

## HERBST: "OUR TOWN DESERVES BETTER"

### **August 1, 2016 –First Selectman Timothy M. Herbst on Monday issued a statement regarding continued efforts to politicize land use planning:**

These are exciting times for Trumbull and as our community grows and continues to thrive we must grow with it. Thousands of residents use our trail system every week, our library is in high demand and the non-partisan analysis provided by the Plan of Conservation and Development calls for the Town to identify properties in close proximity to our municipal campus to better serve our residents. So when a property owner approached the Town to discuss their options, we felt it was an appropriate time to discuss the larger goals of the Town and to pursue the opportunity with other property owners. The Town Council unanimously agreed on a bipartisan basis that we proceed. The Planning and Zoning Commission voted to recommend these acquisitions and the Legislation and Administration Committee of the Trumbull Town Council voted 5-1 to proceed as well.

We have an obligation to our residents, and business owners to pursue every opportunity to make Trumbull a better place to live, work and raise a family.

When this all started I was excited and grateful for the bi-partisan support of the Council. I am disappointed that some have used this as a mechanism for their own political platform. Fortunately, I believe that the majority of our town's leaders see this for what it is: a great opportunity to provide better services to our residents.

I have repeatedly assured those living in the affected area as well as residents of our community at large, that **I will not use eminent domain** in an effort to acquire these properties. I do not know how else to underscore that point. However, knowing that during his time as First Selectman Mr. Baldwin used the threat of eminent domain to acquire the property that now serves as the Town Hall Annex, I can appreciate where the Democrat's fear and concern comes from.

It is truly unfortunate that Chairman Garrity is using what should be a non-partisan issue to advance his candidacy for State Representative. Mr. Garrity knows what the Plan of Conservation and Development says as he voted in favor of it. Commissioner Helfrich crossed party lines because, candidly, he has taken the politics out of the situation to do the right thing. Councilman Whitmoyer did the same thing last week when he voted in favor of these acquisitions at the committee level. I commend these two public servants for putting the good of the Town before any personal or partisan considerations. My concern is that those who want to turn this into a political fight, will likely hurt any efforts the Town makes, whether under my leadership or my successor, to develop our Town in response to the needs of our growing community.

The property owners we've worked with, have a reasonable concern, that if a private developer were to come in and pursue these properties, any influence they have in the kind of development pursued here is muted. With the town purchasing these properties in pursuit of the Plan of Conservation and Development the involved property owners, the neighbors and the community at large have a greater voice in the entirety of the process.

I am looking forward to tonight's meeting and hope that everyone is able to have their voice heard. So many in our town have hoped we would pursue opportunities to expand services for our growing community and I hope that we are still able to do just that. Trumbull deserves nothing but the best.