

June 5, 2024

State Senator Mike Barrett
State Representative Ken Gordon
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

Via Federal Express and E-mail

Dear Sen. Barrett and Rep. Gordon,

Next week's vote to finance the new Bedford Fire Station is irresponsible. Ample grounds for that charge will be found in the attached "Analysis of the New Fire Station Site Selection and Public Process." Voters will go to Town Meeting on Tuesday to cast a vote on the \$32 million project while having no knowledge of how far the selection process deviated from accepted norms and practices.

Town officials and their surrogates managed and throttled information from the start, which distorted everything that followed. This examination forcefully bears that out. The historic district controversy was decided on February 21, 2024, but the fight for honest and responsive government goes on.

As long as 10,000 voters are in the dark about the compelling reasons to oppose funding the project, democratic principles are being corrupted and Bedford residents are being defrauded.

Many good people with the best of motives have been drawn into the effort to move this project forward. The air of inevitability has always been its powerful rationale. But looking into the following alleged violations will show that there is an ethical cloud over the entire matter that no amount of partisan smooth talk and deflection can dispel.

Credible allegations that the Town violated its statutory and/or fiduciary obligations can't be dismissed. The most serious breaches include:

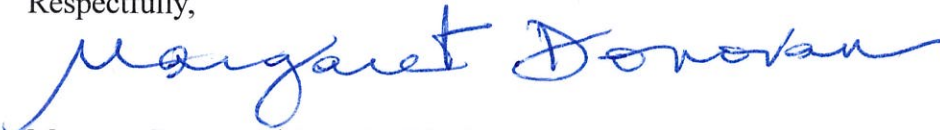
- * Multiple violations of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.
- * Devising a strategy to intimidate the appointed members of the Historic District Commission (HDC) into violating their oaths of office and nullifying the mandates of a Legislative Act.
- * Material misrepresentations and omissions to Town Committees which were then factored into the Committees' 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Recommendations.
- * Using a declaration of uniqueness in the Central Register to undermine municipal transparency.
- * Material misrepresentations and omissions to Bedford residents by Town spokespersons prior to Town Meeting.
- * Material misrepresentations and omissions by Town officials at Town Meeting.
- * Material misrepresentations and omissions before a Superior Court justice.

The sad irony is that without the completely predictable length of time spent trying to force the HDC's compliance, and the many complications related to the site, it is quite possible that a new firehouse would already be rising on one of the other more feasible locations, quite possibly costing far less.

I cherish my hometown and share the frustration of every Bedfordite who wants to see the town's outstanding firefighters in the outstanding facility they deserve. But I am also reassured and inspired by public statements of the Fire Department rank-and-file and their representatives that what they want above all else is to get the project right. That is truly what matters most.

I therefore hope you will refer the contents of this examination to the Office of the Inspector General – because the citizens of Bedford and their first responders deserve an honest, above-board process – not one mired in secrecy, manipulation, and contempt for the law.

Respectfully,



Margaret Donovan | SaveOurBlock.org
186 Pinehurst Avenue, 6E
New York, NY 10033

Attached: Analysis of the New Fire Station Site Selection and Public Process
 Open Letter to the Town of Bedford 4/24/2024

Copied: Matthew J. Hanson, Bedford Town Manager
 Bedford Fire Chief James Bailey
 Wayne Braverman, *The Bedford Citizen*