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**From:** "Rob Schlansky" <rjschlansky@rcn.com>  
**To:** amccummings@yahoo.com  
**CC:** rschlans@nortel.com  
**Subject:** ICE Headquarters in Burlington  
**Date:** Tue, 30 Oct 2007 22:14:09 -0400

Hello Ann,

You and I have met a couple times (at various Chris Monaco for SC functions I believe) and I think you know my wife, Joanna. As you probably know, I'm a Town Meeting rep for Precinct 6 and also serve on Ways & Means (with Tim who I was quite disappointed to hear had left the committee, though he's clearly on to a greater and more worthy calling).

Joanna and I recently were informed that we are soon to have a new tenant in Burlington's midst in the form of the New England Headquarters for the Immigration & Customs Enforcement department. I understand that their attempts to establish their headquarters in Lexington and Charlestown were rebuked, but apparently, they somehow slipped through the cracks in Burlington. It will probably come as no surprise to you that I am quite concerned with this development on a couple fronts. However, in expressing my concerns to Selectman Zenkin recently, I was pleased to hear that he had spoken to you, Tony Fields and Bob Mercier and that, apparently, after having discussed the information Walter had gathered, you had agreed the matter warranted closer assessment and discussion and had also agreed to raise the matter at the next Planning Board meeting. I am thus hopeful that the Planning Board and Selectmen can work cooperatively to determine how to appropriately address and, I hope, prevent this from going any further in its current form.

I will not belabor the details of this ICE Headquarters here since I am sure you received similar, if not more, details from Walter. Suffice it to say that I, nor a single person I have spoken to about the concept of an ICE HQ in Burlington, believes this to be in Burlington's best interests. Transporting individuals who are under-arrest into Burlington for "processing", whether true criminals or simply "well-meaning" individuals who are illegal and targeted for deportation, presents only a risk for our residents. There is no upside that I can see. Even the best of people will do desperate things in desperate situations and worse, in this case, we can be sure that not all of those who will be brought here will be the "best of people".

I'm aware that this came before the Planning Board and was not really presented to you in a manner that was conducive to recognizing the intended use. To be frank, I have no interest or concerns with the past, but am more concerned with how we intend to proceed, transparently and constructively, from this point forward. That is why I am pleased to hear that the conversation between you, Walter, Tony Fields and Bob Mercier was a positive one and I hope (and expect) that subsequent discussions will be equally if not more productive and will focus on what is in the best interests of the residents of Burlington. I am concerned, however, by rumblings I've heard that some members of the two boards mentioned, as well as some members of our town administration, have been "poo, poo'ing" this issue or attempting to gloss over it. I don't believe it's an issue to be taken lightly and presents concerns on several fronts. Specifically:

- 1) The question, already noted, of whether this is in the best interests and ensures the optimal safety of Burlington's residents should be of the highest priority. Can anyone provide a single positive with having ICE locate their headquarters here that could outweigh the potential risks to the safety of Burlington residents (and don't tell me tax revenue)? Can they give me a single positive at all? Can any reasonable person really tell me that we're better off with such a facility in our town than without?
- 2) If our zoning bylaws truly allow this type of use, then we need to be looking carefully at revising those bylaws! It's hard for me to believe that our present zoning allows such use in an office park and suggestions I've heard that the holding areas in question are simply "waiting areas" is ludicrous. I have a hard time buying that our current zoning allows this. It sounds to me like creative semantics are being used in an attempt to fit the proposed use into our current zoning. I'd expect the Planning Board to be at a minimum concerned, if not angered, by the lack of transparency and forthrightness shown by the applicants with respect to the building use. Not only that, but I'd expect the board to take action to ensure that there was not a willful attempt to "gloss over" the buildings true use in an attempt to side-step the zoning bylaws or prevent appropriate scrutiny.
- 3) It is hard for me to believe that any reasonable person, who was fully aware of the intended use of

this facility, could possibly believe that such a use would not raise concerns with various branches of town government, the Police, and, most importantly, Burlington's residents. If nothing else, this suggests a significant lack of sound judgment. I would expect and hope that the Planning Board and Selectmen would begin to assess how a project and use of this nature could get so far with so few people being aware of it. Was anyone who actually lives in this town even aware of this? The fact that those who were aware did not see fit to raise the issue of the intended use to, at a minimum, the Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Police (thru the Selectmen) is an issue that needs to be looked into very carefully.

I am not typically an alarmist, or a conspiracy theorist, but this incident raises many unsettling questions. A lack of transparency and forthright discussion will lead only to unhealthy speculation. So, my thanks for championing this issue from a Planning Board perspective on behalf of Burlington's residents. I'll be eagerly awaiting the outcome and a plan from the Planning Board, Selectmen, and Town Administration to jointly address the issues above and, I hope, find a way to prevent the ICE HQ from becoming a reality in Burlington.

Respectfully,

Rob Schlansky  
TMM Precinct 6  
781-771-5703 (you may call me if you wish to discuss further)