**POLITICAL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**CHRIS SWEENEY**

Hello everyone and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak for a few moments. As a proud, involved, resident of Littleton, I recognize the gift of living in this vibrant, beautiful community, and as a member of the Littleton Selectboard (**is this correct?**), I intend to honor my commitment to this town and its residents. I also recognize the importance of actively participating in the growth, development, and continued support of our collective “**home**.” We are fortunate to live in a place filled with history, natural beauty, resources and potential, and it is up to all of us to do whatever is needed to insure the health of this town for years to come. Littleton is on the brink of greatness once again. We know that small towns face unique and significant challenges... probably more so than larger cities but as a tightly knit group of committed neighbors, we also have unique opportunities. It’s gratifying that many people are choosing Littleton as a place to live and raise their families, but I believe it is critical for all of us to do more ... we need more jobs, more good paying jobs, and a more stable tax base. The world is changing and advancing rapidly and it is clear to me that we need to have representative vision in the present in order to be proactive and innovative to insure sustained health and growth of our town into the future.

In order be successful in this environment, it’s important to examine “what makes this town tick....” to identify and strengthen the backbone and infrastructure and establish and support systems that will work to maintain economic and civic growth and health. We must seek out employers and give incentives to job creators. We must also create a context in which employers are able to seek benefits and offer incentives for their employees in order to support a better quality of life. We can compliment employer growth by emphasizing our existing assets and distinctive resources.

We have great potential for civic growth....places like Main Street, our center of activity, Pine Hill, and Parker Mountain outdoor recreational destination... these places attract new residents, visitors, and in turn can also accommodate entrepreneurs seeking to brand Littleton as a premier destination for outdoor recreation, greenways, biking, and many year round events that would act as catalysts to drive and enrich our local economy and quality of life. Our natural landscape is stunning. Our cultural venues like the Burlington Opera House are ripe for hosting events.

I believe the time has come to address what is needed to merge the charm and beauty of Littleton with the best practices and procedures necessary to sustain civic health now and into the future. I intend to implement crowd sourced long range plans to guide our progress over the next ten years. I envision more transparency and community involvement via social media. It’s important to have a voice and for our residents to be heard.... to consider proposed changes .... for the good of the community as a whole before they are implemented. It’s important to avoid separate agendas that do not benefit the average resident. I envision a process in which the public has a say in shaping a vision for the future as our community members work together to submit ideas to benefit the town. I also see forming a young citizens advisory council so we can find a place at the table for those who will inherit the future. I propose citizen based task teams to enrich our environment- they’d be involved in keeping our streets clean, tree planting, neighborhood beautification, and traffic calming, all with the intent of enriching Littleton... encouraging walkability, bikeability, increased property values, enhanced amenities, and ultimately job creation and positivity.

I believe we will walk a fine line as we create and implement economic development strategies that support growth while honoring and preserving the very special character that distinguishes our district. While current policy attempts to sustain our town, it’s time for a new vision and plan that encourages and employs modern technology and philosophy. We are all connected on so many levels. Access to one another and to government is unprecedented. The time has come for us to implement those modern tools to promote growth in support of our way of life.

I believe in creating incentives for appropriate development and in making it easier for entrepreneurs to invest in our community by streamlining processes. I believe in shifting from exemptions from increased tax to do increased assessment value as a result of rehabilitation or renovation of commercial buildings. I think we have to explore outside funding and grants, and as a cohesive community, create growth and infrastructure plans that can be supported at state and federal levels. I support encouragement- for investments to benefit the existing community, for planning for future programs that will help us obtain funding for future implementation, and for cooperation across the region...finding entities with different missions that can align to make this town a more desirable place in which to live, work, and learn. I also envision eliminating competition for limited resources with the intention to generate durable economic growth while supporting a clean, healthy environment.

Some new initiatives I propose are

* Establishing a place of higher/continued education
* Exploring our ability to remain competitive-as the key to economic success
* Researching and encouraging public and private investment in quality amenities, infrastructure, and services
* Demonstrating our united commitment to education with understanding that it is the key to growth, sustainability, and quality of life.
* Examine the necessity of building a technology infrastructure and the viability of establishing a network of telecommuting jobs.

I am proud to live in “The Most Progressive Small Town in this state. It will take teamwork and the entire community to continue our proud heritage- one that has endured for well over two hundred years. It is my intention that we continue to work on and take care of, Littleton’s natural, civic, and human resources in order to leave a healthy legacy filled with economic prosperity, environmental protection, cultural vibrancy, and a place we are proud to call “**HOME**.” It will take energy, patience, intention, imagination, and **all of us**, working **together** to fulfill our vision. Thank you all!