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**From:** Maura Keene <keenemaura@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Friday, September 24, 2021 5:28 PM

**To:** Planning Department Email <planning@amherstma.gov>; Town Council Members <towncouncil@amherstma.gov>

**Subject:** CVS lot

Dear Planning Board members and councilors

I noticed that the rezoning of the town lot behind CVS is on the Planning Board agenda for September 29. It has come to my attention that the Jones Library Trustees were told by George Ryan and BID head Gabrielle Gould at their September 20 meeting that plans for a three story parking garage were “quietly being drawn up” by Kuhn-Riddle with backing from Barry Roberts. This directly contradicts what the Planning Board was told by Ryan in July- that there was no definite plan, but that rezoning would permit a parking garage to be built if the town wanted it.

This explains why Ryan was so resistant to studying any other locations for a parking garage—why he was so vague about how many spaces would actually be gained—why there was no mention of how much money the town would lose by giving up the current spaces. His only comment at the Trustees meeting was that the plan was opposed by “the same three to five residents” of North Prospect Street and, at the July 7 Planning Board meeting, that it would cost \$300k to resurface the current lot.

This is a shameful back room deal. It may be that the CVS lot is a good place for a parking garage, but it is unconscionable to plan it without proper study, and to present the rezoning as just a “preliminary step” when, in reality, a whole design is being developed. This is a similar process to what happened with the failed elementary school project and the current library expansion. Plans were drawn up and presented as take it or lose the money, even though the plans were flawed. Contrast this process to the one Amherst Media went through to get their new building approved. Plans were presented to several committees and refined until the finished plan was much improved.

I wish those looking to redefine Amherst would be honest with the residents and consider listening to the feedback they receive.

Maura Keene