



**Andrea E. Berry**

**Select Board – 3 year term**

I moved to North Yarmouth in 2015 with my partner Steve and daughter Cora and can't ever imagine leaving! I'm an avid gardener and have planted the beginnings of a small orchard on our one acre, along with a vegetable garden and over 40 species of native plants. I love to walk my dogs on the town trails, paddle on the Royal River, and relax on my hammock with a good book.

I am lucky enough to be the only candidate for Select Board who lives and works in the Village Center. You've driven past my office, where Wild Seed Project shares a building with Toot's. And you probably know my home: we're right across from the Town Office driveway with the Little Free Library and the charitable farm stand. If you know my home, you know my values: equity, inclusion, and the stewardship of our environment.

I live these values. I am a vocal advocate for justice, a passionate environmentalist, and an ambassador for our town. I have worked in nonprofits my entire career advocating for education access, racial equity, and the environment. Where I have the most success is in bringing people together, in creating space for all voices and diverse opportunities for input and participation. I want to bring my skills and my passion to our local government, so that I can help ensure that we all feel like we belong here, and we are all welcomed.

**1. What are your qualifications for the office that you seek?**

- As the Executive Director of Wild Seed Project, I lead all aspects of our environmental nonprofit: I direct a rapidly growing staff, oversee activities at multiple locations, manage our finances, and spearhead our national efforts on ecological landscaping and climate change. Daily I manage a complex budget that includes balancing multiple revenue streams, varied production locations, and a retail arm that has doubled in revenue in the last year. I have spent my career in philanthropy, working with investments and endowments, and supporting organizations through budget coaching and strategic planning. Complex budgets don't scare me, nor does strategic financial planning, both of which will be critical as we try to build the town's undesignated fund while keeping taxes manageable for townspeople. I am also an avid volunteer, having

proudly served on nonprofit boards including the Maine Women's Lobby, Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, Baxter Academy for Technology and Science, Resources for Organizing and Social Change, and Friends of the REACH School. That breadth of experience in board governance and organizational oversight will be critical for a role on North Yarmouth's Select Board. I know how Boards work, know how to run an effective meeting, and am experienced in Robert's Rules of Order.

Over my career I have honed critical skills in community-centered leadership, bringing people together in ways that help everyone feel included. I know the value of working as a member of a team to solve problems in our community, how to communicate clearly about complex issues, and how to ensure that every voice is heard and valued.

**2. What motivated you to run for the office that you seek?**

- Over the last few years there has been an increasingly negative tone about the way our Village Center is developing criticism of new housing and the look and feel of the community that is emerging. I love where I live--smack in the middle of the Village Center--and feel that it is important to have a representative on the Select Board who not only drives through the center of our town, but who lives and works there. I'm excited about the vision of a walkable Village Center filled with small businesses that support our community and cluster and multi-family housing that provides access to affordable places to live. I'm stepping up to provide that unique voice and commitment to everyone in our community, longtime residents and new neighbors.

**3. Do you have sufficient time/energy to devote to this position?**

- Yes, I have sufficient time and energy to devote to the Select Board.
- As a working mom who has always held volunteer Board positions, I know a thing or two about balancing work, family, and giving back to the community. When my partner, Steve Berry, was the Chair of the Select Board in 2020 and 2021, I saw firsthand the work and time needed to be an effective member of our town's governing body. I know that I have the time and energy to serve our community as he, and others on the Select Board, did and continue to do.

**4. With one or two meetings a month, all boards are limited in what they can accomplish, how should the board decide what is most important?**

- I want to prioritize issues that will make a direct impact on people's lives and balance community benefit with individual burden. I believe that we can bring all priorities to the table and make a collective decision that centers varied voices and opinions, finding common ground where we can, and diving in open to all sides when issues are more complex.

**5. Think of an issue facing North Yarmouth that you care about. Do you have a positive solution that you want to bring forth?**

- There are many issues facing our town that I'm interested in exploring, from ways to support seniors staying in their homes, to the TIF District and its impact on our tax burden, to what it means to have a walkable Village Center. One issue I'm particularly passionate about is how we maintain the open spaces we do have while strategically expanding protected and preserved land throughout our community. I'd love to look at the potential of drafting an Open Space and Land Acquisition Plan for our town that sets reachable goals for acquiring new town property, highlighting desirable tracts of land, and strategically saving funds for future purchases. A plan that creatively includes our community partners such as land trusts, other conservation organizations, and landowners, working alongside the Parks and Recreation Committee and Select Board, would allow for greater impact with less financial burden. With such a plan we can proactively seek out parcels for sale and/or encourage conservation easements in order to strategically preserve the rural tracts of undisturbed forests and historic farmlands that make North Yarmouth so special.