

Tom Plenda Biography

My name is Tom Plenda, and I have lived in Keene since retiring and moving here in September of 2015. My wife and I moved here from Detroit, Michigan, to watch our grandchildren grow up. Our youngest daughter had made this her home for a number of years along with our son-in-law, Jason, who grew up in the same house they now share in Keene. They are in charge of raising my grandchildren; all I have to do is enjoy spending time with them.

Our first impression of Keene was the ride down Main Street toward Central Square, which emerged in front of us like a giant picture postcard of a quintessential New England Town as it might have been painted by Norman Rockwell. The succeeding public events we attended after that never disappointed. Each was better than the last, from the Pumpkin Fest to Christmas carols in the park, the art fairs, Fourth of July fireworks, and all the others in between. Keene had fulfilled its promise from that first visit and helped us make the transition to our new home.

Our neighbors also make this a great place to live. Never prying or nosy, they are always quick with a friendly wave and a smile when passing by. I was especially impressed by the Symonds Elementary School Bicycle Club that I encountered while walking in Ladies Wildwood Park one day. Their politeness and courtesy made it a delight to share the park with them on their bikes.

Another note worth mentioning is that I have found New Hampshire drivers to be the most courteous of any place I have ever driven, which is most of the 50 states, including Alaska and Hawaii. When I hear a horn blowing and look around to see where it's coming from, it's usually me. (Sorry about that, old habits die hard. I'm trying to do better.)

Keene had fulfilled its promise, and we never regretted leaving our lifelong home in Michigan.

And now, I want to be a City Councilor for Ward 5 in Keene. No, I take that back. I don't want to be a City Councilor anywhere. I want to go about my life oblivious to the dubious musings of those who want to be in charge of things. I'm usually very thankful to leave that to somebody else. Most of us are that way. We sleep better at night knowing that someone else has taken on this burden for us so that we don't have to do it.

But our peaceful slumber was profoundly disturbed this past year by the public discourse surrounding the Downtown Infrastructure Project. And as if the myriad of issues spawned by this endeavor weren't enough, it turns out the bigger problem is that our city government seems to have run amok trying to advance this project while spending huge amounts of tax dollars and on track for spending even greater amounts of future tax collections to improve the Downtown superstructure in some kind of way, but we don't really know what that is.

Setting the specific Project issues aside for the moment, let's address the fundamental problems of the need for fiscal responsibility and the lack of accountability and transparency of our city government. The current Mayor has taken care of his part by announcing he does not intend to run for re-election. But he did not preside over these events by himself. The current City Councilors and City employees all have a hand in this. Whether by action or inaction, they have allowed it to take place. This cannot be allowed to continue.

So why should you vote for me, with no political experience or background, no desire to be in politics, and no political expertise? ...That's why.

I have no political expertise, savvy, experience, or ambition to advance a private agenda.

I will, however, do everything I can to promote responsible government, vote to spend your money wisely, and keep you informed about what your city government is up to.

All you have to do is vote. Sleep tight.