

Beverly Citizen

Sitting In:

Rep. Mary Grant on 'trust, betrayal and character'

By Rep. Mary E. Grant

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Beverly, Mass. - The past speaker of the house will be arraigned this week after an indictment announced last week. The good news is that the system of justice works and one who is accused of having betrayed us all by breaking the law is being brought forward to face charges. Grand jury investigations are secret with nothing being revealed until the announcement is made. Media accounts before that announcement were anonymous sources and unofficial. The official announcements were not made for many months as we now know.

However, the betrayal of trust runs deep for many who have served in the legislative body during this time. In our culture of speculation and authoritative opinion often substituting for fact, it is easy to jump to conclusions. It is necessary to get the facts. For months no announcement of the outcome of an investigation was made. The speaker emphatically denied the truth of the articles to all, both publicly and privately. In the absence of facts, trust is what it all came down to. Trust is a funny thing. It takes a long time to build and a second to destroy. The betrayal runs deep because in the absence of facts he received the benefit of the doubt and after reading the indictment it is clear he knew so much more. This is not a partisan political issue. This is personal integrity and a question of breaking the law. In fact the vote on the contract in question was fully supported by Republicans.

Many times things are tried in the court of public opinion and because of our constitutional freedom of speech we can all vent, saying "I knew it all along" or even "They knew it all along," but the facts are no one knew the outcome of the investigation until last Tuesday when reading the indictment. In the end, this country has a justice system that allows for a defense. Good thing, because after last week's announcement objectivity will certainly be needed. It is also a good thing because our system of justice deals in facts.

As a society in politics, we have come to accept as fair game misrepresenting oneself or misrepresenting another for personal gain. It happens most frequently when people are on a quest for position, or power or money. We see it in national campaigns, statewide campaigns and in local situations. I have never been a fan of that style of leading or campaigning. It never adds to the quality of our lives, but rather it detracts, and ultimately betrays. When taken too far it breaks the law. I have always deeply respected the charge you have given me and continue to. Character and integrity matter, and I work to uphold both.

In the meantime, we have a budget to deal with that will affect services deeply. We have several major bills almost completed, which will all be passed. Once completed, I will announce a few local meetings to review the budget and look for your thoughts as we move forward. It has been a difficult budget year and I have tried to incorporate your requests with balance as revenue allowed. The overall goal has been to create stability as best as possible.

In addition, I want to say that I enjoy representing the people of this city. What a pleasure it has been this month to participate in several community improvement projects and neighborhood gatherings and to watch the tremendous talent we have here create for all. Many happy families and citizens got out to work together toward positive goals in their neighborhoods: downtown, Gloucester Crossing, Briscoe Middle School, North Beverly playground, Cove playground and the Farms community preparing for the Fourth of July. So many of you do this work year in and year out, not looking for personal gain, just for the greater good. It gives our whole city character. Thank you!

This week we also have some good news for Beverly from the state in the action taken to procure land for the MBTA parking project, and in the first round of approval for the building of Essex and North Shore Vocational Technical High School. In some cases those projects have been 20 years in the making and are now coming together because of persistent attention and coordination. It is reassuring that we can move forward on long term goals even in tough economic times.

Mary E. Grant is the state representative for the 6th Essex District. She lives on Hale Street in Beverly.