

Article 14: Improvements to North Amherst Library

Article 14 seeks funding for an architect's design for improvements to the North Amherst Library. The Friends of the North Amherst Library are sponsoring Article 14.

A group of North Amherst neighbors formed the Friends of the North Amherst Library this summer to improve our beloved North Amherst Library, the heart of our village center.

Currently, access to the North Amherst Library is limited to those able to climb the seven steps to its only door. Yet, since 1990, the Americans With Disabilities Act has prohibited discrimination based on disability. It is past time for our Library to be accessible to all.

Approving Article 14 will start to address this and other North Amherst Library issues:

- * No public restroom or water fountain (required by ADA regulations)
- * Burns oil for heating/cooling
- * Public can use only the middle floor (800 SF)
- * Staff use only the middle floor and ground floor (about 700 SF)
- * Top floor (20' x 30' = 600 SF) is unfinished and unused

The Town recently purchased the land behind the North Amherst Library. This can now provide convenient parking for 18 vehicles. It also allows for a new, accessible, ground floor entrance in the rear of the Library -- the key to an efficient solution for Library issues.

The Motion under Article 14 will ask \$50,000 from Free Cash for an architect's design for the improvements that Article 14 specifies.

For instance, a new sidewalk, bordering the parking lot and extending to the new rear entrance, would provide access for those using wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, etc.

A new external elevator near the new rear entrance, using the modern space-saving elevator technology and serving all three floors, would provide accessibility. It would also allow meetings in a new, top floor community room even when the Library is closed.

\$50,000 is the minimum under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B, Section 6, for "competitive sealed proposals" when selection of the most advantageous offer, from a responsible bidder, requires a comparative judgment of factors in addition to price. When seeking a design, this is appropriate.

Photos and Parking Diagram: Over, please.

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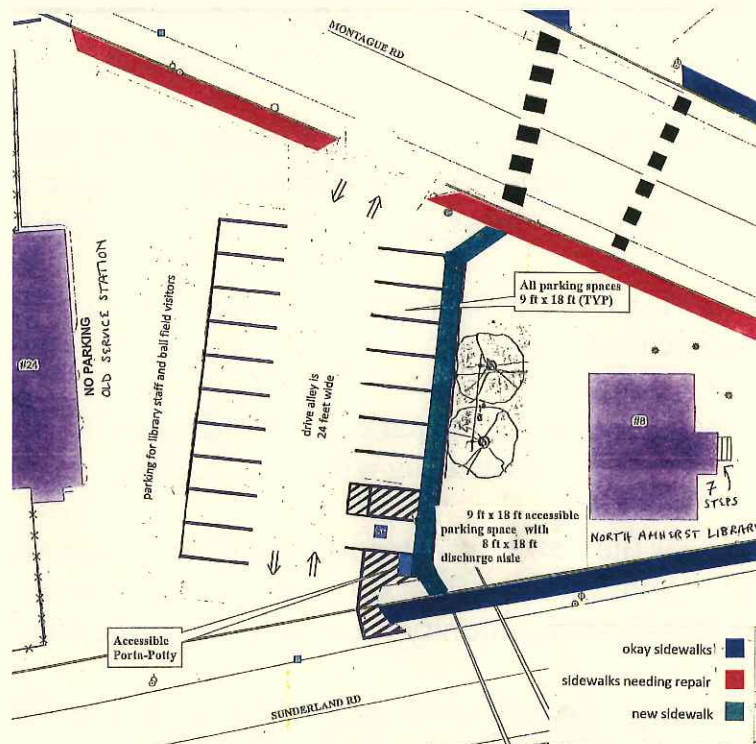
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North Amherst Library Basement, showing stacks. Credit: 2011 Jones Library capital project request to Community Preservation Act Comm.



Top floor. Credit: Same



Parking behind Library for 17 vehicles, 1 accessible van. At its 9/18/17 meeting, the Design Review Board recommended this parking configuration. It took no position on the crosswalks proposed for Montague Road. Because this is a state highway, crosswalks and curb cuts for accessibility require Massachusetts Department of Transportation permission.

Parking configuration proposal is superimposed on a 7/23/17 Amherst Town DPW plan. Diagram omits proposed new sidewalk to proposed new Library rear entrance.