

Business Owners/Workers Statements In Support of CVS Parking Garage/Rezoning BL to BG

Clay's

I am a resident of Amherst and an employee of Clays clothing store at 32 Main St in Amherst, and I would like to let you know how important I believe it is to have more convenient parking in Amherst. When working with customers in the store it is all too often that their shopping is cut short by parking issues ranging from paying meters or running out of time because it took so long to find a parking space.

The parking problem is only going to get worse as the population and related number of visitors grow and with the increase of tourism.

Best wishes,
Laurie Christiansen
49 Boltwood Walk
Amherst, MA 01002

Amherst Copy & Designworks - Sean Cleary

My name is Sean Cleary and I own Amherst Copy and Designworks (which is now located in Hadley). Parking in downtown Amherst has long been very difficult (despite what the hired consultants have repeatedly told the Town). With the advent of all the new housing units downtown the problem has only gotten worse. It is so frustrating to try to go to a movie or out to dinner on Friday evenings and to circle and circle looking for a spot. When the students are in town getting a spot in a permitted lot is now extraordinarily difficult as many of the students have permits and leave their cars at these spots most of the time. In fact, it is not unusual for them to go away on their breaks and leave the cars in the spots for the entire time period (Thanksgiving, Spring break, etc.) thus removing the spot from circulation during that time period.

Glazed Doughnut Shoppe

To whom it may concern,

I support a parking garage in the CVS lot. I feel this is what our business community really needs despite the parking studies done in the past that a parking problem is a perception problem. This is simply not true. People will avoid town because they can't find a spot. Offering more choices and options, helps free up the spaces directly in front of businesses for deliveries, shipments and quick visits. We regularly hear from customers, family, and friends, that they avoid down town because of the lack of parking. And while at some points in the week there may be sufficient parking, Amherst businesses rely on the surge times

(football games, graduation, weekend nights) to be profitable. If the parking situation does not have the capacity to meet the full surge potential, then those people will not come back at another “down” time. They are there for the big event, or that timeframe, and that’s it. So we must be able to capitalize on as much business as possible during these small windows of time. And the lack of parking is inhibiting our ability to do so.

In addition, my employees regularly complain that they cannot find long term parking in a place that feels safe. They often get out late at night, and having to walk to dark, far away parking areas is not something they should have to do in order to have a job. Almost no parking areas have parking lengths that will accommodate an 8 hour shift, so they need to leave to feed the meter (not everybody is comfortable using the app or has credit cards to pay with). If they are scheduled to be on by themselves, they have to decide between risking a ticket, leaving the store for a short period of time, or I as the owner have to incur extra payroll to have two people on, just so one can go feed the meter after 4 hours.

Thank you for taking the concerns of businesses seriously,

Keren Rhodes
Owner, Glazed Doughnut Shop

Amherst Books, Inc.

8 Main St., Amherst MA 01002
413.256.1547
413.256.1621 (fax)
SAN 179-3012

www.amherstbooks.com
books@amherstbooks.com

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To the Amherst Planning Board:

We are writing to express our support for the zoning change in the town parking lot behind CVS. As retail business owners in town we have long felt the effects of insufficient parking in downtown, and we think that a bona fide parking garage in that location is a good idea.

Our shop is fortunate in that we are close to on-street parking and the lot on the common. But how many times have we watched a customer cut their browsing time short with the realization "Oh! My meter is going to run out!" This doesn't have to be. When people have so many choices of where to shop, they will often choose the place they find easiest to get around – and unfortunately Amherst is not currently that place. If there is a simple parking solution a person might decide that they have time to cross the street and browse our shop too, instead of just stopping quickly for a coffee before their dime runs out.

The most recent additions to the parking landscape – the underground garage & the lot by the cinema – were too modest in scope to really address the baseline needs of the community, employees, and visitors, let alone the ever-increasing student residential needs.

We believe that an addition of a parking garage would provide a wholesale improvement to the downtown Amherst experience. It would allow visitors and locals alike to easily stow their car and walk around without worry. It's a good idea and it's a simple solution; let's do it.

Signed,

Shannon Ramsey
Nat Herold