**Hanscom Area Twns Committee**

**DRAFT meeting minutes**

**November 21, 2019**

Attending: HATS Selectmen Jonathan Dwyer, Lincoln, chair; Linda Escobedo, Concord; Mike Rosenberg, Bedford. Other HATS members: Margaret Coppe, Lexington, Mark Siegenthaler, Bedford Plannng Board. Also attending: Jessica Casserly and Charles Paone, Hanscom Air Force Base public information officers; Col. Chad Ellsworth, commander, 66th Air Base Group; Anthony Gallagher, Massachusetts Port Authority community relations; Bedford Selectman Emily Mitchell.

Col. Ellsworth spoke of Hanscom’s growth, with a worforce of some 10,000, including Lincoln Laboratory. Construction projects continue all over the base, much of it recapitalized infrastructure, one of the colonel’s priorities. Construction project value is more than $500 million. There are more than 150 buildings on the base, with an average age of 43 years. A construction contract for the $22.5 million Lincoln Laboratory semiconductor lab is scheduled to be awarded in March, with completion scheduled for May 2022. A $220 million engineering prototype facility at Lincoln Lab is scheduled for design in fiscal year 2021, construction awarded in 2022 and completion in 2025. An $11 million contract for expansion of the Sartain Gate is planned to start in June 2020 and finish in 2022. This work will have an impact on area traffic. The colonel noted that this work has been invited before, but it has been hard to find a contractor for a job this small.

The $32 million cogeneration plant is almost complete, the colonel said, awaiting final certification from the gas company. The facility will generate 4.6 megawatts of electricity and help power the Base steam plant. The project will save $3.2 million a year in energy costs.

In July the federal Defense Contract Management Agency, employing 300, moved to Hanscom from Boston. Its building was renovated for $15 million. A new 66-room dormitory for junior airmen opened near the end of 2018. Officials just cut the ribbon for the new primary school, Col. Ellsworth said. The $37 million project was finished ahead of schedule. The new middle school opened two years ago. Also, a current $2 million renovation will allow the 300-worker Army Corps of Engineers office to move to the base from Concord. The base service station will be moving to the area of the commissary and exchange, an environmental upgrade.

The Hanscom mission is booming, the colonel said, and “I don’t see Hanscom going anywhere anytime soon.” There actually is a need for additional space off base to accommodate an increased workeforce plus swing workers. In answer to Selectman Dwyer’s comment about likely traffic congestion when Sartain Gate is closed, the colonel said there will be a traffic mitigation plan. The search pit now at Sartain can be relocated, he noted. He added that Hanscom is conferring with town officials, the National Park Service and Massacusetts Port Authority regarding oither points of access to the base.

Col. Ellsworth said cultivating relationships with the contiguous towns continues to be a priority, and he is making a concerted effort to partner. He cited monthly breakfasts with town managers, the opening in July of the Patriot Golf Course in Bedford, and partnerships with off-base child-care providers. He also noted efforts to provide credentials for food deliveries from off-base restaurants. There are 2,600 family members in 730 residences on base, he said (including 300 Air Force units, 165 Army and 85 Coast Guard). Hanscom’s senior leaders all look forward to serving in this area because of the wealth of knowledge available, the colonel said. Select Board Member Escobedo said it’s hard to understand why Col. Ellsworth’s position is on a two-year rotation.

In response to Selectman Rosenberg’s question about dealing with area traffic congestion, Col. Ellsworth noted efforts in the workforce to promote vanpools, bike-to-work, telework agreements. staggered schedules and mass transit. He noted that Hanscom is part of a team working with State Rep. Michelle Ciccolo of Lexington on possible traffic mitigation legislation.

Col. Ellsworth noted that the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, located at Hanscom and other installations, recently received the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award. The mission is one of command, control and communication, he explained.

**Hanscom Field**

Mr. Gallagher noted that the next meeting of the Massport Community Advisory Committee is scheduled for Jan. 9.

**Municipal highlights**

Selectman Rosenberg said Bedford again will have a two-level tax classification, and fiscal 2020 tax rates reflect a modest increase. The selectmen approved an application for establishment of a Bedford Cultural District. Selectman Dwyer said Lincoln town meeting approved water system improvements. About 150 people attended the annual State of the Town session and learned about proposed zoning changes in the area around the railroad station.

Select Board member Escobedo said zoning changes on the Concord spring warrant likely will include accessory dwelling units.Mr. Siegenthaler said the accessory dwelling units plan defeated at town meeting in Bedford were detached. Accessory units have been allowed within the main structure for years. Much of the opposition to the proposal was the absence of a special permit requirement that would have provided input from neighbors. He said the Planning Board is evaluating the outcome.

Select Board Member Escobedo also mentioned a major cyber security issue and the importance of having protocols in response. A mixed-income housing proposal is in the town pipeline, she said, acknowledging the demand for lower-priced housing. In answer to Selectman Dwyer’s question, Select Boad Member Escobedo said Concord has hired a director of tourism. Ms. Coppe noted that Lexington officials are moving forward with plans for improvements to Bedford Street in the Hartwell Avenue area. She added that a committee has recommended against a crematory at Westview Cemetery. She also explained a proposal to rezone a large house on Bedford Street to allow 13 apartments of between 600 and 900 square feet. Selectman Mitchell said her colleagues and School Committee members will convene to choose a candidate to fill a School Committee vacancy.

Selectman Rosenberg acknowledged the passing of former State Sen. Susan Fargo of Lincoln and praised her many contributions to her district.

Future meeting topics include housing options in January and Lisa Wieland, Massport executive director, in February.

The minutes of October 22, 2019 were approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.