



2021
TOWN
ELECTION



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PLANNING BOARD

ARMEN MATTHEW ZILDJIAN

INITIAL STATEMENT

There is little doubt that the times we are living through are unprecedented and difficult. The challenges that our community has encountered over the past year can feel debilitating, but Bedford has shown time and again that we can come together to work for the good of our neighbors and our community.

Like all communities, the adversity that Bedford faces will not suddenly disappear along with Covid-19; they will linger if we don't face them and work to address them. Some issues our town has been facing are families struggling to find affordable housing, seniors hoping to downsize and remain in their community, and traffic lining up and down the Great Road daily. The Bedford Planning Board has the tall task of facing these challenges and I know we can come together and can find workable solutions for the future of our town.

By observing the Planning Board make difficult decisions over the years I have concluded that it could benefit from a new voice on the Board, one that can further encapsulate our collective future. I believe I can bring that voice.

On my campaign website, I have outlined my experience and qualifications [here](#). What I hope you learn about me, and why I would make a well-versed Planning Board member, is that I am a listener. Your concerns are my concerns, and as a leader, neighbor, father, and husband, I know just how critical listening can be.

My name is Armen Zildjian and I've called Bedford home for the past two decades. Over that period of time the Bedford community has become part of our extended family and my wife Sybil and I wouldn't trade the memories we have made here for anything. Our two children have enjoyed growing up in this safe and loving community, they attended our fantastic public schools and developed tremendous friendships.

My plan is simple: work to expand inclusive and equitable housing, promote small businesses, and ensure accountability. More specifically the Planning Board must work to address the interests of groups who have been left behind in Bedford: our low-income earners, aging population, and middle-class families. It is sometimes presented that these

groups' interests are in conflict with one another, but I don't believe they are. I believe we all have a part in what makes this a great community that we call home.

We owe it to the next generation and the previous generation, our kids and parents, to preserve a town that they can continue to call home. We need careful, responsible leadership that is best conceived through someone who can first listen and then act. Bedford deserves an independent and thoughtful voice to represent their interests in tomorrow's future. Ultimately the future is what the Planning Board provides for the people of Bedford.

I promise that as I represent you and your neighbors on the Planning Board that I will be listening to what you want for our community for both today AND tomorrow. That's the promise I'll make to you.

I look forward to earning your vote between now and March 13th. I encourage you to check out my [website](#) to learn about my candidacy, or email me at Armen@ArmenForBedford.com. Similarly, make sure to share my [Facebook](#) with your friends, family, and neighbors.

May you and your family remain healthy amidst these challenging times.

QUESTIONS ~ LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Traffic congestion is often cited by candidates as an issue they would address if elected. What ideas would you bring to the table and how would you work with the Select Board to implement changes to address this issue?

Traffic throughout Bedford, especially on Great Road has been a hot topic since I moved to Bedford in 2002. There have been some projects to help resolve problem areas but it's clear that formidable action must be taken to do more, we owe it to our neighbors to address this issue. The Planning Board should acknowledge that while it may be beneficial to expand business and housing on Great Road, it may not be feasible with the current constraints of traffic. It does not take a traffic study to know that expanding in already busy areas will worsen issues.

How would you work toward greater housing equity, i.e., assuring that Bedford offers opportunities that will attract residents of all ages and socio-economic status?

I was fortunate enough to move to Bedford when a middle-class family could afford to live here. Nowadays, that is rarely the case. Increased opportunities for housing is on the forefront of my priority as a member of the Planning Board. However, the conversation surrounding housing equity is often proposed as a dichotomy, benefitting one sub-group over another. We should look to serve all groups equally, regardless if they are a family seeking a community that has quality education for their children, or our senior citizens who wish to downsize, or whatever other situation they may be in.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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