

2 Page Road
Bedford, MA 01730

October 24, 2023

Matthew Hanson, Town Manager
Town Hall – 10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Bedford Select Board
Town Hall – 10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Subj: 139 The Great Road (139 TGR) – Utility Poles & Buried Wires

Mr. Hanson & Select Board Members,

I need to express my concern regarding the shallowly buried utility wires and the utility poles across the frontage of 139 TGR, an issue that I raised at Town Meeting a year ago. After attending the Fire Station consultant's presentation to the Historic District Commission this month, I believe that a potentially serious public safety hazard may exist. The poles were absent from the consultant's streetscape images, and I have neither seen nor heard of any action being taken regarding this issue.

When the Great Road from Walsh to Hillside was widened to provide a center turning lane, all the utility poles were in the new public way and had to be removed. The overhead wiring was buried along that section of The Great Road. All the wires were brought back overhead to utility poles from large vaults under The Great Road at 139 TGR, and the wires are shallowly buried between the vaults and the poles along the frontage of 139 TGR.

The site is not usable as a fire station until the driveways and curb cuts are widened and regraded, or the entire frontage is regraded and paved (Option 2), to allow fire apparatus access to the site. Such actions seem very likely to impact some shallowly buried high voltage electric transmission wires, standard voltage electric transmission wires, telephone wires, fiber optic wires, cable TV wires, traffic control wires, fire alarm wires, or other wires. The utility poles also obstruct the apparatus bays (Option 2).

Federal and State regulations require notification before excavating or grading to promote public safety and to avoid costly damage to underground utilities. Digsafe is a system that was created to coordinate the process. DigSafe notes that most states require a minimum of an 18-inch Tolerance Zone (buffer) on each side of any underground utilities. Before using powered

equipment within a Tolerance Zone, you must “verify the location, type, size, direction-of-run and the depth of the facility”.

In order to prevent damage to underground utilities resulting in a public safety incident, it is critical that the locations of all underground wires along the frontage of 139 TGR be established as soon as possible, so that a determination can be made of what corrective actions, if any, are needed. If another costly multi-year wire burial project is required for relocation of shallowly buried underground wires and the utility poles to enable site access by Fire Department apparatus, construction and operation of a viable fire station at that site would be delayed by years, if ever, compared to construction at any other site in Bedford.

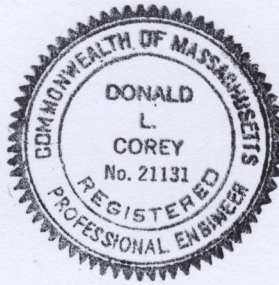
Respectfully,

Donald Corey

Donald Corey

Reg. Prof. Eng.

Bedford Selectman 1974-1977



CC;

Fire Station Building Committee

Interim Fire Chief Paul Sheehan

Historic District Commission