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—For section.....Voices/Viewpoint
—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42947

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Beautiful work, Angie. I'm jealous that you did a better job than we did in reporting this story.

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

#####BEGIN HED#####

¹ Quantifying 'many, many, many complaints'

#####END HED#####

#####BEGIN SUBHED#####

² Public records call into question the extent of public
³ demand for for emergency zoning in Brattleboro

#####END SUBHED#####

⁴ TEXT BODY:

#####BEGIN TEXT#####

⁵ DURING THE Selectboard's explanation of votes related to
⁶ zoning changes affecting 69A on Dec. 22, 2025, two members
⁷ cited the volume of complaints they had received.

⁸ Peter Case stated that the number of people who spoke
⁹ publicly opposed to rezoning "pales in comparison" to those
¹⁰ who had contacted him personally, including by text.

11 Elizabeth McLoughlin, the chair, stated that she had
12 received "many, many, many complaints."

13 These statements suggested an awareness of the level of
14 community opposition that extended well beyond what appears
15 in the public record.

16 In light of those statements, I submitted a Public Records
17 Act request seeking:

- 18 • Written complaints (emails, letters, texts) regarding
19 69A
- 20 • Any records memorializing verbal complaints
- 21 • Records from the period beginning when 69A opened
22 in May 2025

23 The intent of the request was to better understand how
24 many people privately complained to Selectboard members,
25 what they complained about, and when those complaints
26 occurred, based on the documentary record.

27 * * *

28 THE RECORDS PROVIDED reflect two people complaining or
29 individually raising concerns to Peter Case.

30 In addition to those personal complaints he received, he
31 forwarded 12 pictures, all either taken by him or sent by one
32 individual who also sent multiple complaints to a broader group
33 which included all Selectboard members.

34 No written record memorializing verbal complaints was
35 produced.

36 The photos included in the records do not show anyone
37 clearly engaged in illegal activity; the majority appear to
38 document people being present in a public space rather than
39 specific unlawful conduct.

40 Two photos were accompanied by a text message
41 alleging illegal drug use; however, the individuals were not at
42 69A but rather in a nearby doorway where they would not have
43 been visible to 69A staff. In addition, the images themselves do
44 not clearly document illegal activity, and the conversation does

45 not indicate they were reported to the police or any enforcement
46 action was taken.

47 Assuming it was drug use, the fact that it was occurring
48 off-site, around a corner, seems to suggest not that drug use was
49 being allowed inside but that it wasn't.

50 No distinct individuals are clearly documented as having
51 individually complained to Elizabeth McLoughlin.

52 The records provided reflected a total of eight
53 individuals having submitted written concerns related to 69A to
54 any Selectboard member. Five of the eight are or were downtown
55 businesses owners, and the impact on business was emphasized
56 in their submissions.

57 * * *

58 THE CONCERNS reflected in the records largely centered
59 on the visibility of homelessness downtown and related social
60 issues, such as public behavior, safety perceptions, and the
61 concentration of social services.

62 Included in the records provided four statements of
63 support for 69A or a desire to have them not implement the
64 emergency zoning change: one sent specifically to board
65 member Amanda Ellis-Thurber and three sent to the Selectboard
66 as a whole. One of these was sent on behalf of six members of
67 the Planning Comision.

68 This means prior to the meeting the Selectboard had
69 eight documented individuals who had complained about 69A or
70 contacted them in support of making the emergency zoning
71 change and nine who had contacted them to advocate they not
72 do so.

73 The records provided did not support the statements
74 made by either Selectboard member.

#####END TEXT#####

Bio/COATTAIL:

#####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL#####

75 **ANGELA EARLE GRAY** is an entrepreneur and human
76 resources professional.

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#####END BIO/COATTAIL#####
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LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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