

# Sabra appointed to JNC

SOMERSET — Governor Charlie Baker's legal office announced on April 10 the appointment of Somerset attorney Steven P. Sabra to the Judicial Nominating Commission.

The JNC screens applicants for judgeships and clerkships so that the governor can choose from the most qualified candidates. Atty. Sabra has served on the JNC under four other governors and is the only committee member from the Southcoast.

"I am honored to serve on the JNC," atty. Sabra said. "The selection of judges and clerks is one of the most important decisions made by the governor and the opportunity to serve my profession and the community is a privilege for me."

The JNC is comprised of 21 members selected from across the state and from different legal backgrounds which is why Sabra appreciates representing the Southcoast. He added that there are some upcoming judicial vacancies that will directly impact the Southcoast community, making his knowledge of the local legal community an asset to the selection process.

Sabra has been practicing law for almost 40 years, focusing primarily on personal

injury and worker's compensation law as well as criminal defense.

Sabra has volunteered for a variety of professional and civic organizations, including the Fall River and Bristol County Bar Associations, the Board of Bar Overseers and the Somerset Advisory and Finance Committee. Sabra has also served on the Somerset search committees for chief of police and town administrator. Sabra has four grown daughters and lives in Somerset with his wife.

The JNC is a non-partisan, non-political commission composed of distinguished volunteers appointed from a cross section of the Commonwealth's diverse population.

The JNC seeks judicial applicants who possess the temperament, ability and integrity to freely, impartially and independently interpret the laws and administer justice. It also hopes to recruit applicants who represent not only the geographically diverse parts of the Commonwealth, but also the racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the citizens.

"The Judicial Nominating Commission's reflection of our Commonwealth's diversity and geography will see that everyone is fairly served and



**Somerset attorney Steven Sabra has been appointed to the Commonwealth's Judicial Nominating Commission.**

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represented by the Massachusetts judicial system," said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito. "And I thank the members for lending their expertise to our administration."

The JNC's first order of business will be to review applications for chief justice of the Appeals Court, following the announcement by the Honorable Phillip Rapoza that he will retire effective June 30.

## PLANNING

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which were both approved in the mid 1990's, the remaining 13, approved since 2006, comprise approximately 173 lots available for sale and home construction," Adams said.

He further points out that three of the subdivisions are under the Open Space Residential Design which have permanently conserved 135 acres of open space.

"Over the past 20 years, the average number of permits has been only somewhat higher, and the highest number issued was 66 in 1994. We are not in the midst of a housing boom, nor is one likely to occur in the

square feet to 90,000 in the aquifer zone. Adams notes that the suggestion would appear to be counterproductive to the goal of keeping a rural character and could result in sprawl.

"Board members pointed out that a more effective method, one that they did not necessarily recommend, would be to increase the required frontage from 150 feet. Frontage is more of a control in that area," Adams said. "They also explained that none of us has ever heard anybody complain that lot sizes in Swansea are too small and should be increased."

"Our alternative recommendation to you, would be to refer such discussion to the Zoning Revisions Group for additional review, as well as a review of the

the purchase of agricultural property and open space.

"We pointed out to you that the Board has consistently recommended to the board of Selectmen to exercise its right of first refusal whenever such properties have sought "release from Chapter" but that such recommendations have never been accepted, members said in their letter.

"In summary we believe that in order to preserve agricultural properties in Town to the extent that they contribute to our rural character, a high priority should be placed on making more funds available to the Community Preservation Committee for such purchases when they are consistent with the priority placed on properties," the letter said.

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