



State of the Town Address

March 23, 2017

Five years ago this week, the Board of Selectmen and I agreed to partner in building a better Hanover. When I attended the March 19, 2012 meeting of the Board of Selectmen and signed my first employment contract, we agreed that much work needed to be done to modernize the way that Hanover did business and so, we got to work. From improving some of the basic tools of daily work like replacing the touch tone phones and microcassette answering machines with voice over internet communication, to embarking on a multi-year transparency project, profoundly transforming the way Hanover communicates and engages with its citizens and business partners, we have sought – and will continue to seek – constant improvement in the way we deliver information and services to the people of this community.

Much work still needs to be done, but this half-decade has seen incredible progress – and when we look forward, we see incredible promise.

So today, at this State of the Town Breakfast, we celebrate the local leaders – both public and private – who have had a hand in our progress, and we'll hear from some of the decision makers and risk takers that have had an active role in the revitalization of Rte. 53 – our community's commercial corridor and economic lifeline.

When the Board of Selectmen embarked on the town's first ever strategic planning five years ago, the strengthening of partnerships with our business partners – and leveraging those partnerships to improve commercial activity - were among our policymakers' most important priorities. They challenged me and our team to reach out, engage, and inspire. They challenged our business people to invest in our community. They challenged regional and national companies to invest in what we consider to be the most vibrant community on the South Shore. It's taken years, thousands of hours of hard work, hundreds of meetings, and dozens of plans, but today, our message is clear: The State of our Town is strong. The State of our Town is vibrant. The State of our Town is exciting! Our community is pulsating with exhilaration and activity. With more than \$100 million in private capital being invested today – right now – in our community, Hanover is seeing an economic revival surpassing anything in the region. We have become a leader in being open for business – and our business partners are here to affirm that partnership. All of that work has a singular goal in mind – to enhance our business presence and thereby provide relief to our taxpayers through increased commercial development revenue.

We have delivered – together – on that challenge of returning vitality and vibrancy to our community. As I said last year - words even truer today - The Town of Hanover encourages – not inhibits – responsible and sustainable growth. The Town of Hanover encourages – not inhibits – innovation and new ideas. The Town of Hanover encourages – not inhibits – partnership with the private sector. Effective leaders like Lloyd Sova from PECO Real Estate Partners, the new owners and stewards of the lynchpin of Hanover's economic revitalization, the Hanover Mall, and his colleagues, are here today because they have lived that partnership – and are here to tell the tale of the success they have already seen and

the successes of tomorrow they will achieve with the help and support of the elected and appointed leaders of this community. Lloyd – we welcome you to Hanover and look forward to years of partnership. We thank you for choosing Hanover and commit today that your investment in our community will be one of your company's greatest ventures. We'll hear from Lloyd first hand in few minutes about PREP's exciting once-in-a-generation plans for Hanover's anchor property.

At the other end of Rte. 53, the former Sylvester Lumber site, one of Hanover's most historic and storied landmarks, is also undergoing an exciting and enduring revitalization. Many here have taken the trek north from Hanover to Weymouth to purchase the unmatched meats and delightful pastries at Previte's Market. Very soon, that trek will no longer be necessary, as Joe Previte and his team will be breathing new life into the Sylvester site, adding a butcher shop, bakery, and other amenities, making this multi-purpose market and restaurant one of the commercial anchors of Rte. 53. Joe is traveling with family and could not be with us today, but is a strong partner with us in redeveloping this pivotal site. In fact, Joe's arrival in Hanover is one of the great stories of Hanover's revitalization. Our Planning Department, with leadership from Assistant Town Manager Tony Marino, whose enthusiasm and willingness to help and be part of our success knows no bounds and whose invaluable help touches all aspects of our large organization, put together a marketing pamphlet that we sent around the corner and around the country, hoping to attract new investment in Hanover. Selectman Susan Setterland, herself a veteran of the banking and business community, hand delivered one of the packets to Joe Previte, noted to him that he should invest in our community – and revitalization project

was born. That's the story of Hanover's recent success – individual people who believe in what we're doing and spreading the word that Hanover is open for business.

While we're on the subject of Susan, I'd like to pay a brief homage to this tireless volunteer and stalwart supporter of our still nascent government as her term as one of our chief elected officials winds down. Susan is stepping down from the Board of Selectmen after seven years in office, but her lifetime of service will, I am sure, continue. Thank you, Susan, for all of your work to build a better Hanover.

Throughout our organization, our people – your friends and neighbors who work to fulfill the goals of the Selectmen – make our multiple partnerships possible. Here's a shining example. With us today – back just this week after an extended leave but with us for the long haul - is Pegge Powers from the Finance Department. Pegge's career has taken her from the secretarial pool at the FBI as a dedicated administrative support staffer (where, by the way her weekly salary was \$34.00) to the kiddie pool as a dedicated mom. She's been with us for nearly 30 years, and performs a variety of tasks behind the scenes to keep our Finance Department running smoothly. At more than 80 years young, Pegge comes every day because she's part of something – and we're glad that she is indeed part of our something. Pegge, we salute your service and dedication – we welcome you back and want you to know that you have a home in the Hanover Town Hall for as long as you want it. Seated with Pegge is Acting Finance Director Chelsea Stevens, who accepted the challenge to broaden her scope, spread her wings, and step up into a leadership role. That's the kind of team we have – and that's the kind of team we want.

Partnership pervades everything we do. Since the Board of Selectmen challenged us nearly five years ago to venture outside of our buildings and our comfort zones to forge

partnerships in the community, the results have been transformative. Jansi Chandler from the Cardinal Cushing Centers and Dan Berry from the South Shore YMCA are both here today. The town's relationship with Cushing and the Y has deepened from a cordial, neighborly rapport to an unbreakable bond; we're working together on a host of projects from improving access to affordable housing (Just this past Monday night the Affordable Housing Trust increased funding by \$55,500 totaling \$296,000 of contributions from the Affordable Housing Trust to the Kennedy building project), to revitalizing yet another section of Rte. 53, to responsibly developing one of the town's largest vacant parcels with Cushing, and expanding program access to our Seniors and students with the Y, progress defines our partnership with these non-profit all-star organizations. All that from forging relationships, building trust, and never losing sight of the Selectmen's strategic goals.

Several other partners – some who have endured the ebbs and flows of the economy in town for decades, others who have recently invested in our community – are with us today to show their support for building a better Hanover - together. I'd like to introduce you to a few of them. Brian and Melanie O'Neill from the Rustic Marlin are creating excitement and an artistic buzz with their new sign shop behind Tractor Supply. One of their creations hangs in my office as a symbol of the power of local small businesses. Brian and Melanie – thank you for believing and investing in Hanover! Tom Norton and Richard Walker from Coastal Volkswagen have been here in town for a few years now, but have recently deepened their commitment, working with Town Planner Pete Matchak and our volunteers on the Planning Board to reinvest in their property. Their pledge to expand their financial commitment to their property is a sign that our local economy is vibrant – and our local community is as well. Thank you Tom and Richard. We're here for you moving forward!

Steve Avitable and his family are seasoned veterans of business on Rte. 53. Their family business, Avitable Fine Jewelers, has been a presence in Hanover for more nearly 15 years. Steve is one of the best examples of local talent staying local – investing in their hometown – and in our community. Thank you Steve – and your family – for choosing to make Hanover your home – and the hub of your business. The story of Joe Previte and his decision to locate to Hanover because of Susan’s outreach is being repeated every day here. Our team is reaching out to potential partners and enticing them to do business in a town that is open for business. Today we welcome Tim Bulman from District Real Estate Advisors - the new owners of the Burger King site. Tim has caught the contagious bug of Hanoveritis and is poised to be yet another partner in improving a site ripe for redevelopment.

You can see the theme developing in this year’s remarks. Partnerships in and out of our government are the bedrock of our progress. We have spent hundreds of hours fine-tuning our information reporting over the last few years. From updating our website, to expanding our social media outreach, to producing videos on topics as varied as water quality and Christmas cooking, we have worked tirelessly to engage and inform the public. We have recently fulfilled another of the Selectmen’s goals through the implementation of dashboards for each department. Our award winning website now features dashboards that provide regularly updated information, providing residents, visitors, and business partners a snapshot of our government with the click of a mouse. The Selectmen’s meetings are now paperless, with a new method of information sharing that has streamlined and improved the way our elected leaders obtain and retain the information coming from the Executive office. So the information on what we do and how we do it is at

your fingertips. And many of our people who do all of the 'whats' and the 'its' of a local government are here with us today – because alongside all of our work with our business partners, all of our economic development activity, and all of our partnerships, we continue to conduct the basic, critical work of protecting public safety, providing basic services like plowing snow, collecting taxes educating our young people, and providing clean water to our residents. Today, I'd like to recognize and thank some members of our team, some of the unheralded but dedicated public servants who suit up and show up every day in a tireless and constant pursuit of good government and a better Hanover. Each of the initiatives I've mentioned today have Art Ceurvels' fingerprints on them, and probably some gravy and coffee stains as well because of all the work he does at his kitchen table at home working on our behalf. Art – thank you for being there whenever we present you with another new project and for never saying no – even when you want to. Hanover has emerged as a leader in transparency, in financial reporting, in openness and engagement – and we have you to thank for implementing every step to get us there.

Here's another example of what it means to care – and to be there – I'm sure you saw the news reports the last couple of days of the extraordinary work of our public safety officials - responding to a major hazmat and law enforcement incident on Tuesday night, then mere hours later being dispatched to assist in fighting a seven alarm fire in Rockland just hours later. Our police officers and firefighters stand ready – at a moment's notice, around the clock and for multiple calls – to respond when needed. All of our men and women in uniform deserve our gratitude for the challenging, relentless, and dangerous work they do.

With us today are some living examples of that unwavering commitment. Police Chief Larry Sweeney has been answering the call for more than thirty years, beginning his career

as a public safety dispatcher, and rising to be one of the region's most respected law enforcement executives. He not only wears a gold badge as our Police Chief, he wears of badge of honor for the privilege of being a native son of Hanover that has been allowed to live a life of service to his hometown. Chief, we salute you and we thank you for your lifetime of service. With Chief Sweeney today is yet another shining example of our partnerships – this one with the Hanover Public Schools. School Resource Officer John Voelkel has swiftly become an indispensable and esteemed member of the Hanover Schools team, and is firmly established as a resource for our educational professionals and a role model for our Hanover Youth. Officer John – thank you for showing our young people what integrity and service means on a daily basis. Integrity and service define our School Superintendent, Matt Ferron. He sits here today not for the free breakfast, not for the chance to have his picture taken with Officer John. Matt Ferron is here today because he believes – fervently – in the unbreakable partnership between the Town of Hanover and the Hanover Public Schools, an enduring and abiding relationship that just plain doesn't exist in other communities – and our students and their families are the beneficiaries of that relationship. Thank you, Matt, for being a partner and a friend.

Another Hanover native has answered the call for decades as well. Fire Chief Blanchard – another home-grown local leader, chose to follow in the honorable footsteps of his father and brother and rose through the ranks to make his footprint on Hanover's history as Fire Chief. The challenges and the dangers are real – Chief Blanchard stood alongside his brother and sister firefighters yesterday as a former warehouse in Rockland scorched and blackened the earth below. Our Hanover firefighters – led bravely by Chief Blanchard - saved property and people by minimizing this blaze's impact on nearby homes and

businesses – an unheralded but vitally important service to the Hanover of today and tomorrow. Speaking of tomorrow's Hanover, with Chief Blanchard is our newly minted Deputy Chief Jason Cavallaro, another native set to help write the story of Hanover's history with his public service story. Jay represents everything that's right with the next generation of leadership in our community – he's made the commitment to raise his family here and give back to the town that has given him so much. Jay – we welcome you to the leadership team and in your capable hands we place our confidence in its future.

Victor Diniak knows those values of commitment and giving back. He's been doing so since returning to his hometown to work after graduating from MIT, eschewing a much more lucrative career in quantum physics or rocket science (that was, quite literally, the family business) in favor of a career in public service serving his hometown. Since Ronald Reagan was President, Victor has been tirelessly answering the call at all hours to keep our roads safe, our water clean, and our trash disposed. He even wrote the accounting program that the town used to use to pay our bills and balance our books – how many native sons can say that? Thank you Victor – for passing up rockets to deal with replacing sprockets. And speaking of cogs, of sprockets, one of the critical cogs in the wheels of progress at the Hanover DPW who, for nearly 50 (yes 50) years has shown up daily to do his part for team Hanover is DPW Deputy Superintendent Cur MacLean. Curt isn't with us this morning, as he's at a convention in the Midwest preparing for the next chapter in his life, but since his career is winding down – he's set to retire before next snow season – I thought we should recognize and thank a dedicated employee who has logged thousands of calls in the middle of the night, hundreds of cold, snowy blizzards, and countless improvements to our

infrastructure and our local soul. Curt MacLean defines dedication and public service – and for that we thank him.

People don't call Bob Murray when something's going right. As our Facilities Manager – the living embodiment of the 'fix it guy' Schneider from the old Sitcom 'One Day At A Time', Bob is the guy we call when something's wrong. And he's always there. His Deputy Alan Peterson is too. Alan recently joined us and knows firsthand the demands of managing more than a dozen buildings, dozens of customers – all who want their thing to be fixed now – and hundreds of work orders that also need to be done. Finish your breakfast quickly Alan, because I'm sure a few more work orders have been entered into our now electronic work order management system while I've been talking. Welcome and thank you – and now get back to work!

Our gathering today is televised on Hanover Community Television, a resource that has become a go-to source of information for our residents. Colleen Smith's keen eye and steady hand have been behind the lens and on the grips of the cameras as Station Manager for more than half a decade. She has successfully led HCTV to a multimedia cheerleader for all things Hanover; even travelling recently to Springfield so that residents who could not witness our state championship boys' basketball game in person could enjoy it from their homes or their mobile devices. Colleen's enthusiasm shines through even though most of her work is behind the camera. But that's the beauty of team Hanover. Many of us are out front, interacting with citizens and officials, but many of the people who really make team Hanover a success are just doing what they love – every day in every way, with a simple focus – to build a better community. Thank you, Colleen and all of your colleagues for doing your part to make the great place it is to live and work.

And isn't it great? Hundreds of residents made the same long trip to Springfield that Colleen did – cheering the basketball team to victory and hundreds more waited for them at home as our boy's basketball team brought another championship to the community that is quickly becoming the title town of High School sports, escorted by the same Police and Fire Departments we mentioned earlier. That's community. That's Hanover.

And I guess that spirit - that passion for this special place – that contagious enthusiasm for our community - is what attracts folks like Lloyd Sova and PECO Real Estate Partners to bring his team and his willingness to invest \$40 million in the future of Hanover – because we're a community with a rich and storied past, but one with an even richer future. We're a community committed to being among the best. And we are among the best. Thanks to all of you for making it that way, and thanks to all of you for giving me – each day - the honor of being able to help us get there - together.