

February 17, 2021

In Support of Sensible Development at the New Bedford Golf Course

As a group of community leaders whose priority is to promote sustainable and transformative economic development, we want to recognize and applaud the efforts of the City Council and Mayor Mitchell in taking the first tangible steps to advance long talked about plans to redevelop a portion of the municipal golf course for new commercial development.

The proposed 100-acre Advanced Manufacturing Campus is noteworthy to us for several reasons;

First is the notion of a sustainable master-planned development. Such an approach is forward looking both in terms of creating more of the types of higher paying jobs that such modern facilities employ, and that it puts New Bedford front and center as a city ready to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic into a new future. This new future will most certainly include increased and more geographically decentralized domestic manufacturing of critical supply chain products for health care, food supply, and other essential manufacturing that will merge high-technology processes with skilled workers. Those workers that can be found right here in New Bedford.

Second, this proposal will serve as a much-needed catalyst to improve Hathaway Road's safety, usability, and aesthetic for all that travel and live in that area, specifically those close to difficult to use intersections. While safety is paramount, a new and better designed Hathaway Road corridor can also improve access for vehicles and pedestrians while allowing for future growth.

And third, it appears that the private development proposed will actually ensure that one of New Bedford's greatest recreational assets, our 18-hole public golf course, will benefit from much needed improvements that will be welcomed by existing golfers while inspiring new players from all backgrounds to maybe take up the game for the first time. Why not be a city known for having one of the best and affordable public courses in New England where all players are welcomed?

It is also important to remind ourselves that this is a complex project, and it will take time to go through the planning, approval, and eventual development processes. We urge our elected leaders, volunteer boards and commission members to continue the thoughtful approach taken to this point. It is always good to ask tough questions, test assumptions, and have an honest debate on all aspects of this or any significant development proposal. We trust that these combined efforts

can also be executed with efficiency to allow for the best possible private sector proposal to emerge. New Bedford should only accept a plan from an experienced development team that share our values as a community.

We understand that this proposal, or really any single project, will not change the city forever. However, the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Campus does represent one of the best opportunities to achieve commercial tax growth at a scale large enough to make a real difference in future municipal budgets. And it will demonstrate that we can do big, impactful, and complex things here in New Bedford, and do them well. As such, we urge everyone involved to continue to work together to get this project done for the benefit of all.

We are writing on behalf of The Regeneration Project of the New Bedford Economic Development Council—a collaborative platform that represents community, institutional, and business leaders who are committed to shaping, advocating for, and tangibly advancing strategies for sustainable and shared growth for the City of New Bedford and the region.

Sincerely,

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