



TOWN HALL
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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April 27, 2016

DRB MEMORANDUM

Memo to: Rob Morra, Building Commissioner
David Ziomek, Asst. Town Manager
Christine Brestrup, Planning Director
Jennifer Gannett, Permit Administrator
Ruth Taylor, Administrative Assistant

From: Jonathan Tucker, Senior Planner

Subject: DRB Meeting – April 26, 2016

The Monday, April 5, 2017 meeting of the Design Review Board began at 7:15 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room/Library, Amherst Town Hall.

Design Review Board members Catherine Porter, Derek Noble, and Jonathan Salvon were present. Member Jan Marquardt was absent.

Staff present included Senior Planner Jonathan Tucker.

Applicants present included Sarah la Cour, Executive Director of the Amherst B.I.D.

Applications

DRB 2016-00015, Amherst B.I.D. – Lessey Street, adjacent to Sweetser Park – Pilot installation of Temporary public restroom unit.

Recommend approval as proposed, with one condition.

Ms. La Cour presented site plans and specification sheets for the proposed restroom unit to be located at the west end of the paved portion of Lessey Street, adjacent to and just north of the Enos Foster Cook Memorial fountain. This would move two existing handicapped accessible parking spaces further east, but would not remove them.

Mr. Tucker pointed out that the site was located in the public way, and so would only require building permits and Select Board approval following advisory recommendations by the Design Review Board

and Historical Commission. The site is located within the Dickinson National Historic Register District and is immediately adjacent to historic Sweetser Park.

Ms. La Cour indicated that a lack of public restrooms had been an issue for downtown Amherst for years. Recent difficulties experienced by private businesses were causing them to limit use of their rest rooms to only customers. This was an experiment to see if this kind of public restroom unit would meet demand, and if this location was feasible. The site has water and sewer, power, and nearby site lighting (a period pole in Sweetser Park). The unit had its own air conditioning for summer weather.

The pilot installation will last for 4 months weeks, June through September, after which it will be removed. It will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., after which it will be locked. It will not be open or available during the downtown bar hours. Responsibility for daily upkeep will be shared by the B.I.D. and Amherst Public Works.

The restroom unit is essentially a trailer unit on wheels. The B.I.D. will lease the unit at a cost of about \$20,000 for the 4 months, and the Town will provide in-kind services in terms of connecting the unit to water, sewer, and electrical power. The restroom unit has a white metal exterior and will contain three restrooms—a men’s room, a women’s room, and an accessible restroom, that comes with its own ramp.

The section of Lessey Street across which the restroom unit would be placed was closed off some years ago and converted into an extension of Sweetser Park, but it had been designed with subgrade matting to support and allow emergency fire vehicle access to the east side of the 30 Boltwood Walk building and the Clerk House, in the event that portions of Lessey Street further east were blocked off. The B.I.D. was still waiting for comments from Fire Chief Nelson on the proposed location.

Once in place, the area around the restroom unit would be landscaped with potted shrubs and small trees. A trellis was being considered to screen the north end of the unit facing the Lessey Street sidewalk. The ramp to the accessible bathroom would connect directly to the cross path leading from the Cook fountain to the Lessey Street sidewalk.

Signs indicating the presence of the restrooms would be installed at the main intersection and the B.I.D. will distribute a small map showing the restrooms’ location to downtown businesses for distribution to visitors.

There was unanimous consensus that the site worked well for an experiment. Its proximity to the Police Station was noted.

After further discussion, the Design Review Board recommended approval of the temporary public restroom installation, as proposed, with the following condition:

- 1) That the B.I.D consult with the manufacturer to see if a diaper table could be installed in the accessible restroom, for the convenience of families.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.