

Margot Fleischman – Town Caucus Nomination remarks – January 6, 2015

First of all, thank you all for being here. You came out on this very cold and snowy night because you care deeply about our town, and your dedication is part of what makes Bedford the wonderful place it is.

It has been my great privilege to serve as your Selectman for the past three years and I would be grateful for the chance to continue for another term.

While I know that the work the Selectmen do is not all glamour – lately there seems to be a lot of sewerage involved! – it is work that I greatly enjoy and find very meaningful.

When I ran for the first time, I was eager to get started on the issues that I felt would make a difference in the lives of Bedford residents. Then as now, people care about housing affordability, rebalancing our tax rates, providing a great education for our kids, taking good care of our seniors, adding vibrancy to our downtown, strengthening our civic and cultural institutions, fostering a healthy and cohesive community, and respecting our history even as we plan for our future.

While I am delighted to report that a lot of progress has been made on many of these issues, I have also learned that even great ideas take time and that perseverance is probably the most important tool in the Town Government toolbox. Bedford is in the middle of so many important and exciting initiatives, and what I am eager for now is the chance to see them come to fruition.

So what have the Selectmen been up to in the past three years, besides talking about sewerage pipes?

We have made a great start on Economic development, having hired an Economic Development Coordinator and joined the Route 3 Economic Development Coalition. We have just begun to tap the potential of this public-private partnership to improve our tax

base, meet the needs of a changing workforce and – at long last – begin to address our regional transportation challenges. And perhaps not entirely coincidentally, we have also seen the first increase in our Commercial/Industrial tax base in over a decade, and the subsequent modest but encouraging downward trend in our residential tax rates.

We have maintained our record of solid financial management, retaining and improving our AAA bond rating. We have made a renewed commitment to maintaining our capital infrastructure through planned investments, and are working across committees and town departments to create a new model for planning for and funding our capital needs.

We have made a great start in improving our bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, to give people of all ages and abilities access to safer streets, sidewalks, paths and trails for active living, recreation and commuting alternatives.

We have focused diligently on the vacant Coast Guard Housing on Pine Hill Road, bringing what once seemed like a pie-in-the-sky idea of creatively redeveloping that beautiful parcel one step closer to reality.

And yes, we have spent a lot of time talking about basic infrastructure, coping with broken sewerage pipes and learning about how our water system works and what it takes to ensure a safe and reliable water supply. No, not glamorous, but essential and basic to what government is for.

I am humbled that you gave me this job, allowed me to represent you, and entrusted me with your deepest concerns and highest hopes for our wonderful town. I would be honored for the chance to continue this work and I respectfully ask for your support tonight and for your vote on March 14.