

Hanscom Are Towns Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2019

Attending: HATS Selectmen: Jonathan Dwyer, Lincoln, acting chair; Mike Rosenberg, Bedford.

Other HATS members: MargaetCoppe, Lexington; Mark Siegenthaler, Bedford.

Others in attendance: John Beatty, executive director of the Massachusetts Military Assets and Security Strategy Task Force; Chris Boles and Jennifer Boles, Bedford; Mason Heilman, legislative aide to State Rep. Michelle Ciccolo; Katie Winchell, Save Our Heritage, Lincoln.

Mr. Beatty explained that the task force was formed in 2014 under state legislation designed to support and strengthen Massachusetts military installations. The task force is comprised of the governor, Cabinet members, representatives of the National Guard, defense industries, higher education institution and the Massachusetts Port Authority, as well as some legislators.

He summarized task force initiatives in 2018, including boiler upgrades and other energy efficiencies at Westover Air Force Base. The task force worked with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Westover also hopes to establish an aviation training center, including air traffic control, with an initial focus on research, this or next fiscal year. The base received federal funding for a maintenance facility specializing in the skin of airports, he added.

Mr. Beatty said the task force wants to return a flying wing to Barnes Air National Guard base. He also noted that Devens is hosting an Army Reserve training area, involving some 130,000 personnel on ranges, in cooperation with surrounding towns. Mr. Beatty described a multi-service and agency facility hosted by Joint Base Cape Cod, including the county sheriff. He said there is a great effort ongoing to integrate the work of all the tenants. Joint Base Cape Cod is trying to realign to a smaller footprint to rebalance among current users, he said. The Air Force would like to open its first microgrid there, in partnership with neighboring towns, Raytheon Co. and the task force.

The Task force has asked the Army to move its futures command to the Natick Soldier Systems Center. This is designed to rapidly distribute technology to fighters. Much of the research and development already takes place in Natick, he said. The task force is deliberative in selecting projects, Mr. Beatty said, trying to achieve the best fit for the Defense Department. There is a lot of talent and a great track record of partnership in the commonwealth, he said.

The director said Hanscom Air Force Base recently was asked to participate in an Association of Defense Communities panel to describe partnerships with contiguous towns and the state. Areas include education and research. "We think we are an example," Mr. Beatty said.

During 2018, he task force helped with securing funding for rehabilitation at Lincoln Laboratory; as well as tracking the development of a new Kessel Run laboratory. This 500-person Boston software development organization falls under the Program Executive Office at Hanscom, offering rapid software development for the Air Force, Mr. Beatty said. He also talked about the Massachusetts Innovation Bridge, involving MITRE Corp. and Mass Development, that connects federal technology projects to contractors.

Mr. Beatty said currently he is not concerned about Hanscom being vulnerable to a Base Closing and Realignment. He noted that installations' missions have to be consistent with the 2018 National Defense Strategy. This includes an emphasis on innovation and modernization in protecting national security. This region leads the nation in many of these areas, Mr. Beatty said, and Hanscom AFB aligns nicely.

Selectman Dwyer asked Mr. Beatty what the Hanscom area towns, as defense communities, can do to help the task force. Mr. Beatty said there is a defense community infrastructure program designed to support military installations in civilian communities, which might be an avenue for federal funds. In answer to a question from Mrs. Boles, Mr. Beatty said the task force has not been monitoring the divestiture of former Navy properties in Bedford. The focus has been on the active installations, he said. The director also noted that three Massachusetts U.S. representatives have been appointed to the House Armed Services Committee.

Other business

Mr. Gallgher mentioned a recent meeting of the Massport Community Advisory Council. He noted that the Feb. 19 meeting of the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission will take place at the new Boston MedFlight facility.

Selectman Dwyer reported on Lincoln's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, emerging from a cycling safety committee. Selectman Rosenberg said this would be a timely topic for the April HATS meeting agenda. He also noted that there are two contests on the March 9 Bedford election ballot. Town meeting will vote on establishing a town disabilities commission. Ms. Coppe reported that Lexington recreation officials are considering proposing a state-of-the-art athletic complex at the Minuteman Regional Technical High School.

Selectman Dwyer said a round table featuring new town managers in Bedford, Concord and Lexington would be a good centerpiece for a fall meeting. Selectman Rosenberg said HATS should invite new members of the Legislature from the region to present at another session.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.