

Here is a transcript of remarks given by outgoing Selectman Noah Eckhouse at Lincoln's Annual Town Meeting on March 19, 2016.

Thank you, Peter and Tim, for those kind words. And thank you, voters of Lincoln, for trusting me to be your Selectman for these past six years. It has been a true honor and something I have really enjoyed.

I want to thank my colleagues past and present: Gary, Sara, Peter and Renel. Six good years of teamwork. And thanks to Sarah Cannon Holden who helped me transition into her seat.

Our town is staffed by knowledgeable, dedicated people who are extremely good at what they do, and it has been a pleasure to get to know them, from DPW crew to police and fire, Town Hall staff and teachers. These folks run our town all day, every day. They keep us safe. Educate our kids. Care for our seniors. Keep the town looking beautiful and manage our open spaces. They care as much about Lincoln as we do. Their jobs are not easy. Trust them. Respect them.

A special thanks goes to my family: Catherine, Michela and Eli. I've spent a lot of evenings in meetings, a lot of hours on the phone, and a lot of "do you have a moment" questions at the dump, at the school, in Donelan's. Thanks to them for their support of me, and this town.

Look, you don't want to hear a retirement speech but I want to make four quick points for you to consider.

Get involved — This town doesn't run itself. We run on volunteer leadership. We all have to contribute. I did it when my kids were young. You can too. Find a role and jump in.

Provide solutions, don't identify problems — Nothing demotivates a volunteer more than complainers. Is Lincoln perfect? Of course not. Do we love to hear well-considered suggestions? We do. Will we help you get to well-considered positions? Yes! Life is full of things that could change, but the why and the how are often more important than the what

Not to decide is to decide — Consider the cost of doing nothing. Sometimes our desire to utterly dissect a decision stops us dead in our tracks. I argue that our most precious asset is not money or land or the Lincoln Way. It is our volunteer energy. Squandering that resource is something we all must guard against. Consider the opportunity cost when raising an issue.

Protect Lincoln. The conservation land... is that what I mean? Or crime and pollution? Nope. Although worthy, I'm getting at something more fundamental. As most of us see, the level of discourse in our nation is awful—singular points of view, uncompromising approaches and personal attacks. Not just in the presidential campaign but literally in neighboring towns. We are surrounded. We need to keep it out of Lincoln, or else no one will ever volunteer to serve. Lincoln is *not* a special place by accident.

Believe in the wisdom of Town Meeting. Assume that the person you are speaking with might truly know what they are talking about, even if you disagree with them. Resist the temptation to publicly complain about what has already been decided. Face forward and protect this house. Consensus is better than perfection.

Thank you again. It has been my honor.