

**Hanscom Area Towns Committee (HATS)
January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerks of HATS member towns, the HATS meeting convened in a meeting via a recorded video conference on January 21, 2021 at 6:30 pm as allowed by Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Present:

Select Board Members: Emily Mitchell, Bedford and HATS Chair; Linda Escobedo, Concord; Suzie Barry, Lexington and assigned Clerk for this meeting; Jonathan Dwyer, Lincoln.

Guests: State Representative Ken Gordon-21st Middlesex; Glen Kernusky, Hanscom Air Force Base Community Relations Representative.

Public Participants: Kate McEnealey, Concord; Margaret Coppe, Lexington; Alek Soderberg, Bedford TV

Welcome and Announcements:

Ms. Mitchell welcomed participants noting that the meeting was being recorded by the Town of Bedford and Bedford TV.

Guest: State Representative Ken Gordon-21st Middlesex

Representative Gordon reviewed the extended Legislative Session that just concluded at the State House. Items reviewed included: the Climate Bill-recently vetoed by the Governor, the bill has since been refiled; the State Budget-included money for Bedford and Lincoln for the education of Hanscom students; the Transportation Bond Bill-some was vetoed by the Governor, some passed including two local earmarks for the Minuteman Bikeway: \$5 million for the Towns of Bedford, Lexington, Arlington and City of Cambridge for overall improvements, maintenance, development of the Bikeway and \$50,000 for the Town of Bedford. Economic Development Bill-that included: the Governor's housing bill to address the availability of housing and affordable housing, including changing the vote required to change housing zoning from 2/3 vote required to simple majority, caps the delivery charges from food delivery services; right of first refusal to tenant and a student loan bill of rights. Bills Rep Gordon is looking to file this session are an early childhood education/daycare bill to create a subsidized program supporting early education/daycare providers to help address availability of programs, cost of programs and level of wages paid to employees. A bill that didn't get passed last session that he will refile this session would not allow property tax exemptions for MassPort lessees;

Ms. Escobedo asked about next steps for Home Rule Petitions that didn't pass at the end of the session due to the high visibility of other bills getting attention. Rep Gordon suggested getting in contact with specific Town Rep for refile information. Mr. Dwyer asked for more details on the upcoming Budget and Revenue forecasts. Rep Gordon indicated that projections aren't looking well and the rainy day fund had been tapped. Mr. Dwyer also asked for clarification on the requirement for MBTA communities to create multi-family housing near MBTA stations. Rep Gordon indicated there are incentives and some Towns may have already satisfied this requirement. Rep. Gordon indicated there is \$35 million in the Economic Development Bill for

grants for Life Sciences to convert office space to lab space. Rep Gordon feels the Life Sciences industry in this area will help the region regain its economic footing after the Pandemic. Ms. Barry asked for clarification on the Minuteman Bikeway funding. Rep Gordon indicated the money is authorized but not yet appropriated and the \$5 million is for the four communities to determine collectively how to use. Ms. Barry asked about the change in leadership in the House and if that would change things. Rep Gordon is looking forward to working with Speaker Mariano and his thirst to get things done and thirst for knowledge by looking at data. Ms. Mitchell expressed concern and frustration surrounding the COVID-19 vaccination roll out and the need to get more vaccine available locally and asked if there is any update from the regional and local perspective. Rep Gordon indicated 2/3 of the vaccine is being used on a rolling basis at this time but the ability to get more is slow right now. Rep. Gordon also expressed frustration regarding the MBTA bus route cuts that are coming. Ms. Mitchell asked if any of the changes to the Open Meeting Law regarding accommodations and remote participation due to the Pandemic might become permanent. Rep Gordon indicated nothing has been passed yet and no hearings are scheduled, conversations are taking place but need to consider if lack of technological access is a barrier to participation. Ms. Escobedo asked when Legislative Committee assignments would be made. Rep. Gordon indicated Legislative Committee assignments should take place by the end of February.

Update: Hanscom Air Force Base:

Mr. Kernusky reported that 40% of the Base workforce is working on Base while 60% is still tele-working at home. He also stated that the 1st dose of COVID-19 vaccinations had been distributed in accordance with Department of Defense guidance. Ms. Escobedo asked if there was an update on the environmental study and if public comment was still allowed could the electronic link be sent. Mr. Dwyer asked if the pandemic had any effect on the schedule of infrastructure projects at MIT Lincoln Labs. Mr Kernusky responded he would send the environmental study public comment link and he would also follow up on the MIT Lincoln Lab question and report back.

Update: Hanscom Field:

Ms. Mitchell gave a brief update from the most recent Hanscom Field Advisory Commission (HFAC) meeting since a MassPort representative was not present at this meeting. Issues raised at HFAC included Concord and Bedford residents concerned about lead gas emissions and how modeling and sampling are done; flight patterns used by Hanscom based flight schools over certain communities and HFAC reviewing the chapters of the ESPR so they can have input during ESPR comment period.

Municipal highlights-Lincoln:

Mr. Dwyer indicated Lincoln voted to participate in electric aggregation as of March 2021. The Complete Streets project which is a road side path from the Station area towards Wayland has been extended to June of 2021. Lincoln's Town Meeting has been delayed until May 2021; the Town Election will take place in March 2021. Several staff members have recently retired including: Fire Chief, Assistant Town Administrator, Council on Aging Director, Land Use & Planning Director, Conservation Director and Parks and Recreation Director.

Municipal highlights-Concord:

Ms. Escobedo reported that Concord was unable to get Special Legislation passed before the end of the Legislative Session regarding the Annual Town Caucus so it will be held outside on January 25, 2021. A regional vaccination center has been established with surrounding communities to vaccinate Public Safety staff. Concord's Town House has been closed for renovations and should open in March/April 2021. Town Meeting has been moved to June 2021.

Municipal highlights-Lexington:

Ms. Barry indicated that the Town Election will take place on March 1, 2021 and Annual Town Meeting will be held remotely and begin on March 22, 2021; at this time there are over 50 articles on the draft warrant. Last week Lexington participated in a regional vaccination clinic with Arlington, Belmont and Watertown to vaccinate Public Safety staff. The Select Board recently voted that due to the Pandemic there will be no in person events surrounding Patriot's Day for 2021; all events will be virtual. Town Hall remains closed to the public and curb side pickup at Cary Library is still on pause.

Municipal highlights-Bedford:

Ms. Mitchell reported Bedford is gearing up for Town Meeting on May 15 &16, 2021; the Town Election will take place on March 13, 2021 and there will be no Caucus this year due to Special Legislation. Outdoor dining permits have been extended and Bedford was recently awarded a REMAP grant thru MAPC and has started work on a Racial Equity Municipal Action Plan.

Future meeting dates & main agenda items:

Ms. Mitchell indicated she had reached out to Colonel Stephens at Hanscom Air Force Base and MassPort representatives and had not yet heard back as to if the February 18, 2021 or April 15, 2021 meeting date would work for the respective parties to attend as the featured HATS meeting speaker.

Minutes-November 2020:

Ms. Mitchell had one correction to the Bedford municipal highlight section of the minutes. By a roll call vote 3-0-1 (Mitchell-yes; Escobedo-yes; Barry-abstain; Dwyer-yes) the November 2020 minutes were approved as corrected.

Adjourn:

With the Committee's business concluded for the evening, by a roll call vote 4-0 (Mitchell-yes; Escobedo-yes; Barry-yes; Dwyer-yes) the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Suzie Barry
Lexington Select Board Member