

To: The Town Board and Town Clerk  
From: Councilperson Robert Lynch  
Re: Membership, Enfield Water Resources Advisory Committee  
Date: June 8, 2020

Colleagues:

This afternoon at 4:51 PM, less than 50 hours before our Town Board is scheduled to convene to take up its monthly business, the Supervisor posted and shared with Board members via email her chosen selection of membership for appointment to the Enfield Water Resources Advisory Committee (sometimes referred to as the “Aquifer Protection Committee.”)

All nominated Committee members, including its proposed Chair, Deputy Supervisor Stephanie Redmond, were among those who’d requested, through a March 5<sup>th</sup> email message from Nancy Spero to this Board, that such a committee be formed. Our Board voted on May 13<sup>th</sup> to establish a Water Resources Advisory Committee, members making clear that the Committee’s objective expands beyond that of mere aquifer protection, but rather encompasses water quality and its availability within the entire Town of Enfield.

At no point since the Committee’s creation, to my knowledge, did the Town, including on its website, solicit Committee membership. In my opinion, transparency demands such a solicitation, lest we Board members be accused of “closed-door politics,” placing a politically-favored few in charge of policy-making responsibilities to the detriment of the broader cross-section of Enfield’s diverse population.

Make no mistake; each of the persons our Supervisor has nominated is an upstanding Enfield citizen, one actively involved in this community and one who holds this community’s interests in the highest regard. But one cannot avoid the fact that each of the persons nominated represents a particular and homogeneous political ideology within our Town, that of the environmental activist. Put plainly, our Town’s residents represent a broader diversity of political and philosophical opinion. Put even more bluntly—and feel free to quote me on this—Enfield is more than just ENSAW. Last year’s election proved that fact.

Moreover, the Supervisor’s list of appointees fails to fulfill the letter and the spirit of our May 13<sup>th</sup> Resolution that created this Committee. This Councilperson’s amended text, adopted by the Town Board without objection, states:

“Membership on this advisory committee shall include at least one member of the Enfield Town Board, at least one member of the Enfield Planning Board, and at least one member engaged full time in the practice of agricultural production within the Town of Enfield. The Town Board will appoint the committee’s remaining members so as to ensure diverse representation of the Enfield community, drawing from the membership ranks of applicable community groups, and also from the general public...”

While the Supervisor has appointed a member of the Town Board, Councilperson/Deputy Supervisor Redmond, to serve on this Committee, she has failed to appoint a required representative from the Enfield Planning Board. And to my knowledge, none of the Supervisor’s nominees to the Board is a farmer, one “engaged full time in the practice of agricultural

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production within the Town of Enfield.” Until such members are chosen, in my opinion, the Water Resources Advisory Committee’s membership is infirm, and the Committee lacks the legal composition or the credibility to conduct business.

Given the secretive, last-minute procedures the Supervisor has employed to constitute this Committee; in effect, for lack of a better term, to stack its membership with environmental activists, I will move Wednesday to table this appointment Resolution until such time as this Town Board completes a wide solicitation on the Town’s website and elsewhere to seek out the “diverse representation of the Enfield community” called for by this Resolution. Should such a motion to table fail, in faith to my oath of office, I will have no choice, but to oppose the Supervisor’s list of appointments to this Committee.

In an accompanying email disseminated three minutes prior to release of the June 10<sup>th</sup> proposed Resolution’s text, the Supervisor stated that in her opinion, membership in the Water Resources Advisory Committee remains open-ended, effectively an expansive membership without practical limit. In her words:

“When others who may fill the representation requirements set forth by the board last month express interest, the board can appoint them at that time.”

But a municipal governing board does not assemble a committee like one would establish a club. At some point, the Committee may recommend action, and such must come from a finite body of representatives chosen by a governing board based on their fitness to serve. Either the Town Board appoints members willy-nilly without limits, or it restricts membership to its favored few, its partisan allies. Either alternative makes such a Committee a farce; a political lobbying group, nothing more.

Earlier this date, Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, I stated to this Town Board:

“I’ve said before that I believe Councilperson Redmond deserves appointment given her interest in water quality matters. I, too, would consider membership, should outside interest prove less than overwhelming. I live over the aquifer; and doing so, I have interest in keeping our water safe and plentiful. But again, others should be given first opportunity.”

Therefore, barring success in my efforts June 10<sup>th</sup> to table the appointment of members to the Enfield Water Resources Advisory Committee, I will propose to amend said Resolution so as to name myself, Enfield Councilperson Robert Lynch, to the afore-stated Committee, in line with the Supervisor’s appointment standards and also my prior expression of interest. I would do so knowing full well that said Committee would remain powerless to conduct regular business unless and until an Enfield Planning Board member and at least one full-time farmer are added to its membership.

Respectfully,

Robert A. Lynch  
Councilperson