

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board Week Ending –March 2, 2026

1. Daniel Stapleton
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Please Note: The Select Board Correspondence policy has been updated as of January 27, 2025. The letters posted here reflect the views and opinions of the author as recorded in the body of their email. Neither the Select Board nor Town staff have verified or reviewed the contents. The Select Board and the Town do not necessarily agree, condone, support or advocate the ideas expressed in these letters and have not verified any factual statements made in the letters.

To: Town of Concord Select Board; Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager; West Concord Advisory Committee

From: Dan Stapleton, 20 Conant Street, West Concord

Re.: Proposed Cell Tower at Rideout Field and Playground

This letter follows previous correspondence and public comment, which requested that the Town not pursue the Request for Proposal/Bid for a monopile cell tower at Rideout Field and Playground until the Town performs appropriate due diligence. The following comes with the caveat that I am stating upfront that I have no expertise and limited (but growing) knowledge about broadband, do have experience with other types of infrastructure planning, and have been getting up to speed about past Town efforts around the landfill and Umbrella cell towers and the CMLP fiber improvements. And I acknowledge that the Select Board and the Town (in particular, the CMLP) may have already looked at this more comprehensively than I am aware of and I may not have my facts straight yet – but the Town seems to be proceeding so quickly with Rideout and since my wife and I will be directly impacted I wanted to get this letter out now.

The basis for my request to stop proceeding with the Rideout Tower bid/proposal is as follows.

1. The Town has not assessed the West Concord mobile goals, service needs and market considerations. West Concord is in transition with substantial new mixed-use development proposed (e.g., MCI redevelopment). The mobile industry is also in significant transition with recent and on-going evolution to 5G and 6G-Ready (2030 launch). The Town's Fiber service is also expanding and improving. An assessment of West Concord mobile goals and service needs, similar to other towns, would likely define a digital infrastructure strategy that would be a "hybrid" of Mobile Broadband (4G, 5G-low, mid, high band, 6G-ready); Fiber (the Town service via CMLP); and Fixed Wireless Access (for areas not accessible with Fiber) that would address the specific current and future mobile demands of West Concord residents, businesses and emergency services and be fully integrated with the Town's Fiber broadband strategy, capabilities and planned improvements (XGS-PON).
2. My understanding is that the Town's overall digital network approach is to: a) rely upon CMLP fiber as the network "backbone" providing near 100% data coverage and support dark fiber leasing, b) fill in the broadband mobile gaps with private developers (tower companies), and c) ease private development by relaxing zoning. This approach, however, does not mean that development of a West Concord mobile strategy, based on an analysis of specific West Concord needs and concerns, is still not warranted before proceeding with a new West Concord tower. The West Concord broadband infrastructure, including mobile, is key communication infrastructure that benefits residents but also affects the Town's competitiveness in the future (as demonstrated by Town's committed investment in the Fiber component of the broadband network).
3. The Town has not confirmed existing West Concord mobile coverage and capacity. Coverage refers to the geographical area where a signal can be reached. Capacity refers to the capability for managing data traffic without disruption. The only study done by the Town is a 700 MHz propagation model by IDK Communications, which only evaluates 4G and low band 5G, providing limited information on other coverage (e.g., 5G mid band) and no information on capacity. Also, my own very-limited drive/walk test with my phone app and 5G service indicates that the gaps indicated by the propagation model should be checked further with field tests and available heat maps.

4. Most importantly, the Town does not appear to have performed an Alternative Site Analyses of potential tower locations. The Town is proceeding with the Rideout monopile tower with (apparently) only a cursory look at other sites and without any industry-consistent analysis of alternative sites, including performing some or all of the following:
 - Multiple site review (there are many eligible properties within West Concord, including Town-owned properties)
 - For each alternative site:
 - Compliance with West Concord Network Strategy
 - Performance modeling
 - Site accessibility
 - Available infrastructure (e.g., electrical, fiber)
 - Zoning and regulatory compliance
 - Construction and maintenance cost estimate
 - Expected carrier interest
 - Town income projections (fiber and land use leases)
 - **Adverse impact analysis** - impacts to the **public, property owners** and natural resources, including:
 - Visual and Aesthetic Impact Assessment
 - Environmental Impact Assessment (if required)
 - RF Emissions Safety Report
 - Safety and Structural Risk Analysis
 - Community and Property Value Impact Assessment
 - Availability of Town fiber capacity to meet future needs (versus leased use for the tower)

There is reasonable expectation that, in addition to issues brought up by others, the Rideout Field and Playground tower will adversely impact property values of a number of properties in the vicinity. Before that happens, isn't it reasonable to expect that the Town would do appropriate due diligence to confirm that this is the best strategy and site? Also, it is hard to support the proposed zoning change to remove barriers to development (Section 7.8 - Wireless Communications Facilities), if the Town doesn't do appropriate due diligence when locating new mobile facilities – in particular an Alternatives Site Analysis and an assessment of impacts to the public and property owners.

Given that there is, apparently, no imminent need for enhanced coverage in West Concord, it seems that a new subcommittee working with CMLP (and the Fiber Broadband Completion Task Force), and the West Concord Advisory Committee would be appropriate and capable to develop a West Concord mobile strategy, Alternatives Site Analysis and recommendations.

I hope that the Select Board will consider this request, and if no further study is recommended by the Select Board, indicate why not.

Thank you for your consideration.

3/2/2026

Dear Members of the Concord Select Board,

In November 2025 the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) have jointly published a [detailed report](#) that recommends the rejection of [the IHRA definition](#) because that definition's examples label an overwhelming majority of Israel or Zionism criticisms as antisemitism. The Brandeis Center, the ADL, StandWithUs, and other right-wing advocacy organizations and individuals have consistently been operationalizing the IHRA examples for this purpose. As the MESA/AAUP report indicates, of the 102 complaints filed with the Office of Civil Rights that the report analyzes, all but one focus on speech critical of Israel; about 80 percent describe speech critical of Israel or Zionism as antisemitism, and about 50 percent consist solely of such criticism. This is what the ACLU of Massachusetts warned the Concord Select Board in the letter they rushed this January (attached again for your convenience, since it is not yet available online). The ACLU-M wrote that "the IHRA definition erroneously conflates constitutionally protected political speech with unprotected discrimination," and that it "incorporates examples of constitutionally protected political criticism of Israel, [as] examples of antisemitism." Because of these reasons the IHRA examples as a whole cannot be considered good policy, or even a guide, even when it has bipartisan support or broad national or international recognition.

Of the three prominent antisemitism definitions, which includes the [Nexus Document](#) and the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#) (JDA), the IHRA definition is distinctly expansive, implicit, and simultaneously vague in its inclusion of Israel or Zionism criticism as antisemitism. The IHRA definition's examples must be rejected because they lack clarity, nuance, and specificity. In contrast, both the Nexus Document and the JDA are explicit, clear, and nuanced in this specific aspect. The JDA, for example, explicitly distinguishes between antisemitic and non-antisemitic instances of Israel-criticism: "Hostility to Israel could be an expression of an antisemitic animus, or it could be a reaction to a human rights violation, or it could be the emotion that a Palestinian person feels on account of their experience at the hands of the State." [Concerned Jewish Faculty and Staff](#) and many other progressive groups have suggested the Jerusalem Declaration and the Nexus Document as "useful

guides” instead and state that these other two definitions “are endorsed by large segments of the Jewish community and avoid IHRA’s pitfalls.”

The claims that the IHRA definition, together with its examples as a whole, offer a harmless, non-legally binding guidance that does not chill speech has been proven wrong, including in the town of Concord. As I made explicit in my public testimony on [February 25 Select Board meeting](#), I firsthand experienced the chilling effect and the increased emotional and fiduciary costs of the IHRA definition’s examples, specifically it’s vague and broad “double standards” example, as someone who wants to engage the public from a Palestinian perspective. Concord Carlisle for Informed Dialogue co-founder friend Mahreen Hoda and I did a repeat screening of *No Other Land* in Concord on December 6th. Soon after we announced the screening, an anonymous member of the public called the Concord police and complained to Capt. Brian Goldman about the documentary, saying that it is a one-sided, antisemitic, i.e. that the documentary is antisemitic because it applies double standards to Israel. The police then made the decision to involve the library director who ended up calling me at home a week after I reserved the room in Fowler Library. On the phone the director said that she called because a community member who labeled the documentary one-sided and antisemitic (again, that the documentary is antisemitic because it applies double standards to Israel), and expressed concern about such a film’s screening on public property. The IHRA Definition’s examples have already been deployed in Concord to silence our constitutionally protected First Amendment rights. The IHRA Definition’s examples must therefore be rejected immediately.

Because of its lack of clarity, nuance, and specificity I urge the Select Board to reject the IHRA definition’s examples and to consider embracing the JDA or the Nexus Definition of Antisemitism as helpful, non-binding, guiding documents for our community to stand strong together against antisemitism in our town and schools.

Respectfully,

Ece Turnator

Cambridge Turnpike, Concord

Dear Select Board and Town Manager LaFleur,

From Paul Boehm's comments at the last Select Board meeting it sounds like the Board did not intend to include the controversial IHRA examples as part of its IHRA adoption.

At a future Select Board meeting could the Board please consider putting that in writing? Perhaps with an amendment that makes it explicit?

It's important to put it in writing because in just about every article written, "the IHRA definition" implies both the definition and the examples. That's why many people are upset. They assumed the Board had adopted the examples.

It's important to exclude the examples so that the Select Board does not label any speech critical of a foreign government as possibly antisemitic.

Thanks for all your efforts on this!

Mattan Kamon

Hawthorne Lane

Dear Members of the Select Board,

At the last Select Board meeting, the Board expressed a willingness to clarify the status of the IHRA examples in the proclamation. I'm writing to express my support for an amendment to the proclamation.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism is a document that includes definitional text and text related to "contemporary examples of antisemitism." As is clear from the Board's correspondence, letters to the Bridge, the ACLU's letter to the Board (attached for your convenience), and the ADL's comments in the recent Jewish Journal article, the proclamation, which stated "the Select Board hereby adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism," has been interpreted to adopt the entire IHRA working definition of antisemitism document, including the examples.

Even though the Board received a lot of correspondence expressing concerns about the IHRA examples, the Board did not indicate that the IHRA adoption excluded the examples during their Jan. 27 meeting or in the proclamation itself. On the contrary, during the Jan. 27 meeting, Mr. Boehm stated that "[t]he IHRA definition does create examples, for guidance, that's all they are. The proclamation reinforces the attributes of the IHRA definition." This statement as well as the language of the proclamation itself indicated to the public that Concord adopted the entire IHRA document including the examples.

During the Feb. 25 Board meeting, Mr. Boehm stated that there has been misunderstanding and a "conflation between the definition itself and examples given in the document" and that the definitional text and examples are "two distinct pieces."

I'm relieved to hear that the Board will revisit the proclamation and clarify the status of the examples. As explained by the ACLU's letter to the Board, the IHRA definition "incorporates examples of constitutionally protected political criticism of Israel." The IHRA examples have been used to silence and punish critics of Israel's policies, for example, Rumeysa Ozturk's case among many others. Given the weaponization of antisemitism allegations both nationally and locally to punish pro-Palestine speech (as discussed in the Bridge here and here), the proclamation should not have adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. Palestinian, Arab and Muslim community members and allies have the right to speak about Palestinian human rights and history without fear and discrimination.

I respectfully request that the Board amend the proclamation to remove the adoption of the IHRA definition since it is associated with examples that encompass political criticism of Israel. There are other definitions of antisemitism that can be referenced in the

proclamation instead. At the very least, the proclamation should be amended to explicitly disclaim the IHRA examples.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Mahreen Hoda, Oak Knoll Rd., Carlisle