

## Select Board's ad hoc Hartwell Road Committee

### Minutes of April 28, 2021 meeting

#### Remote participation videoconference

**Members Present:** Jennifer Boles, Lori Eggert, Meeta Mathur, William Moonan, Karl Winkler

**Also present:** Charles Ticotsky, Special Assistant to the Town Manager, Meeting Administrator; Bedford TV

**Taking Minutes:** Meeta Mathur recording for the Minutes

[*Note: Ms. Eggert was delayed a couple of minutes, but was present for the rest of the meeting.*]

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**Call to Order:** Chair Boles opened the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

**Disclaimer:** *Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the ad hoc Hartwell Road Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Persons who would like to listen or view this meeting while in progress may do so by Zoom or by phone. Bedford TV is also recording this meeting. All votes taken by this body shall be by roll call vote.*

#### **Announcements:**

- Mr. Moonan provided an update on efforts of the private owner of the Navy hangar [located on the southern tract of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant that was sold by the GSA at public auction in 2019] to solicit support for his application for a grant to finance the rehab of the old hangar, which is required by the terms of his purchase of the property. He has approached the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission to ask for a letter of support.
- Ms. Boles noted that Mike Rosenberg's article about the committee's last meeting appeared in *The Bedford Citizen* on April 12th.  
[The committee's discussion of written responses to questions submitted by readers to *The Citizen* can be seen in the "**Other Business**" section.]
- Ms. Boles also brought to the committee's attention an article on the Massachusetts Municipal Association website titled, "Superfund site in Billerica is transformed into solar array," [*The Beacon: Mass Innovations*, 2014, October 7] and observed that it contains a photo of a beautiful solar farm.

#### **Minutes Approval:**

- Ms. Boles raised the question of whether committee may need to re-approve the meeting Minutes of March 18, 2021, because a glitch in Bedford TV’s video recording omits a portion of our April 6, 2021 meeting [the 72 seconds of the Minutes approval]. However, the audio recording Ms. Mathur made, as well as the chair’s handwritten meeting log both preserve the Minutes approval voice vote of **6-0-0** that was omitted from the Bedford TV video.
- Mr. Moonan suggested that since the Bedford TV video is a popular resource for the public, it would not hurt to reaffirm the Minutes approval.
- Mr. Moonan made a motion to re-approve the meeting Minutes of March 18, 2021 and Ms. Mathur seconded the motion. The committee voted by voice roll call to re-approve the March meeting Minutes: Ms. Boles, Ms. Eggert, Ms. Mathur, and Mr. Moonan voted Aye; Mr. Winkler abstained, mistakenly believing he missed the last meeting. The Minutes of March 18, 2021 were reapproved by **4-0-1**.

*[Note: Ms. Mather’s audio recordings for the committee of the March 18th and April 6th meetings confirm Mr. Winkler was present for both those meetings.]*

**Continued discussion and editing of draft committee report for the Select Board re: Hartwell Hill northern tract of the NWIRP and upcoming divestiture:**

*[Note: NWIRP = Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant, which was shut down and vacated 21 years ago.]*

Additional edits were suggested, including:

- Emphasize that other potential land uses are in addition to, rather than as replacement for a Hartwell Hill solar farm, depending on the Town’s future needs.
- Explain that a Hartwell’s Hill solar farm contract could be extended after the initial lease/operation period of 20-30 years expires, if the Town wishes.
- Emphasize Town control of the parcel after divestiture is good insurance for the future of Bedford. As the land and groundwater is cleaned up, Hartwell Hill can become whatever the Town needs most in future years.
- State that preserving that choice for future new residents and younger Bedford residents who are now children is a great opportunity that only the Town can control.
- Keep working on solving map issues: accuracy, conveying as much information as possible in as few maps as possible, as cleanly and simply as possible.
- Add a map showing the location of all four of the Superfund sites on Hartwell Hill, and include legend information on types of contamination present and each site’s remediation status.
- Note in an exhibit that the NWIRP contamination of groundwater with toxic, but often common chemicals was due to a combination of accident, careless disposal, and general lack of understanding during the 1950s into the 1980s of the devastating and long-lasting consequences of environmental contamination.
- Prepare Ameresco presentation pdfs to be added to the committee webpage.
- Add exhibit bullet list or photos of more solar farms near airfields or at airports.

- Ms. Eggert suggests adding photos of solar farms [near airfields, and on local Superfund and landfill sites] to our report cover page.
- Ms. Mathur suggests that titles/headings/subheadings be as clear and eye-catching as possible, so that readers who only skim the report still catch all the main points.
- A reminder that Ms. Lloyd had previously suggested highlighting all in-text citations to make them easy to find when it is time to add page numbers.
- Add a short section to the Executive Summary describing the loss the Town experienced due to the Hartwell Road municipal wellfield groundwater contamination; the ensuing years of litigation with the Navy, Raytheon, Air Force, Massport, and a private party; the multi-million dollar settlement eventually reached with those parties; and the Town's hydrogeology consultant's estimate that the true financial cost to Bedford for the loss of the groundwater drinking water resource was more than double the \$4.7 million dollar payment the Town received.
  - That information could help draw attention to the fact that Bedford has actually experienced some serious losses and negative consequences due to past NWIRP activities. It could help illustrate some of the cost that our town has already paid for hosting the NWIRP for nearly 70 years.
  - The information could strengthen the case to the GSA that the land should be transferred to Bedford under the most favorable terms possible.
- Show the contaminated, closed Hartwell Road municipal wells and water treatment plant on at least one of the maps.

**Other Business:**

- The committee discussed written replies to reader questions submitted to *The Bedford Citizen* about the article on the last committee meeting [Rosenberg, M.; 2021, April 12, "Ad Hoc Committee Favors Solar Farm for Hartwell Hill Property"].
  - Members agreed that answers submitted to The Citizen should be based strictly on information presented or discussed during meetings.
  - Ms. Boles will submit a reply to the reader question about solar farm glare and aviation.
  - Mr. Winkler volunteered to submit a reply to the reader comment about possible land uses in addition to that of a solar farm, including space for items such as permanent pickleball courts.
- An online poll will be sent to members to choose the next meeting date to review changes in the draft report.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Moonan moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Mathur seconded the motion. The motion was approved **4-0-0** in a voice roll call vote of Ms. Boles, Ms. Eggert, Ms. Mathur, and Mr. Moonan. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

