



TOWN HALL  
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**DRB Memorandum #2009-08**

**Memo to:** Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner  
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director  
**From:** Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner  
**Subject:** DRB Meeting – July 27, 2009

The Monday, July 27, 2009, joint meeting of the Design Review Board and Historical Commission began at 6:37 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall.

Design Review Board Members Janet Winston (Chair), Jonathan Salvon and Jim Wald were present.

Historical Commission Members Gai Carpenter and Jim Wald were present. Louis Greenbaum arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works, Jeremy Barker-Plotkin of the Farmers' Market, and Peter Lillya of the Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee.

The Board and Commission members turned to **Old Business**.

**Old Business**

**Review of conceptual plan for redesign of Spring Street and the Town Common (Spring Street) parking lot – presentation by Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works**

Mr. Mooring presented plans for the reconstruction of Spring Street from Churchill Street to Boltwood Avenue. He then presented plans for the reconstruction of the Town Common (Spring Street) parking lot.

**Spring Street from Churchill Street to Boltwood Avenue**

The existing asphalt sidewalk on the north side of the street will be removed and replaced with a new concrete sidewalk that will be at a lower elevation, closer to the level of the street. The new sidewalk will be moved north by about 3 to 4 feet to align with the property line of Grace Episcopal Church. The new sidewalk will be 5 feet wide and will have a 6 inch vertical granite curb.

The roadway grading will be changed so that there will be a crown in the center of the road and a “gully” or gutter along the northern edge, where the roadway meets the parallel parking spaces. This will allow stormwater to run off the parking spaces and into the new catch basins to be installed in the gutter. A new drainage system will be installed in the roadway, connecting to the existing drainage system in Churchill Street. There will also be a sewer line and water line installed in Spring Street as part of this reconstruction. The work is being done in coordination with the renovations planned by Amherst College for The Lord Jeffery Inn.

Mr. Mooring stated that the new sidewalks are planned to have a similar paving pattern to that of the sidewalks in the central part of downtown – brick edging with diagonal scoring and construction joints. Amherst College will

be building the sidewalks on the south side of the street and they will match whatever the town does on the north side.

The roadway will be 22 feet wide with 8 foot wide parking spaces on either side.

There will be a low retaining wall beginning at the stucco parsonage building (formerly the home of the LAOS bookstore). The retaining wall will continue to the driveway that serves the Masons' parking lot, behind the yellow frame house. The purpose of this retaining wall is to take up the grade change created by lowering the sidewalk. The Masons' driveway will be regraded. There will also be a granite curb installed in front of the yellow frame house and in front of the beige house, again to take up the change in grade.

In front of the Grace Church Columbarium and Memorial Garden, approximately 4 parking spaces will be lost, due to grading problems. A grassy, sloped island will be constructed in place of these parking spaces.

Ms. Brestrup asked if the Board wished to discuss the issue of materials for the retaining wall, since the wall will be adjacent to the gray stone church and across the street from The Lord Jeffery Inn, which will be renovated.

Mr. Mooring noted that the current plans call for the use of the concrete interlocking block being used in front of Zanna's and the Souper Bowl.

Jonathan Salvon stated that he would rather not see concrete block used for the retaining wall, for aesthetic reasons.

Mr. Mooring noted that the concrete block is available in a granite (gray) color.

Mr. Salvon asked that the DPW come back and show the Design Review Board samples of the proposed materials. Ms. Winston noted that she would like to see the darker gray color if the concrete block must be used. Board members acknowledged that stone would be more expensive and that expense was a difficult issue in these economic times.

Ms. Brestrup offered to contact Grace Church to ascertain if they would be willing to share the cost of installing a stone wall rather than concrete block.

Mr. Mooring noted that the town is currently using northern granite for the curbing, since the southern granite that had been used elsewhere in the downtown contains more quartz.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) That the DPW come back to the Design Review Board with materials and colors for the retaining wall.

### **Town Common (Spring Street) Parking Lot**

Mr. Mooring went on to describe the work proposed for the Spring Street parking lot. The parking lot is proposed to be narrowed. This will slow down the traffic driving through the lot. The sidewalks as asphalt now and are proposed to be replaced with new concrete sidewalks. The new sidewalks will be 14 feet wide. The curbing will be sloped or beveled so that farmers can drive up onto them during the Farmers' Market. The concrete sidewalks can be either all concrete or can have the same pattern as those in the central downtown area. New benches will face towards the Common.

The concrete will have the diagonal scoring pattern that has been established for other sidewalks downtown. The sloped granite curb will be 6 inches high.

Mr. Barker-Plotkin said that people are concerned about having the farmers' trucks tilted, with one set of wheels on the sidewalk and one set of wheels on the parking lot pavement. He wants the trucks to be able to pull all the way up onto the sidewalk. Mr. Mooring said that the sidewalks could be made wider.

Mr. Barker-Plotkin suggested that the proposed trees be moved completely onto the Common, and out of the sidewalk area, to provide more room for farmers' trucks.

Mr. Salvon agreed that it would be “cleaner” if the trees were not in the sidewalk.

Mr. Lillya noted that it would simplify Farmers’ Market operations if the trees were moved back into the grass area.

Mr. Mooring stated that the light poles have a base of 12 to 18 inches and that it would be best if these remained within the sidewalk for ease of maintenance. He also noted that the light pole bases would contain electrical outlets for the farmers to connect to during the market. He commented that it is better to put electrical conduit under a solid surface, rather than grass. He also noted that the parking meters would be on the outside of the sidewalks, away from the parking spaces.

Mr. Salvon recommended that some other type of parking system be instituted, rather than parking meters.

Mr. Mooring stated that parking machines are more expensive than meters and that the town would probably need to stay with meters for now. He stated that there are three types of parking payment systems:

- 1) Pay and display;
- 2) Pay and walk away; (this type requires that each space have an ID number);
- 3) Meters.

Mr. Greenbaum arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Mooring noted that the best, newest parking meters are located in the Spring Street parking lot.

Mr. Wald stated that the town should think about getting rid of the parking meters.

Ms. Brestrup asked about adding some type of constriction at the east end of the parking lot, similar to that proposed at the west end. She noted that adding islands at the east end would cause the loss of 3 parking spaces. She stated that islands at the west end would allow the crosswalks to line up in a more perpendicular fashion with the roadway and sidewalks.

Mr. Mooring stated that the islands are more necessary at the west end in order to control traffic. He noted that the crosswalks can be aligned to be more perpendicular at the east end without installing islands. He expressed concern about losing parking spaces.

Ms. Brestrup stated that there was a concern about the addition of signs on the Town Common. She noted that the Design Review Board and the Historical Commission had voted at a previous meeting that there should not be permanent signs for the benefit of a particular group or entity installed on the Town Common.

Mr. Mooring said that the Farmers’ Market is considering the possibility of a temporary banner, to be strung across the Spring Street lot on the day before and the day of the Farmers’ Market.

Mr. Salvon stated that if a stage were installed on the Common, it should be installed on the downhill side. Mr. Mooring noted that there are trees in the way of installing a stage on the downhill side.

Mr. Wald mentioned the Frederick Law Olmsted plan for the Town Common and stated that decisions should be made based on a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Mooring noted that it would be good to have some sort of permanent stage because there is a need to obtain permits (building permits, electrical permits, etc.) every time a temporary stage is installed.

Mr. Wald stated that the Historical Commission was generally in favor of the idea of a bandstand or stage but that it needs to be part of a whole, comprehensive plan.

Ms. Carpenter asked if performers had been consulted on the optimum location for a stage or bandstand.

Ms. Winston suggested that wiring for a stage could be installed and a permanent stage could be installed at a later date.

Mr. Mooring stated that there is a transformer at the southwest corner and that the town will take over the power on the Common on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The DPW proposes to run an electrical circuit all around the Common and provide power outlets on all of the light poles.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) That the trees should be in the Common grass area and not in the sidewalk;
- 2) That the DPW should be encouraged to install “bump outs” at the east end of the parking lot;
- 3) That the 14 foot sidewalk was satisfactory;
- 4) That the system of metering should be re-examined;
- 5) That the “easing” of the corners of the sidewalk at the west end was a good idea.

Mr. Wald and Mr. Greenbaum left the meeting at 7:25 p.m. to attend Town Meeting.

Ms. Carpenter commented that it was important to consider traffic calming for days when the Farmers’ Market was not in session. This supports the need for “bump outs” at the east end.

Ms. Winston noted that islands or “bump outs” would define and protect the parking spaces at the corners of the lot.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Cc: Anita Licis, DRB  
Janet Winston, DRB  
Jim Wald, DRB & HC  
Jonathan Salvon, DRB  
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB  
Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner  
Nate Malloy, Associate Planner  
Aaron Hayden, Select Board Liaison  
Larry Shaffer, Town Manager  
Jason Skeels, Town Engineer  
Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works  
Peter Lillya, Public Transportation & Bicycle Committee