

Chris Gittins - Caucus Nomination Speech

Good evening. I am Chris Gittins. I ask for your nomination to run because I am committed to Bedford, committed to the well-being of Bedford's residents, and committed to the well-being of Bedford's residents for generations to come. It is a gift to live in a community with all good things Bedford has to offer. I do not take this gift for granted, and want to do my part to build and sustain our community.

Almost twenty years ago, I moved to Bedford into the house that my grandparents built in 1951. Like many Americans of that era my grandparents moved out from the city in pursuit of the American dream. My grandfather made electronics components at General Radio and my grandmother worked in the cafeteria at Page School, now Page Place Condominiums. They were parishioners at St. Paul's. My father was a member of the first graduating class at Bedford High School in 1958. He played on the football team and worked at Blue Ribbon Dairy.

I am fortunate to still live in the home that my grandparents built but now with my wife and two children. Our kids are benefiting from Bedford's great schools, our daughter at Lane and our son at Davis. We're members of First Parish Church and Wedgewood. I served for three years on the town's Arbor Resources Committee. I'm now a Cub Scout den leader. From all these community groups, I appreciate that one of Bedford's strengths is its residents who are so engaged and willing to pitch in to make our Town function so well.

Like most scientists and engineers, I believe in the need to be open to new ideas and to be mindful of lessons learned from prior experience. Strong foundations enable us to operate a little out of our comfort zone when we address new challenges.

My grandparent's stories of living in Bedford and my experiences visiting them here when I was a child are very different from the Bedford I see today. When they moved here Bedford was rural. Now we are suburban. Although the details of day-to-day life here have changed, I believe our hopes for our lives, our children's lives and for the future are much the same. We want a strong foundation upon which we can build our lives – good schools, safe neighborhoods and welcoming neighbors, clean air and water, good health, opportunities for gainful employment and the physical means to get there.

The challenges we face to building and maintaining that strong foundation are different though than they were decades ago. We need to adapt our responses accordingly. We must also be mindful to plan for the long term while addressing immediate needs.

As resident my primary areas of concern have been: Environment, Transportation and Education. As a Selectman, I would seek to build upon the good work our Selectmen and town committees have already done, such as implementing Community Choice Aggregation which will enable Bedford residents to get cleaner energy than is provided by basic service and likely at lower rates. I would also prioritize implementation of a Net Zero plan to reduce the town's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 and implementation of the infrastructure

recommendations from the 2015 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to improve connectivity of neighborhoods and to make Bedford more walkable and bikeable. These are investments we need to make not just to improve our quality of life now, but also for our children and for residents in decades to come.

Thank you for your attention. I ask for your support tonight because I am committed to building and sustaining Bedford so it can continue to be a gift to us and future generations. I hope to earn your vote on March 9.

Christopher Gittins

January 8, 2019