

September 29, 2025

The Town of Bedford Select Board
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Dear Mr. Mortenson, Mr. Brosol, Mr. Parker, Ms. Malone, and Mr. Hanegan:

When I wrote to you on August 25th, I hoped you would take to heart my urgings to discuss the information I have shared in an open Board meeting. On Friday, I read the third Board meeting agenda posted since then that makes no mention of what has been brought to your attention. That tells me that you intend to ignore your fiduciary duty to give Bedford's citizens information that they are entitled to know and to evaluate. I am astonished but not surprised.

You all have received the evidence that I've been submitting since the Spring, which is not based on conjecture but is replete with documented facts of irregularities (at best) regarding the siting of the new fire station. And yet, since it has not been added it to the agenda, you have had no means to discuss the critical findings among yourselves. How is it possible to faithfully serve the people and yet deliberately ignore evidence of wrongdoing? Where is the respect for "transparency"?

The Town just trained more than 100 members of Bedford's Boards and Committees on their duties, including the ins and outs of the Open Meeting Law. Isn't preventing vitally important information from ever making it to a Board meeting the ultimate defeat of the Open Meeting Law?

I have been explicit all along about what I was looking into. No doubt it was far more information than the Select Board wanted, but it was important to keep the members informed of my efforts. As long as I was researching the matter, I didn't expect it to be discussed in a Board Meeting. But once I had reported the results of that research in a complaint to the Attorney General's Office I saw no way the information it brought to light could properly be kept from the public. How naïve.

The decision of the Attorney General's Office in June to not investigate Sarah Stanton's evident abuse of power was not a finding of fact, as you know. It did nothing to diminish the importance of sharing the factual basis of the complaint with the people of Bedford. Particularly because of the scope of the expenditure and the damage to the integrity of the Historic District that is being done.

Since you could not discuss it among yourselves outside of an open Board Meeting, I did actually think that you might schedule it – as the Fire Station Building Committee did after being copied in on the complaint – even though, as Chair Jeff Cohen explained when we appeared to audit the session, discussing the information was not within their "purview".

That was clear, and the documentation was only distributed to them as information they should have. But it is squarely in your purview and, especially after I wrote the letters of July 22nd and August 25th, I dared to hope that it would make it onto your agenda – since I can't understand how anyone could believe that there is a sound basis for refusing to explore the problems raised by the

findings. To ignore that betrays a lack of confidence in public support for the project. If you do think there is a good rationale for maintaining a virtual embargo around the information, then an acknowledgment of what I have shared with the Town and why you think it is irrelevant is past due.

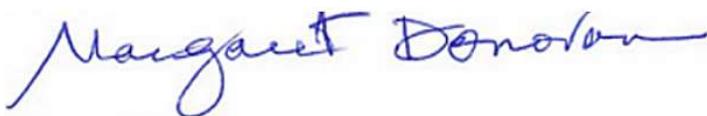
The “Select Board Handbook” states that “to resolve problems that have been brought to any Board member’s attention by a Town resident or by any other means, the member should work in coordination with the Town Manager and, if appropriate, also bring the matter to the attention of the full Board.” Please explain how that directive is being observed when it comes to this matter. Until last month, I was so focused on the toxic administration of Sarah Stanton that I failed to consider how damaging the Select Board’s apparent groupthink has been in seeking to advance a terribly flawed project *at all costs* without the fully informed oversight of the town’s people.

The byword of the SaveOurBlock.org site is: *It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see...*

- *What I see* is the Town’s overwrought manipulation of Town Meeting in 2022 to satisfy a rogue official’s rogue agenda.
- *What I see* is the success of that agenda because other officials fear that trusting the population with the facts would mean admitting bad mistakes were made and ducking calls to correct them.
- *What I see* is my mother and Mrs. Brown delivering the town’s historic district petition to the Statehouse, full of confidence that it would protect the town from caving into the sort of short-sighted pressure that had already done so much damage to Bedford’s unique heritage.
- *What I don’t see* is the gracious property I looked at for fifty years through the window of my parents’ real estate office at 138 The Great Road – always admiring how uniquely situated it was and thinking, later on, how sad that the property and grounds were not being lovingly maintained.
- *And what I hope I will never see* is a massive fire station in its place, changing the character of the town forever – and for no good reason, since there were and there are far better sites.

Whatever follows, I have made sure that there will be an unimpeachable record of how far off the rails self-government can go when the Open Meeting Law is broken and a conspiracy of silence prevails.

Sincerely,



Margaret Donovan

Copies to: Matthew J. Hanson, Town Manager | Fire Chief Jim Bailey | Captain Mark Sullivan | Lieutenant Mark Daly | Captain Scott Ricker | Captain John Daniels | Fire Station Building Committee Chair Jeff Cohen | Bedford Historic District Commissioners | Elizabeth Hacala | President, *The Bedford Citizen*