

October 30, 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:

I was home last week and drove past the construction site more than once. What no doubt looks like progress to you looks like a thin veneer over a tragic error to me. Because I know what it is hidden beneath the surface, and – by every ethical standard – Bedford’s residents should, too.

Ten years from now, no one will care how long it took to get the new station built – all that will matter is how well it serves the needs of the community. I recently rewatched parts of the 2022 ATM video, including by veteran firefighter Tom Piccirillo’s courageous plea to make a substation part of the solution. It is a sad irony that the rallying cry to “Listen to the Firefighters” is ignored by officials whenever the subject of a substation comes up.

Why isn’t the Board urgently prioritizing an idea that a number of first responders have said is needed now – instead of subscribing to a litany of bogus reasons why it can’t be done? Who knows better than they do? And who cares more?

Why be satisfied with only maintaining existing response times when so many of them can be improved by turning the current project into a strategic overall solution? Isn’t it quite likely that spending \$40 million at the Bacon property will actually push a substation even further into the future? Don’t you think there will be consequences?

The voters at that 2022 Town Meeting were told that “139 The Great Road is the best and most viable option to fulfill our obligations as a community to protect the life, health, and safety of our residents and property.” That may have been true in Sarah Stanton’s contrived universe but not in the world of facts.

Don Corey reminded the voters that not many years ago Town Meeting approved the purchase of a vacant property for \$6 million – even though that it was valued at far less – because it was worth it to prevent Princeton Properties from developing the land and destroying the surrounding Concord Road values.

Why am I writing about this again now? Because I believe that it must be addressed while it can still be corrected and know of no way to get it before the people of Bedford. But you have sworn to serve and protect their best interests. So, what else can I do but trust you to take this to heart? In addition, my website is a chronicle of this sad chapter in Bedford’s history and will remain online long into the future.

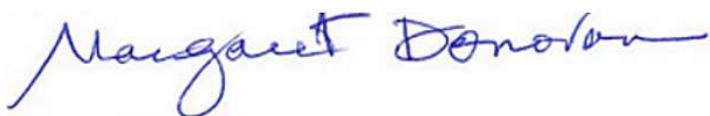
The townspeople are being tremendously shortchanged at 139 The Great Road but you can still turn a consolation prize into a win-win by putting aside the preconceived notions and excuses that keep a substation in limbo and *make real lives at real risk part of a real solution.*

- Repair and upgrade the current station as an EMS hub with one fire truck and adapt the new station specs as much as possible to a site at the other end of Great Road.
- Bracketing The Great Road with ambulances – much like Lexington’s configuration – would enhance response times to many areas of town, including the substandard times to the Northeast Corridor, while not reducing response times to any of the others.
- The entrance into Bedford would be greatly improved if an impressive BFD headquarters replaces the Indian restaurant building and the car wash on a much more nicely shaped 63,000 sq. ft. lot – where it would really fit in, instead of being shoe-horned into an historic block.
- The restaurant and coffee bar would be easy to relocate and given the ever-present For Lease sign in the storefront between them, the owner of that land would likely be reasonable. The car wash owners would do just as well or better in the no man’s land corner of the shopping center parking lot. And drawing people into the shopping center lot should make its owners happy.
- Pay for the land by selling the current site – very possibly at a profit since that property has much more potential and flexibility now that the protected carriage house is no longer there – which would then be developed appropriately with the HDC’s oversight. And the signature wall could be lovingly restored.
- First responders would finally have a first-class firehouse, a first-class location, and a first-class substation for not that much more time or money than would be spent at the wrong site and with the cost of a substation still in the future.

And given how badly the project poisoned the community well, this solution would heal the hard feelings.

The confident, optimistic spirit that built the Empire State Building in fourteen months is in the air whenever we look for ways to make things happen, instead of bemoaning why they cannot be done. It costs nothing to keep one’s eyes and mind open to what is possible – while closing them can be very expensive. I urge you to seriously ask yourselves if it may not be too late to do the right thing after all.

With my best wishes.



Margaret Donovan

Copies to: Matthew J. Hanson | Chief Jim Bailey | Captain Mark Sullivan | Lieutenant Mark Daly | Captain Scott Ricker | Captain John Daniels | Committee Chair Jeff Cohen | Bedford Historic District Commissioners | Elizabeth Hacala and Bill Fonda, *The Bedford Citizen*