**Hanscom Area Towns Committee (HATS)**

**June 30, 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 Zoom video conference on June 30, 2021 at 7:00 pm as allowed by legislation (S.2475) extending the suspension of certain provisions of the Massachusetts 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:*** Colonel Katrina C. Stephens, Commander, Hanscom Air Force Base

***Public Participants:*** John Beatty, Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force- Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Anthony Berry, Bedford TV; Margaret Coppe, Lexington; Meg Deloner, Bedford; Robert Domnitz, Lincoln; Steve Gladstone, Lincoln; Sean Hagan, Bedford; Glen Kernusky, Hanscom Air Force Base; Chuck Paone, Hanscom Air Force Base

**Welcome and Announcements:**

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

**Guest: Colonel Katrina C. Stephens, Commander, Hanscom Air Force Base**

Colonel Stephens gave a high level update on the following topics in relation to Hanscom: COVID-19; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts underway at Hanscom-one of the first bases in the Command to stand up a specific office for DEI issues; status of the security upgrades for the Base and the Sartain entry gate (Route 2A entrance) reconfiguration project; partnership efforts with MIT/Lincoln Labs; collaboration with Minuteman High School on STEM related issues; Base Exchange & Services upgrades; Support to Military Families; planning for a 20th anniversary commemoration of 9/11; partnership with Space Force Base on Cape Cod; decision by the publisher of the Hansconian Newspaper to cease publication; any potential for a BRAC; reviewing policy on telework and in person requirements especially in regards to workspaces.

Ms. Escobedo (Concord) asked how the recent emergency preparedness exercises went. Col. Stephens indicated they went well and more will be planned for the future..

Mr. Dwyer (Lincoln) inquired about the status of the various construction projects and how the relocation of some staff back to base went. Col. Stephens stated the projects are all still moving forward and transition of additional staff to Base has gone well and the pandemic has taught them they can deliver the work product without needing to be in the building so as a result they will be looking at updating their telework policy.

Mr. Dwyer (Lincoln) asked Mr. Beatty if he sees any economic impact to the status of Hanscom with tighter budgets. Mr. Beatty indicated he doesn’t see a negative economic impact for Hanscom, he feels Hanscom will remain vital, is physically sound and the mission continues to grow.

Ms. Mitchell (Bedford) asked a question for Ms. Miller from Concord regarding environmental issues on Base and if there is a detailed approach for a reduction in reliance on fossil fuels. Col. Stephens indicated they are making changes to the way things have been done in the past across the Command and are actively engaged in reducing their carbon footprint in an eco-friendly way.

Mr. Dwyer (Lincoln) asked for an update on the Ruiz Gate (Hartwell Ave entrance) and Sartin Gate (Route 2A entrance) in relationship to how they are used and hours of operations. Col. Stephens indicated that the Sartin gate is able to handle more traffic including commercial traffic due to more land availability and following the renovation of the Sartin gate, the Ruiz gate will be updated/renovated.

Ms. Escobedo (Concord) asked if there are any housing struggles for people assigned to Hanscom. Col. Stephens indicated she had not heard of any and housing is determined by grade/rank and people from all branches of the Armed Services currently live in Base housing not just members of the USAF.

Ms. Mitchell (Bedford) asked a questions for Ms. Miller of Concord regarding non automobile options for persons traveling to Hanscom including walking trails, bike paths as a means to cut down on automobile traffic. Col Stephens indicated the USAF purview can only deal with walking trails and bike paths on Base outside the fence line would need to engage with the local communities.

Mr. Domnitz of Lincoln asked a clarifying question regarding the percentage of civilians and percentage of military living in on Base housing. Col Stephens indicted it is approximately 90% military and 10% civilians in Base housing representing all branches of the Armed Services.

Ms. Escobedo (Concord) asked if Colonel Stephens was still meeting with the HATS Town Managers. Col Stephens indicated they have been meeting over Zoom approximately once per month and hope to resume in person meetings in the near future.

**Update: Hanscom Field:**

Ms. Mitchell (Bedford) gave a brief summary of the recent Hanscom Field Advisory Commission meeting. MassPort has a construction project scheduled for August 2021 to repave the November taxiway. This project is anticipated to be less involved that the last repaving project and truck traffic (approx.. 400 round trips) will take place via Route 62 in Bedford. Margaret Coppe (Lexington) also stated that Massport will be issuing RFP’s for development on the Bedford side of the airport but the information available so far is still vague as to what is included.

**Municipal highlights-Lincoln:**

Mr. Dwyer reviewed with members on the most recent version of the Route 2A repaving project including objectives and priorities of the project, design elements and additional features needed. Mr. Dwyer stated that Lincoln will be sending a letter to MassDOT with their comments and asked for the other communities to do so as well. Mr. Dwyer told the members of Lincoln’s recent successful Memorial Day event that honored Gold Star families

**Municipal highlights-Concord:**

Ms. Escobedo stated that Concord’s Annual Town Meeting was held outside in June and was a very successful 2 ½ hour meeting. She also stated Concord had recently held their first hybrid in person Select Board meeting via zoom with members and staff present in the room and the public viewing from home.

**Municipal highlights-Lexington:**

Ms. Barry reported that the Lexington Town Manager had recently sent a letter to MassDOT regarding the Route 2A paving project; Lexington’s first Chief Diversity Officer would be starting in July 2021; Work on the 250th Patriots’ Day Celebrations has begun with the initial meeting of the Lexington Semiquincentennial Commission earlier in June; and the Select Board had recently approved a remote work policy or eligible Municipal employees.

**Municipal highlights-Bedford:**

Ms. Mitchell reports that Bedford’s outdoor Annual Town Meeting in May was successful and they have already begun planning for a November Special Town Meeting. Bedford continues it work on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion using the yearlong REMPA grant they were awarded by MAPC. Ms. Mitchell stated that several longtime Town employees had recently retired including the Town Engineer, Recycling Coordinator and they also have a new Finance Director. Bedford’s Town Manager has started a future of work committee to evaluate working options for employees (home, hybrid, in-office). Bedford recently received approval for their Cultural District from the State.

**Reorganization of the HATS Board:**

The annual reorganization of the HATS board takes place at the June meeting and as such, Ms. Barry (Lexington) made the following motion: That the Town of Concord will assume Chair of the Hanscom Area Towns Committee (HATS) as of July 1, 2021 for one year; second by Mr. Dwyer (Lincoln). Passed by a roll call vote 4-0 Mitchell -yes; Escobedo -yes; Dwyer-yes; Barry (Lexington) -yes.

The members thanked Ms. Mitchell for her leadership of HATS over the past year and wished Ms. Escobedo well in her upcoming year.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Ms. Escobedo (Concord) stated she would reach out to members over the summer with proposed meeting dates. She stated she is looking for guest speakers & topics as well for future meetings.

**Minutes-February 2021:** Will be on the September 2021 agenda for approval. Mr. Dwyer will post the draft February minutes to the HATS website pending approval.

**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 8:39 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Suzie Barry, Lexington Select Board Member*