



Town of Concord

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2021 Honored Citizen Announcement

CONCORD, MA— The Town’s Public Ceremonies and Celebrations Committee is pleased to announce Elise F. Woodward as this year’s Honored Citizen. A ceremony to honor Elise is being planned for a Sunday in the fall instead of the usual one in March given these different times. With that said, we encourage Concordians to reach out to Elise and thank her for her 30 years of continual service to the community.

Hailed for her grace, humility, and ability to listen, Elise has served on school, church, town, library, and Emerson Umbrella committees, and is recognized and appreciated for her steady character and commitment, for her integrity of purpose, and for her kind and reassuring demeanor.

“Our town is a better place due to her dedicated involvement,” David Holdorf commented.

Elise began her service at each level of the schools as her children Lauren and Andrew grew up. She was a member of the Willard and middle school PTGs, and the middle school and high school advisory councils. Her commitment deepened as a member of the Schools Space Study Committee and the Thoreau and Willard Elementary Schools Building Committee (1993-1995). More recently, from 2013-2015, Elise served on the High School Building Committee.

Her service on town committees began in 1995 – and has hardly stopped – with her appointment for two terms on the Zoning Board of Appeals (1995 – 2001) where she served as chair for four of the six years.

Elise was then appointed to the Finance Committee (2001 – 2007). In 2009 she won election to the Select Board, was chair in 2011-2012, and was re-elected, serving her six years (2009 – 2015) with a calm and thoughtful presence that was noticed and appreciated.

“Elise was/is thoughtful, open-minded, and tireless in her efforts to do what is in the town’s best interests,” said Dan Gainsboro.

The purchase of the McGrath Farm and providing the affordable housing for young farmers is a highlight for Elise in her time on the Board.

Since her Select Board service, Elise has continued to serve on town committees: the Energy Futures Task Force (2016), as co-chair of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee (2017-2018), and she is currently on the Capital Planning Task Force.

In addition to her service on town committees, Elise has served the Trinitarian Congregational Church community as a member of the Mission and Property Committees and currently is a member of the Library expansion building committee and Chair of its Sustainability Committee.

Perhaps in her most noticeable and best accomplishment, Elise was the Chair of the Building Committee for The Umbrella Center for the Arts multi-million dollar re-modeling and expansion project (2017 – 2020).

“I am proud of how that turned out,” admitted Elise, “but I am also proud of the energy efficient high school and the work that went into the recommendations of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan for Concord’s future well-being.”

“Don’t discount the fact that Elise’s service to her community has occurred all while she maintained her career at the architectural firm Shepley Bulfinch,” shared Kathy Takvorian. “Elise was on its board of directors for nine years, including four terms as board chair. Elise is a model of service to professional women and men.”

In fact, Elise is a past president of the MA chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and a current member of both the National Ethics Council of AIA and the Massachusetts Designer Selection Board. In 2007 she won the Women in Design Award of Excellence from the Boston Society of Architects.

“The growth in responsibility and leadership I was gaining in my architectural practice was parallel to some degree with my volunteer service in Concord”, says Elise. “My volunteer experience has enlivened me. The committed involvement of citizens in our community in the important issues affecting our town amazes and delights me. Together we are contributing to the vibrancy of our democratic process – having significantly more effect collectively than we could have as individuals.”

Early in her tenure on the Select Board, Elise urged Town Meeting voters to listen with respect to each other “with a willingness to risk changing your mind,” a statement that is now a part of the opening of every Town Meeting. Elise Woodward has been a model of good listening, and her record of faithful service to the Town and its institutions make her deserving of the Town’s highest volunteer honor.

Since 1963 the Town of Concord has recognized a resident individual or couple, who are not a current elected official, for their significant, extensive, extended, and deep commitment of volunteer service to the Town and fellow citizens. The 2020 honoree was Jonathan Keyes and in 2019 it was Di Clymer.



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