

Town of Bedford
Historic District Commission Minutes
April 5, 2022

A meeting of the Bedford Historic District Commission was held on Tuesday, April 5, at the Town Meeting Room at BCTV at 10 Meetinghouse Road, Bedford.

7:00 PM Call to Order

Present: Chris Allen (Chair), Bill Carter (Town Council alternate member), Kelly Tope (alternate member), Lori Radke (Town Council member), Joe Vaccarello (member), Steven MacDougall (member), John Quintal (Planning Board liaison), Jillian Harris (Assistant Planning Director, staff liaison).

Absent: Lisa Muskat (Vice Chair).

Chair Allen welcomed Bill Carter to the Commission as a Town Council alternate member and appointed Ms. Tope to sit in tonight for Lisa Muskat, Vice Chair.

AGENDA REVIEW:

Ms. Harris reviewed the agenda. Ms. Harris said tonight's agenda under New Business we have a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Historic District Regulations. These amendments will clarify the installation of Solar Energy Systems is an activity that requires a Certificate of Approval, and it will add a new Section 285-28 for Solar Energy Systems. This outlines design and construction requirements. Also under New Business, we have the Town of Bedford with a request for construction of a parking lot expansion at the Bedford Public Library located at 3 Meetinghouse Road and 15 Bell Hill Road, Lots 20-1 & 20-7, Zoned R&A. Then there's a set of minutes from March 1st as well.

MOTION: Mr. Vaccarello moves to accept the agenda. Ms. Radke seconds the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. MOTION carries. Agenda is approved.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

1. The Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Historic District Regulations. The amendments will clarify that the installation of Solar Energy Systems is an activity that requires a Certificate of Approval and add a new Section 285-28 - Solar Energy Systems, that outlines design and construction requirements. The complete text of the amendments is on file at the Town Clerk's office and is available on the town website.

Chair Allen said we'll begin by opening up...

Ms. Elaine Tefft states: Elaine Tefft, 7 Meetinghouse Road. Point of Order. The last time I saw the agenda, it only had the parking lot on it. It didn't have the change in the... and I wondered if there was a paper copy of the changes that were proposed under the first thing that you said. I couldn't understand it because she reads very fast. So, is it possible that I could have a copy of that? [Member of the audience hands a copy to Ms. Tefft]. Thank you very much. Chair Allen said I think we also have them on soft copy, so we'll be bringing them up on the screen, if necessary, throughout the meeting. Ms. Tefft replied I'm nearsighted but thank you for the compliment. [laughter].

Chair Allen continued so with that, we will go ahead and open up the first item here on the agenda. That is the discussion of the amendments to the Historic District Regulations as they relate to Solar Energy Systems. I will ask Jillian to provide a bit of a preamble here as to what we're discussing. Ms. Harris said yes. Tonight, the Commission is holding a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Regulations, Chapter 285 of the Bedford Code. It includes design and siting standards for solar energy systems in the Historic District. It starts with an amendment to Section 285-21, and it clarifies the installation, addition, or modification of a solar energy system is an activity that requires approval. Then it also includes a new Section 285-28 related to the design and construction requirements for solar energy systems. I can go through those for the benefit of the public here. It recognizes that solar energy systems can allow for significant improvements to historic properties and finds that it's in the public interest to encourage the use of solar energy systems. It clarifies the purpose of the regulation is to allow for the installation of these systems in the least visible location possible, and to encourage the use of solar energy without compromising the historic value of the structure or site. It also has additional regulations that the Commission will review when they are looking at these applications, and it clarifies that a Certificate of Approval is required. It states that solar energy systems shall be designed, sized and located to minimize their impact on the character of an historic building and surrounding landscape. They shall be placed so as to avoid obscuring significant features or adversely affecting the perception of the overall character of the property. They shall be located so as to minimize visual impacts and ground-mounted systems shall be located to the side or rear of the principal structure and so as to not be visible from abutting properties and the public right-of-way to the greatest extent possible. Consideration shall be given to installing roof-mounted solar energy systems on an addition or secondary structure where it's applicable, and to avoid altering the historic structure. The Commission may require reasonable screening and buffering of ground-mounted solar energy systems. The required screening may consist of existing vegetation or installation of site-specific screening such as evergreen landscaping, suitable fencing or a combination thereof. Installations shall use the least invasive method feasible to attach the system to a historic roof such that it avoids damage to significant features and historic materials, and it can be removed, and the original character easily restored. In order to minimize visual impacts, colors of equipment and assemblies shall either be muted or match nearby materials and colors. The panels shall be positioned to minimize glare onto neighboring properties and rights-of-way. Roof-mounted systems on pitched roofs shall be on the same plane as the roof and positioned so as to be in the least visible location. And finally, all supplementary equipment and supply lines associated with the systems shall be placed in inconspicuous locations and/or concealed from view with architectural elements or screening. That's a summary of what is proposed.

Chair Allen said thank you, Jillian. I think over the past year or so, we've seen a number of solar array requests come forward before the Historic District Commission. So, I think these amendments are really focused on providing a level of clarity and reduce ambiguity as those requests continue to come forward. That's really what we sought to do with these suggested amendments, but I'll open it up to the

members of the Commission, if anyone has any questions or comments to begin here. Ms. Radke said Mr. Chair, very nice job on the amendments. I think they're very clear, succinct, and I think it really does give some guidance to the Board as we move forward—especially when we get a lot of applicants for solar. Well done. Chair Allen said thank you, Lori. Are there any other questions or comments? [none]. With that, we will go ahead and move to the public portion of the conversation here.

So, I'd like to invite members of the public to approach one of the microphones, introduce yourself, and then you're welcome to ask your question or state your comment please.

Mr. David Clark states: Hi, David Clark, 62 Bedford Center Road. Thank you very much for allowing me to have mine installed a year ago. It's been great. Just one comment, and that is that the panels match the roof color. By nature, those panels are dark so, unless you have a black shingled roof, that's going to be a tough one. I also applaud that you want to have it follow the slope of the roof. I think that's a really good idea. You see a lot of these are canted up to get a better position, a better angle, to the sun, but they're black. I think that's just a given. That's the whole solar thing. So, you might want to investigate that in your research. The other thing is, you say to screen with evergreens or something. Obviously, if there's an evergreen that's going to grow up, it's going to cover the array or the roof, that's a non-starter as well. Chair Allen said sure. I think the thought there was if there's some standoff between those, so that the angles of the sun are still going to work out for it to be a useful tool for the homeowner, not certainly right up against it where it's going to interfere. Mr. Clark added what you might consider is if there's a standalone array, which is pretty popular, that maybe do some setback requirements or something like that. Chair Allen asked setback from the array? Mr. Clark replied from the neighbors. Chair Allen said okay. Mr. Clark added just setback to—they don't make noise or anything—but they are an eyesore. But maybe a setback just like there are setbacks for buildings. Ms. Harris said they'll have to meet all the zoning regulations for setbacks. Mr. Clark said okay. Good. Thank you. Chair Allen said thank you, Mr. Clark. Are there any other comments or questions from the public? [none]. Not hearing any other comments, we will close the public hearing portion of this item.

I will ask for a motion from the members of the Commission on the proposed amendments. Ms. Radke said just a quick question. Mr. Clark does bring up a good point regarding the color. Is there any way we can change that or reword that to maybe best color to—I'm not sure. Ms. Harris said I think there's some room for the Commission to work with them on that one. It states that to minimize visual impacts, colors shall either be muted or match nearby materials and colors. I think that there's probably some room in the language for the Commission to work with individual applicants on that one. Ms. Radke said okay. Chair Allen clarified on an application-by-application basis, right? Ms. Harris said yes. Ms. Radke said okay. I just want to make sure that's understood. Mr. Clark added some frames—the black is the black, and that's the solar panel. My son works in a solar company, so I know a little bit about this. You have frames that frame the actual panels that hold the panels. Some of them are silver, and that's an eyesore. If they're black and black, that's less visually intrusive. So, maybe you, Lori, maybe you consider talking about the frames and the brackets and all that stuff—the hardware. Ms. Radke said okay. Thank you for that.

Chair Allen asked Jillian, do you mind just scrolling down to the language as it currently relates to the color? Ms. Harris said yes. I was just looking at it. We're talking about 8? In order to minimize visual impacts? Ms. Radke said assemblies—so assemblies would probably consider the outline there. Ms. Tope said and muted would—black. Ms. Radke read muted or shall match—muted? Okay, match nearby materials and colors, minimize the glare, okay. I think that might be workable. But it does include assembly, so my guess it would be the outside of the solar panels. That's what you were referring to, I

would assume. Okay. Chair Allen said okay. Thank you for that. With that, we will go ahead and I will open it up again to members of the Commission if anyone wants to make a motion.

MOTION: Mr. Vaccarello moves that the Historic District Commission adopt the proposed amendments to Section 285 and to add Sections 285-21-J, as presented. Mr. MacDougall seconds the motion. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. MOTION carries.

2. Town of Bedford (Applicant & Owner) – Request for construction of a parking lot expansion at the Bedford Public Library, located at 3 Meetinghouse Road & 15 Bell Hill Road, Lots 20-1 & 20-7, Zoned R&A.

Chair Allen said with that we will go ahead and move on to our second point of business here and that is the Town of Bedford request for construction of a parking lot expansion at the public library. So, I will invite the representative of the Town to come forward and share a bit about this application.

Jeff Foote states: Good evening, Mr. Chairman. Jeff Foote here, Public Works, and other members of the Committee. The purpose of my visit tonight is to share the preliminary plans to expand the Town Library parking lot located at 3 Meetinghouse Road. The proposed plan is to double the amount of parking from the existing condition of 60 spaces to 120 parking spaces. The Town Council has approved the use of approximately \$250 thousand dollars of American Rescue Plan monies the Town received as part of COVID-19 relief. In addition, the Town has in hand \$150 thousand dollars in capital reserve funds for the project. The plan introduces one-way traffic into the library for the circulation. So, basically it's a counter-clockwise circulation pattern. All the spaces in the existing parking lot will become one way and loop around and then exit where folks exit today. Again, it is one way vehicle circulation. We think it's going to improve the efficiency of the activities entering and exiting the facility. It will also improve safety. To ease congestion, this plan—I'm going to try to zoom in—so, this plan that we're proposing introduces a delivery parking area for book deliveries, etc, at the library. At the same time, that this occurs, the two book bins will be relocated to the opposite side of the existing island. The thought is if someone comes in, we don't want backups to continue to occur as they do today. So, two things will happen: we will add the pull-off for delivery vehicles, and then we'll get vehicles around to the opposite side of the island to drop their books. That should prevent any spill out into Bedford Center Road and/or Meetinghouse Road.

The proposed plan includes upgrades for paving, closed drainage, curbing and a sidewalk where the existing parking lot is today. The area will also include a new green space that includes an area to accommodate a 20 by 10 tent for Summer functions at the library. This was requested by members of the library staff and the trustees, if I recall correctly. Existing trees and shrubbery in this existing parking lot area will be trimmed, removed as needed, to improve lighting where there currently is overgrown trees and shrub and other flora, also, to accommodate the new parking spots. The proposed area where we're gaining the majority of the parking is located in this area here which is on an adjacent parcel—an adjacent, vacant parcel of town-owned land. This area as well, the area will be paved. Closed drainage will be introduced. There will be a walkway down the middle of it for access to vehicles and the library. Again, in this area, which I think what I'm hearing from the previous conversation—the Town is concerned about the curb appeal and what these improvements are going to look like. So, today, in this location at the top of the parking lot, there are 3 or 4 or 5 spruce trees. DPW cut one down last year because it was compromised. If you take a walk over, I think you'll agree the other spruce trees in that location are compromised and soon will be cut down whether this project moves forward or not. The other areas of concern with trees and visual effects is between the proposed parking lot and the existing

parking lot, there's a row of mature maple trees, I think. And there's a stone wall so, as part of this, our intention is to retain every mature tree we can and then point the existing rock wall up as part of the construction. Down at the lower end of the parking lot is really where the majority of the tree clearing is going to occur. You can see in this area there's a green line where the limits are shown for tree clearing. There will be some tree clearing at the lower limits of the project. Again, this is far away from the public way, and frankly, when this parking lot is built, as you are aware that the existing parking lot slopes away from Meetinghouse Road more than gradually—moderately, I would say in a 5- to 6-percent slope area. This proposed parking lot will do the same. So, today, if you drove past the library, often there are cars parked in this location here. Really, if there are vehicles parked there under the proposed condition, you're likely not to see any vehicles parked in the new parking area. You might see the tops of some cars, but nothing dramatic. Also, there is some additional tree clearing in this area. There's a few, what I would classify as scrub oak trees, and those are near the adjacent property at 7 Meetinghouse Road—the yellow house and barn located here. So, there's a few scrub oaks we're going to remove in this area, but the lion's share of the tree clearing/trimming will occur at the rear of the property at this location. The Town is scheduled to attend the monthly Library Trustees' Meeting on April 8th. Some of the items for discussion, as we move forward from preliminary into final design will include discussion about the landscape plan, condition assessment of the existing subsurface disposal system, consideration of EV-designated parking areas, overhead lighting and types of overhead lighting, and then curbing. The existing parking lot, I think, has 3 different types of curbing. It has granite curbing. It has asphalt berm, and it has asphalt curb. So, we'd likely—we'll see where the funds are—but I think the desire, being in the Historic District, we would really shoot for granite curbing provided we have the funding. So, we are all aware of inflationary measures today, but our goal is to complete this and construct this with the monies that we have on hand. With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions to the best of my ability.

Chair Allen said thank you, Mr. Foote. I'll ask a couple questions, if I can, to get us started. Firstly, if you could, can you help me understand that drop-off area right at the front there? Am I to understand that's really just kind-of 2 designated parking spots? Mr. Foote said no. So, I think, it will be signed saying 'delivery vehicles only, tow zone.' I don't know if we'll do that, but we have to instill some fear in folks otherwise it will be abused. So, this area here is strictly for library personnel. The State Library drops off books as well as others, delivery-type activities that occur, UPS trucks and whatnot. So, there's always a pitch point, as I'm told, in this area. By designating a spot for that, that eliminates the delivery trucks from occupying the entrance of the Library. By moving the book bins to the opposite side of the island, if someone was to come in and stop and drop off a book, they're basically impeding someone leaving the library, which is a lot better than impeding something coming off a public way. That's the intent of that. Chair Allen said thank you. I'll ask 2 more if I can. You walked us through the tree trimming and the various tree removal that's going to happen in this project. Is there any sort of replacement planting that's going on? Mr. Foote responded at this time, the Department of Public Works and the Library Director are working toward that. I'm not sure, based on where we are today that it will be significant. But, if there's a desire and there's funding, then we'll accommodate whatever those wants and needs are. Our intent is to make this look attractive for the community. Chair Allen said understood, thank you. One last question. You spoke about the dollar value of the monies that are set aside for this project. In terms of schedule or timeline, can you give a sense of what that timeline could look like? Mr. Foote replied the reason that I'm sitting here with a preliminary—more than a conceptual plan—and not a finished plan is because there maybe an opportunity in the next several weeks to start this project. So, we have other road construction projects going on, and we may need to bring some fill from one of those projects into the proposed parking area. We really would like to take advantage if there's any cost savings with that. If you are looking for a schedule and a completion date, I'll say

October 1st, but everything's very fluid. Chair Allen said sure. I appreciate that. I was more looking for just a length of time whether or not it started at a particular date. Mr. Foote said honestly, we have unit contract prices with a couple of prime contractors that we have under contract. It's really going to be about fitting this into their schedule. As I mentioned about the fill, they may construct the proposed area offline while they have availability and not come back for a month. So, I don't want to make any promises that I can't keep. I'm trying to be as vague as I can for a good bureaucrat. [laughter]. Chair Allen said fair enough. Thanks for entertaining the questions. I'll open it up to the rest of the Commission here. Lori? Ms. Radke said I have a couple questions. Thank you, Mr. Foote, for attending the meeting. A couple things—on the top parking lot there, you have 2 parking spaces available? Mr. Foote said correct. Ms. Radke continued would there be any thought to eliminating those 2 and making it more like put a bench there or something? It just seems out of place to have those 2 there. It would be nice to have more green space there. Just a thought. Then you really can't see, when you're coming from an historic point of view, you don't see any cars in that area except for the ADA handicapped spaces on the other side. Just a thought. I know it eliminates 2 spots, but. Mr. Foote said we looked at numerous different alternatives, and we could have probably gotten to 130 spaces. But we listened to the stakeholders, and we have a plan now that the Trustees will be happy with. We still have a few items to tweak out if that's what the Trustees desire, I don't think—I disagree with it, but I also don't think that you want to attract a gathering there. Ms. Radke said it's a library. Mr. Foote said well, that's why we have the space behind that's quiet, behind the library that's proposed to be introduced. Ms. Radke said okay. Can I ask one more question, Mr. Chair? Chair Allen replied please. Ms. Radke asked the proposed parking lot in the area that is abutting the 7 Meetinghouse Road, is there any thought of putting some screening there? Trees? Mr. Foote said yes, absolutely. Ms. Radke said okay, good. I think that's important that we do that. Mr. Foote said there's very limited screening there today. There's the fence and, like I said, there's some scrub oak and some other low-value trees or bushes. But there isn't much today. Certainly, I think that is something that Department has always been strong about is introducing landscaping that's appropriate. Ms. Radke said that's all I had, Mr. Chair. Chair Allen said thank you.

Ms. Tope said I have a question. My question was involving the 7 Meetinghouse property as well. Do you approximately know, or could you wave over the property lines? It looks like it's not straight. It looks like those lots must be angled. Mr. Foote said sure, if you'd just allow me. [Ms. Harris assists Mr. Foote in finding the correct document to display]. Mr. Foote said you can see this is the yellow house. This is the Library. This is the exit road out. There's some angled parking, and you can see the property line. You can almost see the little area where there's some vegetation here today. So, here's the property line. I think the most critical piece of the impact or—it's not an impact, but—the most critical area is where we have parking today. So, there was 5 or 6 spots existing. We're proposing to eliminate those—eliminate 2 of them. Traditionally, I would think that there's going to be ample capacity for handicapped parking. The project requires 6, and we included 7. There's 4, 1 and then 2 down below. As far as this area, I'm going to guess that it would receive less activity than it does today. Again, you can see the foliage that's here. There's none here today, and I don't think we're averse to introducing some plantings along this area. Again, we will be working with the Trustees and a landscape design plan. Ms. Tope said that's helpful. I think seeing where the property ends as well, because I know you mentioned drainage, but I was thinking of snow removal and such, and how far back that property went, if it was going to affect it. Mr. Foote said there's no water being directed toward that parcel. It's actually, if you look, this is all sheet flow, as we talked about. The grade is definitely trending away from Meetinghouse Road. You can see the existing field. There's a turn area that exists that comes from 101 that's not utilized. Then there's some wetlands in this location. The water wants to go downhill, and we're not going to interrupt that. Ms. Tope said okay, thank you. This last question—I assume the plans where

you're putting in the walkways, that would be budgeted snow removal and stuff and basically maintenance for that as well? Is that part of the ongoing project funds? Mr. Foote said that's a great question. Sometime in late 2022—in the middle of 2022—Bedford Public Works Department will likely be requesting additional personnel for this and other projects that it is responsible for. So, great question. That's another responsibility that the Public Works will have. Thank you. Ms. Tope said okay, thank you. Thanks for answering the questions. Chair Allen said thank you, Kelly. Bill? Mr. Carter said thank you. You answered the handicapped spaces question. I was wondering if we had plenty there. Is there a path between those 4 handicapped to get to the Library without having to go around a whole island there? Mr. Foote said this sidewalk here exists today. Mr. Carter continued, secondly, the road leaving—you're going to have a spot to drop off your books. Is that going to lead into 2 lanes—either left or right—out of that parking lot? Mr. Foote said as I said, this is preliminary. My guess is I won't reduce the island as shown. It will be somewhat larger. I don't want that conflict between rights and lefts. Great question. Mr. Carter said okay, and this is preliminary, but lighting—especially for that new lot. When it comes to the Meetinghouse property next to it, I'm sure we'll be very conscious of any lighting that will not shine onto that property. Mr. Foote said I'm going to say that the existing lighting is box lighting, and it's downward. This lighting—one of the action items that we need to understand with the Library and come to an agreement on—but it will be similar type lighting that exists today. Mr. Carter said similar to like lumens so that the certain lumens that comes off of that will not... Mr. Foote said they may get converted from incandescent or high-pressure sodium to LED, but the translation should be similar between the measurement of wattage. Mr. Carter continued lastly, to the Meetinghouse property, as you come around that corner to come back up out, if there's not enough screening, you're going to have headlights going into the back part of that property. Is there a shot of a fence or something that will block any headlights shining into the backside of that property? Mr. Foote replied there's a fence there today. Mr. Carter said okay, I apologize. I'm sorry—first time on the Commission here. Mr. Foote said these lines—there's a chain link fence. Two things could occur. I guess we could go put slats in it. I don't think it's desirable, but as we were talking about, I think adequate landscaping is probably the best alternative for that location. Mr. Carter said especially for Wintertime. During the Summertime, it won't be as much of an issue. Mr. Foote said this is a barn. This is, I believe, an old law office. So, the dwelling is here. As I've said, I think, too many times is this project is going to be substantially lower in this area than Meetinghouse Road. Mr. Cartier said but the pitch up—if you're driving up—is going to be pitching up the lights. Mr. Foote said when you come around this corner, and you're in the tangent, light direction should be pointing toward Meetinghouse Road. There will be some—absolutely. But I don't think it will be intrusive. Mr. Carter added just for consideration, that's all. Mr. Foote said yes. It's a good thought. Mr. Carter said thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chair Allen said thank you. Mr. MacDougall said Mr. Chairman, thank you Mr. Foote for being here. I do have a question. It might be swimming outside your lane a little bit, but the size of the Library now—is there any anticipated future expansion? Mr. Foote said as with most departments within the Town of Bedford, there's a master plan that is being pursued by several people in this room. There is. I was not instructed to accommodate that. I'm not sure where that is in the cycle or in the order of expansion/reconstruction of any Town buildings at this point. Mr. MacDougall said I guess a follow-up question would be if there is a future expansion even possible, wouldn't it make a lot of sense to—I see the only place to go is down toward the existing parking lot. That would require some renovation. If you were to go and do all that work now and then come back to the Town and look for a renovation? Mr. Foote said I don't disagree with that statement, but I'm not sure that's where we are today. Mr. MacDougall said okay, is it possible to find out? Is there a Library Trustee or someone that we could find out if there's anything imminent or in the works or in the back of somebody's mind? Mr. Foote said I don't think there's any ... Ms. Radke said I can just address that. I'll be honest with you. We're talking about facilities for Bedford, but Library is probably going to be lower on the totem pole at this point.

There are a number of other facilities that need upgrading or expansion. I can't put a years on that statement, but I'm going to say somewhere—10 years, 15, 20 years out. It is not the forefront right now. Correct me if I'm wrong, Councilor Carter, on that one. Mr. Carter said that is correct. Ms. Radke said yes, I wouldn't be so worried about that. Mr. MacDougall said okay, thank you sir. Chair Allen asked are there any other questions or comments from members of the Commission? [none]. Okay, so not hearing any, I'd like to open it up to invite members of the public to speak. You can line up at either of the microphones. I'd ask that you please remember to introduce yourself, and then speak into the microphone and we'll hear your comments.

Ms. Kathleen Bemiss states: Hi. Kathleen Bemiss from 37 Magazine Street. I am here as a resident. I just have a couple of questions that may or may not be able to be answered. How often is the Library parking lot and the Village parking lot currently at capacity? Mr. Foote asked is that directed toward me? Ms. Bemiss said to anybody that can answer that. Chair Allen said I'll just speak anecdotally. I live very close to this area. Driving by there are often vehicles that are out into the road, but I don't think that's necessarily a function of the parking spaces. I think that's a function of probably more of the drop off. I personally have not seen a number of times that it's at capacity, but that's just my personal experience. Ms. Bemiss asked is the Village Center parking lot—those 17 spots that are down there—being use regularly for the Library? Mr. Foote said I think, on occasion, that I've seen and experienced it myself coming to meetings here, that I've parked not in that parking lot that you referred to for the Bedford Village Common. But I've seen vehicles there at nighttime as I've come from a meeting. So, I think it does get used. I don't know the intensity of it, but it certainly gets used. Ms. Bemiss said right, I guess my question is do we really need 60 additional parking spots at this time if those 17 spots down below are not being used on a regular basis. That would be my first thing. I really think that we're taking a lot of green space that is in this one center of Town. We're taking it away and paving it, which does have negative impacts on the wildlife. There is wetlands farther down. The visual impact from 101 will be a negative aspect as well. So, I'm not sure we need it. I'm not sure that it will be a benefit to that area, and I do think it will change the character of that spot. I'm concerned about the neighbor as well.

Chair Allen said thank you. Please, Kelly. Ms. Tope said I was just going to ask Mr. Foote maybe he would have this answer. Does the Library—are they held back from doing any events due to lack of parking, or is there anyone who could answer that? The reason I ask is I've attended a couple of children's events that were well-attended, and there was a ladies' book club at the same time. The parking lot was pretty full. I don't know if that stopped the Library from scheduling anything else. But it seems their crowds for children's' events are pretty good. Mr. Foote said I would defer to the Librarian or Trustee on that. Chair Allen said I'd like to invite the next member of the public to come forward.

Ms. Dierdre Menard states: I didn't know if you wanted them to answer now so that we could have sort of a flow to the discussion. Did you want to want to...? So, I was actually going to ask a very similar question to Ms. Bemiss, Kathleen. So, I think it will make sense. You'll be answering both of our questions and your question as well, I think. So, my name is Dierdre Menard. I live at 69 Bedford Center Road. So, that's my house, where the Hessions used to live. It makes up the triangle between the Library and the Town Hall and my house. That's it. When I moved here 5 months ago, it's got a lovely Historic District from an old house's perspective. But there's not really a Town Center in the sense of a Main Street. I don't' know if that makes sense. There's no Main Street that you can go into shoppes and run into people and things like that, which is fine. I chose this spot because it was beautiful. And I thought that the way that the Library parking lot that exists today was really sensitively designed. Because it curves behind the library and then it dips down, and you don't see it. From my house, there's sort of two

components to my comments. One is how it is for me, personally, as the homeowner that looks straight at the Library. And then the other is just from a historic downtown perspective. So, for me personally, I look at a parking lot now. But it's a parking lot that has about—what does it have, 9 spaces in it? I don't know. So that's, you know, it's okay. It's also almost never full. So, my main question is, and I haven't heard it addressed yet, what the rationale for this is? I really don't understand. Because I look at it every single day, and it's never full. The fact that when you curve down and you have so many parking spaces already, and the pavilion, it just seems like adequate parking to me based on five months of living here and looking at the parking lot right out my front door every single day. So, the idea that sort of the main historic area will not have a pretty massive parking lot, and not even necessarily have trees to screen it off the way that it does right now, really concerns me from a personal and a historic district perspective. Because there's no guarantee that anything—so Mr. Foote was saying that they're just scrubby old, what, spruces, I think. And they don't provide much screening. But they don't need to because it's a field behind it. There's no problem with looking at a field. But if it's a giant parking lot, I'm just—I'd really like to know what the rationale is for this, because I look at it every single day, all day. And it's just never—even the top parking lot—is never filled. Thank you.

Chair Allen said thank you. Mr. Foote said I don't agree or disagree, but I think in all of this discussion we're having, we should be really mindful of where we are and have been in the last two years. So, before March of 2020, I can tell you that there was a lot more activity happening in the Old Town Hall. There was a lot more activity in this building. And I think the Library would agree that there was far more activity there. And with any luck, that's going to be returning soon, if it hasn't started already. We might be in this lull at this point, that we've been in for the last 25 months, but I think we're all seeing the need to go out and interact with other humans at this point. Chair Allen said it sounds like that's a question of demand—that the demand is going to increase over time. Mr. Foote said I think there was demand before, and I think, as I said, we're in a lull at this point and have been for the last couple of years on the activities in this area. Chair Allen said thank you, Mr. Foote.

Ms. Elaine Tefft states: Well, you can refer to me as 7 Meetinghouse Road. Apparently, I'm not a person. First of all, I'd like to take issue with the fact that ... Chair Allen requests ma'am, can you please state your name for the record? Ms. Tefft said oh, sure. It's still Elaine Tefft. I still live at 7 Meetinghouse Road, and I have several questions for Mr. Foote, because this is the first time, I've actually gotten hard information on what the plans are. First of all, the Town Hall is constantly busy. I don't think a day goes by where I don't see lights on in the Town Hall in the evening or night when it's being used, or cars parked there and people coming in and out. The pandemic may have slowed them down for a while, but it hasn't slowed them down lately. The thing that I'm most upset about quite honestly is an outright misstatement of fact, which I used to call something else. Mr. Foote, I believe stated that there is no water directed from the Library property onto my property. That is simply not true. At some point several years ago, without my knowledge and consent, there was a slope that the Town put in from the parking lot at the Library, going onto my property where there's this big square thing with holes in it where the water runoff goes in. So, all of the water runoff from the present parking lot is, in fact, going on my property. And I'm a little sensitive about that, because God knows what's in that water. I can tell you what's in the water that came from the Fire Department onto my property, because those are the forever drugs that have massively poisoned people. That's not an issue here tonight, but runoff from the Library parking lot is. Where is—could you please point out with me where the geothermal installation is on that map, please? Mr. Foote said let me zoom in for you, Mrs. Tefft, and I'll show you. But while I'm doing that, maybe I misspoke, but I don't think so. I said no drainage was being directed... Ms. Tefft said you said there was no water ... Mr. Foote said no, no—please let me finish. I said there was no drainage being directed toward that property as part of this project. I believe I said that, and if I didn't, I

apologize. Ms. Tefft said you didn't. You didn't. You said ... Mr. Foote said the record will show that, Mrs. Tefft. Ms. Tefft said oh, I think it will. Let me—if you're having trouble finding it, is the geothermal installation underneath what is going to be the new parking lot? Mr. Foote said correct. I think the mouse died here. Ms. Tefft said oh, because I think it is. Mr. Foote said it is, and if you look carefully, you'll see some dots underneath the parking—under the proposed parking, correct. Ms. Tefft asked how carefully do I have to look? Mr. Foote said well that's why I was trying to zoom in for you, but the mouse—oh! Okay. Let me try this again. So, you see all of these dots up through? Those are all the geothermal wells on the lot. Ms. Tefft said so, life being what it is, if something goes wrong with that geothermal installation, and if you get permission to put the parking lot on top of it, you're going to have to rip up that parking lot to fix the geothermal. That's going to be very expensive. And while spending town money is not the purview of this Committee, I think they need to know that not only is it going to be ugly, but it's also going to be dangerous and expensive in the future. Why are you insisting on putting in granite curbing? That is not historic at all. It's modern, and it's ugly. And why would you take out a stone wall and replace it with granite curbing? It's just more convenient. It's the plastic siding of the curbing industry—neat and clean and easy to maintain. Why would you do that? That's for you, Mr. Foote. Mr. Foote answered as far as the geothermal wells, there's not mechanical pumps or anything in those. It's all a closed system, so there's no mechanical devices under the parking lots. The casing has a pipe that comes out of it with a pipe that circulates and has two pumps inside the library, I believe. So, there's no mechanical, electrical, any sort of item that commonly fails. And I think, and I'm not exactly sure, but I think the life expectancy of that geothermal system is, I think it's, you know, in the 25- to 40-year range, I believe. I'm not an expert on that. Ms. Tefft said you did know we get earthquakes in New Hampshire, and if some of that piping gets damaged because of a weather incident or because of an earthquake, or God knows what, any other incident, because a lot of things can happen. It's not a safe place to put it. I have another question. The 2 parking spaces you're eliminating are those the 2 near the Library, one of which is a handicapped slot? Mr. Foote said the 2 spots that are being eliminated... Ms. Tefft said I wrote down—Lori asked you a question after you said that there were going to be 2 parking spaces eliminated near the Library—that are presently near the Library. Are those where one of them is a handicapped slot? They're right next to the bench in memory of a prior librarian. Is that the 2 that you're eliminating? Mr. Foote said well—I'm not sure how many are in the top of the parking lot, but we're proposing 5. One adjacent to the entrance of the Library, and 4 more across along your property line. Currently, I believe there are 5 spaces. Ms. Tefft said okay, Can you tell me where the 2 are that you're eliminating? So, he misspoke. It's just one that's being eliminated. One plus the area for the ... Mr. Foote said there's only one lot there, Mrs. Tefft. **Ms. Miriam Johnson said** there's currently a handicapped spot here that we added because this was... Chair Allen said I'm sorry, may I ask you to introduce yourself? Ms. Johnson said I'm sorry. My name is Miriam Johnson. I'm the Town Librarian. I just can answer this question. Mr. Foote said yes, thank you. Ms. Tefft said thank you Miriam. Ms. Johnson said so, Elaine, this is the current spot right next to the bench. Ms., Tefft said yah, I know. I just wanted to know if those are the—what he said 2, because there is a wide area next to the parking spot—you know, in case somebody's got a lift to get out. Ms. Johnson said right, and so that remains unchanged. Ms. Tefft said it does look, to the normal person who doesn't spend a lot of time on handicapped spots, is there are two spots there. And I wondered if those were the 2 that he was referring to eliminating. Ms. Johnson said so there's 1 here because it needs to be van accessible. Ms. Tefft said right, so is that being eliminated? Ms. Johnson said no, that remains. And then there is 1 over here in the corner that was added in the last 10 years. I don't remember when. But that is going to be green space, and now these 6 that are currently regular parking spots that, you know, people point toward your yard, are now made into the handicapped spots because there's no grade. So, it's just flat going across. We have some currently way down here, but the grade is such that I don't think that you could really get to the Library if you parked there currently. Mr. Foote said I don't think it would be

classified as an accessible route. Ms. Tefft continued so, um, thank you, Miriam. Are you planning to—as long as there is no water being—and you didn't limit it--no water being directed from the Library property onto my property, does that mean you're going to eliminate that drainage thing that you built at least 25 years ago? Mr. Foote said I wasn't employed with the Town 25 years ago. Ms. Tefft said because that would be nice if you would do that. Mr. Foote said as Miriam, the Librarian, stated that that area will no longer be paved. It will be grassed, an area. So, I don't believe we will be directing any more water than goes toward that location today. Ms. Tefft said good! Then would you mind removing your junk from my property and restoring it to what it was before you put that in? That would be nice. Chair Allen said I don't think comments on prior actions would fall within the purview of the Historic District Commission or what we're here to speak about this evening, so I'd ask that you please keep it to items within the Historic District. Ms. Tefft said oh, okay. In that case, apparently—I'm obviously opposed to that, because frankly we don't need an extra 70 parking spaces. I go to that Library several times a week. It's never crowded. There's always parking—even when we had a big event on Saturday, when the Women's Club had their Whale of a Sale, the Town Hall was mobbed—there was still parking. People weren't looking for parking. And 70—it's a huge, huge parking lot. It's, it's more than doubled what there is now. Seventy is a big parking lot, and I would like to read a statement I prepared. I didn't plan on asking questions, quite frankly, because I didn't realize that there was going to be so much difficult information on like granite curbing and moving/getting rid of a stone wall or the directions of water and all of that. And I understand completely what your purview is. Your purview has to do with preserving the Historic District. As you know, because it's been repeated, I live at 7 Meetinghouse Road, and it abuts the property. It abuts the proposal. When I moved in, it was known as the Wiggins' house, and had been the Barnard's house previously. I've been there a long time. The first owner of my property, and as historians you'll be interested to hear this, and the surrounding acreage was John Houston who owned it in 1757. Bedford used to be a farming community and then a Summer retreat for cooler weather by the city folks. The 1850 map of the Town shows the buildings that were there at that time. Many of them are no longer standing, but there's plenty of tar. This town went from people making due to get by to people making dough by development. We need to make preservation and protection of our heritage and history a priority. And I haven't heard that at all tonight. There is nothing historically appropriate in converting the last public green area in the Historic District into a large parking lot, which is unneeded. There is nothing historically appropriate in attracting more traffic into Bedford Center when it already suffers from near gridlock at least twice a day. This green area is now used by children, who play like we used to at recess, by people having a picnic, by the occasional class learning about the environment, by organizations using the summer tent for events. I've seen all of those and more. I've walked through the present parking lot frequently, and there were plenty of open spaces. Last, and I told you about even the Women's Club couldn't fill all the spaces last Saturday. What bothers me is that there's nothing like a big pile of loose dollars to get people excited about somehow spending it. But, please, don't pave paradise and put in a parking lot. Not original, but sincerely quoted. Man may propose, but God disposes and decides. And I hope that you make the right decision and save that one green spot for the children. Thank you. And I'll be happy to answer any question if you have any, but I doubt that you do.

Chair Allen said thank you for your statement. Mr. Foote? Mr. Foote said just to clarify, I don't recall the proposal to remove a stone wall there's an existing wall, I think, as I mentioned, between the parking lots and as part of this I think we were going to simply point it up. If you travel into the lot, on the lower left, there's a stone wall, rock wall, that, you know extends from the upper part of the Library down close to the Kendall Shop. So that wall will remain, and not only that, we plan to enhance it and repoint it, as we do on so many road projects in Town. Secondly, I said this is a vacant lot, but at some point, this lot was utilized for other purposes and if you look here on this lot high point—I believe it's the

high point—this is all paved right down to 101. So, this isn't a pristine area. This parcel had been utilized for other activities in the past. Not that there was a parking lot, but this area was used previously. Ms. Radke said there was a house there. Mr. Foote said yes. Ms. Radke said that was the Johnson house, if I remember right. That was torn down, yes. There was a house there. That's why the parking lot's there or that driveways there. Ms. Tope said can I ask a question to the Librarian? Chair Allen said sure. Ms. Tope asked what is the capacity of the Library? Ms. Johnson said well, I actually don't know the answer to that question. I would have to add it up, and I don't have the numbers. But, if I could address that sort-of in a way of addressing the other questions tonight about the need, I would agree right now that it is rare to fill the entire parking lot. I would disagree that the top lot is never full, because I do see that it is full. And the fact that we're still in a Pandemic, I don't expect that people are coming to the Library and staying at the Library. Our meeting room use is probably at about 50 percent of what it was in March of 2020. It's crept back up each month, but it is not where it was. Will it go back to normal? I can't answer that question, but I do know that when we have children's events, for example, I will not schedule another meeting. Because I know that there are parking spots way down here in the Bedford Village Common, and as much as I ask people who come to meetings to please leave parking spots up here for mothers with babies and probably 25- to 50 picture books, people don't. So, you know, I know that there are 17 spots down here and the staff parks down there when we're having an event, to leave space now for events. But, I mean, I think most people don't park at the farthest distance to walk uphill carrying stuff to the Library. We don't schedule meetings, like I said, when we have events because then there isn't parking for our events because of the meetings. We have never scheduled big meetings during the day in the 15 years that I've been there, because we can't accommodate it as our first mission of being a public library and having people come and go. So, has it impacted operations? Yes, it has. We've been talking about having a parking lot here since 2001, at least. When the Library was built, or when the plans were developed and ground was broken, we did not own the Johnson property. That's why it has this curve the way it does, because that lot wasn't part of Town ownership. It still belonged to the Johnsons. So, it was acquired after that with the intent of expanding the parking lot. I can go back to years and years and years of that statement over and over. We've gone to the Town Council. We've had Trustee meetings. We, when they were planning the Bedford Village Common, we talked about it. So, it's not a new concept that the intent of purchasing that parcel from the Johnsons was for parking. I mean, I have an old photograph, if you want to see it, of the parking lot of the old Library. And, you know, that was not pretty. So, if you want to see what it was in the past, you can see that even—I would—this is my opinion, but I would say that even with this additional lot, the view will be nicer than it was in, I don't know what year it was, '85? 1985. And I did want to point out, too, if I may, that while we won't have the tent over here, we are taking over this area here. We're pushing it back toward the Craft Workers to allow—it's actually a 20 by 40 tent, Jeff. It's 20 by 40, with area around for our raised beds and benches. Mr. Foote said thanks for clarifying that for me. I appreciate it. Ms. Johnson said 20 by 10 is small. Chair Allen said thank you for those points of clarification, and for offering that additional detail. With that, I'd like to invite the next member of the public to come forward and introduce himself.

Kelly Martin states: My name is Kelly Martin. I live at 73 Bedford Center Road, the old Manse. It's going to be tough to follow up your comments, but I'm going to try. A couple concerns from my perspective. Number 1 obviously is the use of the Library and whether, or the overuse, and whether that this overflow parking lot is really needed. What's the basis of spending that money and putting in these additional parking spaces? And I get it—future use, etc, etc. But my concern is as a resident right here—my biggest concern is traffic. Have we done traffic studies as far as what that's going to look like at 5 o'clock with people, those additional cars, leaving the parking lot going left and right and cars coming up Meetinghouse Road? As it is right now, 2 times a day it is backed up, and often times backed

up past church. So, that's a real problem for the Bedford Historic District. And, to your point, Dierdre, there's no shopping—that's not part of it. But it is, it is a, I think, an integral part of the Town, and, I think to add additional traffic pattern for something we're not quite sure about or the use is without a real plan of how we're going to tackle that is a question we should kind of take a look at. I'm throwing this out because I'm not sure there's anybody in the room that can answer the question. What are th—what's the parking lot count down at the Old Harvest Plaza out of curiosity? Does anybody know that? Alright. So, I was just curious. So, we've owned the house for a little over 10 years. At this point I would say that seldom is the parking lot full, although, to your point, the top parking lot is, area is, always pretty pretty full. So, as far as that goes. And then my last thing as far as my only concern as far as construction, I heard that, you know, would be constructed to a point, depending on funds, whether it's granite curbing or rolled curbing or something like that. My view is a little different as far as granite curbing. You did Meetinghouse Road with granite curbing. The Historic District is all granite curbing. I would want a few guarantees as far as what that final product is going to look like as far as the finished product. Chair Allen said thank you. So, I don't know the answer or who to direct this to, but I will pause in case anyone does know the answer on the traffic impact study, because I think it's a very valid point. Has that been done already? Mr. Foote said we didn't perform one. We're not changing the use of any of the buildings in the area, so there's no change of use anywhere. It's all existing conditions and existing concerns. Chair Allen said thanks. I do want to just take an opportunity before we continue to move on here to remind everyone of what our position is as the Historic District Commission. So, we're not in a position to approve or deny this project. We are offering feedback and commentary to the Town, particularly to the Department of Public Works as they move this project the various steps in the process in approvals. We are not the approvers and deniers, so your comments here are being entered into the record, and I think are valid comments for sure, and the questions that you're bringing forward as members of the Historic District, or as residents there—all very valid points. I just want to make sure that we're on the same page. This will not result in a motion tonight to approve or deny this project. Thank you. I'll open up to the next member of the public, please.

David Clark stated: Thank you, Chairman. David Clark, 62 Bedford Center Road. I've lived in town for 40 years now, and I have a loop that I walk every day. Pam sees me. I mean, I go—I finish going past the gazebo, and I come up through the parking lot at various hours. I mean it's not just in the morning, it's in the afternoon, it's weekends. Number 1, I've never ever seen the parking lot at the Library full—the one that we have right now. I was finishing my walk during the Bedford Women—what was that—yah the Whale of a Sale, which was really heavily attended. That is, you know, it's Library parking, but it's municipal parking. It's Bedford parking so, as far as events that happen at the Old Town Hall, or here, or at the Library, that's municipal parking. So, whether it's Library parking or some other event, doesn't really matter. It's free parking. It's open to people who want to park. I'm really concerned about this, and I think you stated a very good point and that is you're here to just sort-of give your input, and I'm just hearing about this project. And, you know, Jeff, you guys when you build a road or if you do an improvement, municipal improvement, you guys really do a good job. I mean, stone walls, curbing, I mean, you do a good job on this stuff. But I'm just wondering, just because the money is available to build something, do we have to build something that is so enormous? Is there maybe some compromise that could happen here? You've got the traffic going in down at the bottom. You've got 2 rows of cars there. You come around that corner, how about just having that one line of parking on the other side of what is now the stone wall and the trees? I mean that's like another 24 spaces. I mean, on Saturday, I counted 12 empty spaces, and that was a really heavily used day. I don't know why, you know, I look at Frederick Olmsted who did Central Park, and, you know, he was a visionary, and New York was a visionary. That was a green space that they, in 1855 or 56, they set aside, and they kept it as green space, and, you know, Pam, you and I and Susan have been talking about maintaining and keeping

green space in Bedford. Once you pave it, it's gone. And I think that is just atrocious—the amount of pavement you want to put in there. We talk about climate change. We talk about, you know, the superheated pavement. It will change the environment in Bedford, for sure. I mean, in Manchester on 100-degree day, and I come to Bedford, I drive down Bedford Center Road, and it's 94. So, that is—there is a big differentiator in that. I also am concerned as a taxpayer—you're doubling the size of a parking lot. You've got snowplowing. You've got maintenance. You've got striping. You've got sealing. You've got shoveling of sidewalks. You've got a whole new cost burden to the taxpayer. That's a concern to me. I'm retired, and guess what? I don't want to have to pay more taxes for something that I really don't think we need. The spruce trees on that existing parking lot, those all died because they got strangled out by poison ivy and other vines, and you know what, they just weren't maintained. What's to say that, you know, good stock is put in on Elaine's side on 7 Meetinghouse side, that that same thing doesn't happen? You know, they were ignored. They could have lived, but, you know, nobody trimmed the vines. One thing you've got to be careful on, and I think this is something that the Historic District can have some influence on, is the lighting. Over by the old Fire Department, which is where we're standing, I live right to the right. And I, and Jeff I've talked to you, and I talked to Peter Barbuto, and I talked to some other people in the Town, they put these big, huge fireballs in the sky up on poles and they were new LED lights. And, I mean, it was like a semi-tractor trailer with its high beams on shining in my house. And, I mean, it lit my entire house up. So, I think that you've got to be able to, before you go—if you do go ahead with this—and it sounds like it's a fait accompli, you've got to control these lights so as not to create a nuisance. These lights that shine—there's one on the old Town Hall, there's one right by the door out here, and, finally, thank you very much, the Town did get them pointed down. But it was 2 and a half years for me to get that going. And that's light pollution. And I think, also, I don't know if you have to have those lights on all night long. I don't know what the, you know, I mean the Library has lights on all night long inside and outside. I don't know what goes on there, but, you know, you might want to have them on a, you know, photo sensitive or timer so that they don't pollute the nighttime. But, yah, I mean, is there any possibility, Jeff Foote, of taking this plan down a bit? Or have you as a DPW Engineer decided this is what you're going to do? You've got the money; you're going to spend it? Mr. Foote said no, I don't think this was my decision at all. I think I was following direction to increase the area and the need for parking at this Library as Miriam said, and she made some great points. I wasn't totally involved with many things decades ago, but, you know, we can do anything. But we want to, if we want to maximize our dollars, and our parking, then, I think this is a legitimate plan. Mr. Clark said well, it's a, it's a legitimate plan, but for the year 2085 or something. I really think it's overkill. I'm really aware, I'm acutely aware of what goes on. I mean I live right next door here, and I'm outside all the time. So, I really would like the Town to consider taking that additional parking and cutting it in half. I think another 24, 25 spaces is more than enough. I mean there were 12 empty spots on Saturday, and that was a big event. So, I don't think you need another—I don't even know how many, it's like another 70 spots. I don't think you need that many. So, that's it. I just hope that, you know, some kind of common sense can prevail here because I really think that it's ugly to have that much parking. Thank you.

Chair Allen said thank you for your comments. Yes, Lori. Ms. Radke asked can I just comment on something? Chair Allen said can we just see if there are any other comments from the public? With that, are there any other statements from members of the public that are here today?

Ms. Dierdre Menard states: I just—I would love to hear what the rationale is. You know, I just, I don't, I hear it anecdotally, and I hear that there's been this request—I'm not even sure who it came from. I don't know if it came from the Library. I'm presuming it did. But I haven't even heard that. I just don't know where this came from, and again, I haven't been around that long—about 5 months. So, I'm sure there's a lot that I've missed, but folks who've been here a lot longer than I have seem to be hearing

about it for the first time too. So, I just, I really don't understand where it came from or how it seems, as David said, to be a fait accompli already. And here we are just discussing how to do it sensitively when I think it's going to sit empty. Because we all look at it. We're all abutting it. We're all right there every day, and the bottom lot is never full. And the top lot is often not full. So, I just don't know how we justify it. I don't know why there weren't studies done that we could hear about to justify this. And I'm really concerned that it's going to be an eyesore that sits empty. Thank you. Chair Allen said thank you. Ms. Radke asked may I comment on that? Chair Allen said yes, please, Lori. Ms. Radke said I've lived here for 20 years, and one thing that we forgot to mention here, the Old Town Hall, and I'm looking at this on Google Earth right now and there's no parking lot for Old Town Hall. The parking lot behind Old Town Hall is for BCTV, and I counted about 30 spots at BCTV. I counted the number of people in here, and there's 15 so half of those spots are already being used. If there was an event going on at the Old Town Hall, an event at the Library, all of that parking would have to then flow into the Library parking lot. That is our history. That is what we're facing all these years. There was, if all 3 of those facilities were holding an event, then there would have been no parking, which perpetuated the conversation of putting in more parking, to answer your question. That's why this keeps coming up year after year after year. Because those 3 buildings—there wasn't enough when all 3 buildings were being used. During the day, the Town Hall is hardly used for parking, if there's anything, there's children's events. And BCTV, there's no meetings on during the day. It's mostly the evening time that the parking is used. And when all 3 of those are going on, there's very little parking. To Mr. Clark's comments, can it be scaled down a little bit? And I'm looking at this Google Earth—it could be. I would like them to go back to the drawing board and maybe scale it down a bit to save some of the green space. Because some of those comments, you know, I'm looking at this and it is a little disheartening to lose all that space. Do we need parking? Absolutely, and I've been hearing this for 20 years. But do we want to save our green space in the center? Yes, we should. So, maybe there is a compromise. And I know you worked really hard on that, Mr. Foote, on that drawing, or your staff did, but I don't know. Maybe we could come up with a middle compromise on it that would accommodate the Library for their parking, all of these buildings, and still keep our green space. Just a thought. Mr. Foote asked what would you like it reduced to? Ms. Radke said I don't know. I'm not an engineer. But, just looking at it, just maybe not as large. Or maybe it can't be done. I don't know. But maybe something could be looked at. But there is a need. You're absolutely right. There is a need for parking. I'm not going to go back on that one. Chair Allen said I think one of the challenges when we talk about compromise is that how many spots are we using right now. I don't think we know that number for sure. How many do we need? I don't know that we know that number right now. So, we've had anecdotal evidence discussed here tonight. So, to then put a data point against that, without any supporting data, is a very difficult thing to do. So, I think Lori's point is fair to say can we go back and take a look at this, but to point to any specific number or spots or what the right answer is from this Commission based on the information that we've talked about, I think, is a very difficult spot for us to be in. Frankly, it seems unfair. Ms. Tope said Mr. Chair, my question is a little bit to that point. You had mentioned that the Commission here isn't going to do a yes or no vote on this, and we had Mr. Clark mention, I believe, that it seems like a fait accompli that this is going to happen. What is the path forward for this project? Who are the final approvers, and has that been done? Or what stage are we in? Because it seems like the public had some interest maybe in commenting further in front of the Board. Chair Allen said I think the question ... Mr. Foote added so as I mentioned at the beginning of this exercise, that Public Works is going to be working in conjunction with the Trustees at our April 8th meeting. As I said at the beginning tonight, this is a preliminary plan that we're advancing. So, we're advancing it if the Trustees— [asking Ms. Johnson] are they the final determination? Ms. Johnson replied you're the boss, Jeff. [laughter]. I don't know the answer to that. I don't know. But I think we work together to come to a resolution trying to reflect the needs and the concerns. Mr. Foote said we brought the first concept to the Trustees, was it December? Or January? So, we've been—we brought

it. We hoped to have something back to them by January and then that didn't occur. Then as the Engineering Consultant that we utilized had time, it was advanced, and it has been within the last couple of weeks. Public Works was charged to come up with a plan to expand the parking at the Library, and we've going through this—we met with the Trustees. We're going to meet with them again. We've heard the public, and frankly, there are 3 Town Council members here tonight. So, I think they'll have a conversation as well. We've heard Lori. We've heard from the Chairman. They're both here. So, we'll take everything under advisement from all parties, not just the people here. Not just the elected officials, but the Trustees. We'll do whatever people want. But we were charged to improve the parking at the Library and expand the parking opportunities. I think we've got a plan here, going back to what I started with. From Bedford Center Road, which we talked about solar before and the visuals from Bedford Center Road are wherever you are driving in the Historic District, this project will not have any significant—I don't see a real adverse situation being proposed here. We will cut some spruce trees down that are compromised. We could all take a walk over, if you're available before the Trustees' meeting on Friday morning and look at them. They are compromised—have been compromised. As far as some of the other proposed tree clearing, it's minimal. We try to minimize it as best as we can. I think we've got a long track record of doing such, and we will continue to do that if it's decided this project is going to move forward. Mr. Vaccarello said Mr. Chairman, if I may, I know we have people waiting, but I just want to add a point of clarity because tonight isn't about a yes or no decision, I guess my question, and I don't know if it is to the Council Members or Jillian usually we have this conversation, at some point we see a final plan that gets put in front of us to say do we have any comments, questions, feedback. Does it soften the impact? All those things. Usually, we get a final plan to actually have a motion to say yes or no. Is that coming back to us? Or is this our only shot at looking at this? Because it seems this is just preliminary. We're gathering all the feedback. Everybody gets to go back and take a look. What is the next—not just next step for you—yes, you're going to meet with your Trustees and you're going to have a conversation about what they want. But at the end of the day, the public has their say, and we have a vote. If it's sitting in the Historic District, typically we get one final approve the lighting, things like that. We have those conversations. Is that not set for this project, or? Mr. Foote replied great comment and question. So, I'm calling this preliminary, but the reason it's preliminary is because we haven't advanced the closed drainage and a lot of the grading. We've got a grading plan. It's not 100 percent. So, it can be considered preliminary, but it's really at probably 75 or 80 percent based on the location of some of the amenities that we've included in this. So, we're not that far from this being a final plan. The layout, as it is, is very close to what the final plan will be. So, there's not a material difference between 75 and 100 percent design complete. So, I don't think it was my intention—we can go over and show you a bunch of plans, cross sections, I think, that were included in this. But it's not going to change material between now and final plans which will occur, with any luck, after we meet with the Trustees and if they're ready to move forward with this. We'll have the plans complete within two weeks. Mr. Vaccarello asked so is this something we vote on next month at our session? I guess that's the question. Is there a motion? Do we have another opportunity to see, you know, yes—this is preliminary and final. I guess that's the question on the table. I don't know the answer. Ms. Harris said there will not be a motion. It's being presented under the guidelines of RSA 674:54, which is Governmental Land Uses. This is where a Commission may hold a public hearing and issue non-binding comments. So that's what this exercise is tonight. Certainly, if the Commission wanted to see a final plan, we can bring that back for the Commission to review when it's ready. Mr. Vaccarello said Mr. Chairman, I guess I'll leave that to you. Chair Allen said I guess on a final plan, though, if that was coming back to us, again, that would be to offer comment. We're not going to be issuing any sort-of motion on that, correct? Ms. Harris said no. There would be no motion, but we could take further comment at that time, if the Commission wanted to hold another public hearing on the final plan. Chair Allen said okay. Ms. Radke said just to add to that, I don't believe it goes to the Planning Board either,

correct? Ms. Harris replied no. Ms. Radke added because it's a Governmental Use. Ms. Harris said correct. Ms. Radke said I just want to make that clear as well. You won't see this at the Planning Board. Mr. Vaccarello said that was my other question. Okay, thank you. That makes sense. Mr. MacDougall said so, could you just go back and revisit the finances behind this for a second? Mr. Foote replied sure. The Town or the Library has a Capital Reserve account that has been building for 10, 15 years towards these improvements. And it's one of those things where we get some money in it then it gets repurposed somewhere else, so it never got where it needed to be. Then, it's my understanding that, over the course of the last several months—help me out—that the Town Council and the Librarian and the Trustees have--[asks Ms. Johnson] the Trustees, were they part of it? Ms. Johnson replied no. I mean, they were part of wanting to add to the CIP again because it was on hiatus. We would put it in, and it would be taken out for years. Mr. Foote said there was never enough money to complete the improvements that are here tonight. Mr. MacDougall said through the Library Trustee Fund? Ms. Johnson clarified through the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Foote said the Town funds it—the Trustees have the last word on improvements to the Library, correct? [Ms. Johnson nods in agreement]. So, there's always been a shortage of funds to make the improvements. Then, as I stated earlier, as part of the American Rescue Plan, some funds became available sometime around the middle of August last year, and the Town Council—the Town Manager asked me to come up with a rough estimate last Summer in what it would cost to expand the parking lot. I gave him a rough number. So, we took the \$150 plus or minus that we have and then the Town Council, I believe, assigned another \$250 thousand dollars toward this effort to get to the \$400 thousand dollars that I mentioned earlier. Mr. MacDougall questioned and that's the cost of this project? It's about \$400 thousand dollars. Mr. Foote said we think so but, again, you've purchased gas and gone to the grocery store recently. Mr. MacDougall continued is that \$250 thousand dollar—does that come with any strings attached? Does it have to be used for a certain purpose by a certain time? Mr. Foote said so I think, if I recall, the Act requires that the money be purposed by 2026. I think I remember that. Beyond that... Ms. Radke said purposed by 2024 and used by 2026. Mr. MacDougall said, and it can be use for any? Mr. Foote said I think there was a broad brush from the Federal Government on that. Mr. MacDougall said just spend it. Mr. Foote said I'm not sure. Mr. MacDougall said money from Heaven. Ms. Radke said I can probably add a little bit to that. So, a lot of the towns in New Hampshire got money from, it's called, the AARPA. I believe the Town of Bedford got just over \$2 million dollars that was supposed to be used for projects having to do with the COVID, and they put a formula—it's interesting how they put a formula in there—for lost revenue. And the Town of Bedford did the formula and then, when you have funds that were from lost revenue, the restrictions to use the funds were a little less restrictive than if you didn't have lost revenues. So, we were able to expand some of the projects using the money to fund some of those projects that normally wouldn't fall under the original purpose of the money. Did that make sense? Mr. Vaccarello asked so it's stimulated to extend your ability to spend? Ms. Radke said yes. Exactly. Those funds--\$250 thousand, I guess—was toward the construction of the Library parking lot. And then we earmarked some money to buy a fire truck and some other items as well—water lines, and things like that. A variety of places and projects that \$2 million dollars will be used for, and part of it was for the Library parking lot. You are correct. That's where it's from. And it has to be spent by 2026. So, if it's not spent here, it will be spent on something else. Chair Allen said thank you for the additional detail. I'd like to open it back up to members of the public here.

Ms. Menard states: It's me again. I just want to make sure I understand where we are. So, the pavilion parking—when did that go in? Mr. Foote asked the what? Ms. Menard said the parking down at the Common. Mr. Foote said oh, I want to say, when did we do that? 2010 or '11? It was gravel and then we recently paved it in—was it last year? Yes, it was last year. Ms. Menard said okay. So, while things were quieter during COVID, you guys gained about--what is it—18 spots down there? Ms. Johnson said

parking existed. It was just not paved. Mr. Foote said right. Ms. Menard said yes. I mean I wouldn't choose to park down there if it were a muddy mess vs. a paved parking area. I wouldn't treat that as extended parking. Okay. So, I'm surprised to find us having this discussion about something that sounds as though the next time we're going to hear about it, the plan is going to be final. Is that correct, Mr. Foote? Is that basically what we're doing?

Ms. Pamela Van Arsdale states: I'm Pamela Van Arsdale, Chairman of the Trustees of the Library. And we will, you know, it's been fast-tracked. There's no question about it. Part of it is that, you know, I used to live in the house to the right of the library—the yellow house. So, I'm very familiar with the green space issues, the parking issue, all those things. I think that you probably can't see from where you live, how much the parking spaces are used. I mean you have anecdotal walking through or driving through, and you see that there are 30 empty spaces, but when there—a lot of programs at the Library, when they're meetings—there are 2 meeting rooms, and when there's a children's event, parking is very sparse. As Lori said, if there's something going on here... so I think part of this is a wish—the Town owns land. The Library does not own the land. I think that part of it is a wish on the Town's part to make safer parking in the Center. Because people, if there are events here and people park on the side of the road, it's really dangerous. I lived on Bedford Center Road for 15 years. And cars some whipping up there. I understand it—in both directions. So, it's complicated because it seems as if it's happening quickly, and I agree. So, the Trustees will talk about it on Friday. We'll look at this plan. This feedback will go back to the Trustees, and we'll see what—I'm only one of several Trustees. So, we'll see what they say.

Ms. Menard said thank you. Yes. Because what I'm concerned about is, with the addition of the Pavilion, we don't know when there's a big event, how many—usually when I hear about things like this, there's so much more data. And I'm really concerned that I'm not hearing about the data behind a decision of this size. It is the Historic heart of the Town. It's a big parking lot, and I kind of can't get my head around the fact that I don't hear any data points about why this decision is being made and how the number of spaces was arrived at. I don't understand that. I also don't understand why, you know, when we talk about commitments in terms of screening—because what I can see from my house, is the immediate Library parking lot perfectly. Ms. Van Arsdale asked you mean the top? Just the top not the back. Ms. Menard said yes, so I can see how often, if you're going to park at the Library and those are open, you're going to park there first. You're not going to park down there. And I see that very often not fully. All the time. But I understand that for events, you want that parking. The fact that it's sensitively designed right now, to drop down below the Library, is brilliant, makes complete sense. And I do see where there are trees in there and things like that. You could fit more parking into the existing parking lot. I would have liked to have heard, you know, first we thought about going and doing that. But instead, it's just this enormous parking lot in the heart of the Historic District. As small as it is, this takes up a ton of it, and there just doesn't seem to be the data behind it. And I'm really stuck on that. So, I just wanted to share that again. And the fact that this seems to be the Historic District Commission—is that how you refer to yourselves? Chair Allen said yes. Ms. Menard said I don't really hear anyone saying we'd really like to make sure you're saying you will provide screening. You know, we'll do what we can. We'll see what the budget allows for. I know you can't insist, because of the way that this is being invoked. But it just doesn't seem well prepared. It doesn't seem like we're saying we really want you to put up screening so that we don't see all those cars the way we don't see them in the lower parking lot today. I know I keep coming back up, and I don't mean to be annoying, but it's a straight shot out of my front door into this parking lot. So, there is a personal component, but there's also just the integrity of Bedford that I'm concerned with and the fast tracking. And it's like money's available and people are ready to go, and it all kind of the stars aligned, but not the data behind the decision. And it really concerns me. So, thanks again. I'm sorry to be sort of indulging myself here, but it really worries me.

Thank you. Chair Allen said thank you. I will just remind the public that we are still in the public portion of the hearing. At the end, the Commission will have the opportunity again to offer any additional comments or questions that we have here based upon the feedback that we've heard tonight. I'll offer that as a reminder. I'll open it up again to the public, please.

Ms. Tefft states: After listening to all of this, I'll tell you what bothers me the most. I'm the only one advocating that we keep green space. The only publicly available green space for the children to play on. There's nobody here advocating for that. We're advocating for more cars, more parking, more gas fumes, more destroying the environment. There's nobody here saying wouldn't it be wonderful to continue to have a green spot where the kids can go and play. I can't tell you—you're obviously so much younger than I. You probably don't remember when kids used to play outside as opposed, with other kids, as opposed to in sports teams and organized, uniformed pick your team competitive sports. Kids used to play and have fun, and I've watched them do that in that one green spot—the only one in the Historical District. And if there's one thing that is historical is children playing. And for over 2 years, the children in this country have been denied that opportunity. And now we're going to deny it deliberately—not because of some Wuhan Laboratory mistake, but because we are willfully going to deny it so that the cars can park, and we can have more meetings to have more discussions. I would like to see a child advocate, because children were a part of our history. And, in some places like the Ukraine, they're not going to be again for a very long time. We're very lucky. Why don't we pay attention to the children? Why don't we give them the chance to be children? Why don't we give them a place to play? Thank you.

Chair Allen said thank you. Are there any final comments from the public, or questions to be heard? Alright, so at this time, we will go ahead and close the public portion of the hearing in terms of offering feedback. You're welcome to stay.

I turn now to the Commission again. Are there any further questions or comments from members of the Commission here? Ms. Radke said I'll just give one. I'll mention it again—maybe going back to the drawing board and seeing if we can maybe limit some of the parking, maybe leaving that top green space and put the parking at the bottom end? I don't know. Just maybe going back and look and see another reconfiguration might be—that's just my suggestion. And then definitely screening, mentioned for the 7 Meetinghouse Road, that area—as much as possible. That's all I have. Chair Allen said thank you Lori. Bill? Mr. Carter said thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to thank all of the residents who came out tonight to speak about this. Being my first night on the Historic District Commission, I've watched a lot of these meetings. And as Chairman, I decided that let's become the Alternate here just so I can listen to this. But I want to thank everyone who came out and spoke tonight. It gives me a better light to look at, because it was mentioned a few times that there is 3 members of the Town Council sitting here this evening. So, once again, thank you very much, and I'll take all these comments in advisement. Thank you. Chair Allen said thank you. Are there any other comments or questions? Mr. Vaccarello said I'll just make one which is I'll echo Bill's sentiment. I thank everybody from the public to come out and speak, and I think if you were looking for feedback and comments from your neighbors in Town, I think everybody in the room heard a lot of good feedback and thoughts and suggestions. Lori, you offered some as well. So, thank you again, and that's all I wanted to add. Chair Allen said thank you. Ms. Tope said I would just ask you'd brought up whether or not we would have another public comment session on the final plan. Where is that going to stand or that decision—when will that be made? Chair Allen said I'd like to suggest that a final plan come back in front of the Historic District Commission. We're talking, I think, about a few key points here: the first is compromise that's just been brought up again in this conversation. We talked about how the plan isn't going to change materially between now

and a final plan. I guess materiality is the eye of the beholder in some instances. We talked about whether or not we're going to use granite curbing or what the lighting situation looks like—what is screening? How does that come into play for the residents of 7 Meetinghouse? I would suggest that a final plan should come back in front of this Commission so this Commission can offer feedback on a plan that has all of that detail. I think we've appreciated the opportunity to offer feedback as it currently stands. But short of actually seeing the final plan, our feedback is, again, anecdotal. Mr. MacDougall asked will any efforts be made to satisfy the one member of the public that said to get some data points as far as parking and usage and that kind of—is there any way to measure that? Mr. Allen said I can't speak to the ability to measure, but I would say, and I reflect on our conversation here this evening, there are a few key words that continue coming. There are a few key themes that continue coming forward. If I were to think about the words that came up repeatedly, it was anecdotal and data and rationale. And if I think about themes, there were themes like compromise. To begin to think about compromise, which I personally would encourage, and I think there is tremendous opportunity here to find an answer that offers additional parking for the Town, to meet the needs of the residents while also protecting green space and the Historic District as it stands. In order to make that compromise, the requirement is data. I personally don't make decisions without it, and that's what any, I think, Town Official should be focused on when—especially talking about something that is going to run close to \$500 K in terms of a budget. So, with that, I would hope that when this returns in its final form, we have a clearly articulated rationale that talks about a need in terms of parking spaces needed at this point to meet demand, and then we can translate that to how does that relate to a solution. That's my personal hope. Mr. MacDougall said can I just throw something out that maybe Mr. Foote can accommodate is just put one of those traffic counters in the lower—not in the turnaround area where someone may be dropping off books—but if they're going down into the parking area, just put a counter there. Do you have access to those, or do we need to go to the Highway Department to contract something like that? Just to find out how many people are even going down there. Mr. Foote said we can do—sure. Mr. MacDougall said that's a data point that would be helpful to the public to know and even us because we don't know. Mr. Foote said it's not as simple as putting out a data collector. So, we talked about this building. We talked about the Old Town Hall and some of the traditional uses. So, we just don't put that out and come back and that's what it is. There are other reasons. So, if this Committee is suggesting a full-blown traffic study, we can do that. It may cost us \$15 or \$20 thousand dollars, but we could do that if that's what this Committee is suggesting, and others agree with that. Ms. Tope said I don't think that's going to accomplish what we're looking for though. And I respect your point. I see what you're saying. Maybe that's a valid data point, but not a full study, because it's the opportunity cost of other meetings and things that aren't happening that we can't measure through that. So, when you said you're not scheduling anything else with the children's event, or we're not using all 3 buildings at the same time, that's not going to get measured. But I still think we'd—it's more difficult of a data point to get, while we are interested in it, is there a need to have all 3 buildings holding meetings at one time in the Town of Bedford? I don't know the answer to that. I don't know if it's easy enough to schedule your programs where, if you have a child's program, you don't schedule something with it? I don't know the volume of programs that the Library does. I've been to a few with a child but haven't paid attention I guess to all of the others. So, maybe some commentary would help there. Ms. Johnson said I can tell you—you know the two meeting rooms we have—1 you can have 100 people in, 1 you can have 20. So, if we were to have 2 meetings of that size, I mean, it's not common to have 100 people, but you could, on a Sunday when we have a concert, we would have 100. And the upper level is, I think, 82 people, for a count. And the children's area is around 40. So, just to give capacity numbers, I know it's not full all the time, but just to give capacity. And, I mean, on a Thursday night, I can tell you the third Thursday of every month, prior to March of 2020, was not any fun to try and find parking here. Because there are 2 meetings at the Library. There's a meeting—1 or 2 meetings at Town Hall—and there's a meeting here. So, it's not

like constantly packed. It's just kind of like the grocery store when you want to check out, so does everybody else. It's that kind of phenomenon that just happens throughout the day. Ms. Tope said okay. Yes, that's a valid point. That's what I was kind of—I don't know how many requests you turn down for your meeting rooms because of parking, or if that happens. I know, again, we're going back to the anecdotal evidence there is, I've heard people say they'd like even more children's events at the Library, but I don't know if parking is impeding scheduling those. The one public commentor mentioned that the children use the green space, but the children also use the Library programs. So, just trying to balance all of those. Chair Allen said alright. Are there any other questions or comments from the Commission here? [none]. Okay. So, I guess, Jillian, I'll ask you. Can we set, I guess it's not a condition, it's a strong request, that a final plan comes back in front of us? Ms. Harris said certainly. You can request that, and we can bring the final plan back for the Commission to review, yes. Mr. Carter added with minutes from the Trustees' meeting would be great also. Mr. Vaccarello agreed that would be great. Chair Allen said alright. So, with those two requests noted, I think we can go ahead and wrap this piece of the agenda here. So, we'll close our second piece on the request for construction of the parking lot expansion. Thank you, Mr. Foote, for being here this evening and responding to the questions of both the Commission and the public. Mr. Foote said you're welcome. Have a great night.

Approval of March 1, 2022, Minutes

Chair Allen said so with that, we will move on to the next item on the agenda, approval of minutes from our March 1st meeting. Before we entertain a motion, who was in attendance of that meeting? I know I was, Lori, Steve was. Okay. We can vote on that. Is there a motion on the minutes of March 1st?

MOTION: Ms. Radke moves to approve the March 1, 2022, minutes. Mr. MacDougall seconds the motion. Mr. Carter, Ms. Tope, and Mr. Vaccarello abstain. ALL IN FAVOR – unanimous. MOTION carries. March minutes are approved.

Communications:

Ms. Harris said I think we are losing both yourself, Chris, and Steve this month. So, we're very sorry to see you will not be reappointed. So, we thank you very much for your service to the Commission. We are going to miss you. We are very much in need of new members of the Historic District Commission, so I just want to put that out there to the public. We've done an outreach mailing recently to all members of the Historic District just to let them know that we are looking for members, and we're hopeful that people will volunteer to serve on this Commission. There are some upcoming training opportunities for local officials that I just wanted to make you aware of. The New Hampshire Municipal Association has a free virtual Local Officials Workshop. That's coming up on Tuesday, May 17th. Then the New Hampshire Office of Development and Planning now also has their Spring Planning and Zoning Conference. That is also free and online, and it's April 30th and May 7th. I can send the registration links for both of those if you're interested in attending. Finally, our next meeting is May 3rd, 2022. Chair Allen said thank you, Jillian.

Members Comments and Concerns:

Are there any comments or questions or concerns from members of the Commission for discussion? Mr. Carter said I will say, Mr. Chairman, it is a lot more fun sitting here than watching it on TV—going back to my comment when we started. [laughter]. Chair Allen said there you go. I'm glad we were able

to live up to it. Ms. Radke said just to add, you did a great job with tonight's meeting. [Board agrees]. Chair Allen said thanks. Ms. Radke said oh my goodness. That was tough. You did a good job. Chair Allen said thank you. Alright, so with that, is there a motion to adjourn?

MOTION: Mr. Vaccarello motions to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Tope seconds the motion. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion carries. The meeting is adjourned at 8:58 pm.

The next meeting of the Bedford Historic District Commission will be on May 3, 2022.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Forcier