



amherstcinema

amherst cinema arts center, inc.

28 amity street • amherst, ma 01002-2218 • tel. 413.253.2547 • fax 413.253.2541 • amherstcinema.org

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September 29, 2021

VIA PUBLIC COMMENT & ELECTRONIC MAIL

Amherst Planning Board

Town of Amherst

Town Hall

4 Boltwood Ave.

Amherst, MA 01002

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GENERAL MANAGER

RE: Letter of support in favor of Zoning Bylaw – Official Zoning Map – Map 14A, Parcel 33 Rezoning, North Prospect Street

Dear Members of the Amherst Planning Board,

On behalf of Amherst Cinema, I offer this statement to express the Cinema's support of the Town's pending decision to amend the Official Zoning Map to extend the General Business District (B-G) to include a vacant parcel of land owned by Town of Amherst, in the vicinity of North Pleasant Street, North Prospect Street, Cowles Lane and Amity Street currently located in the General Residence District (R-G).

As you may know from previous conversations and meetings with my predecessor and former executive director of Amherst Cinema, Carol H. Johnson, public parking has been an ongoing concern for Amherst Cinema.

Our moviegoing patrons are highly car reliant, travelling to Amherst from near and far, within an estimated 25-mile radius and beyond. In the year 2019, the Cinema sold more than 100,000 tickets, an average of more than 2,000 per week. These are not only moviegoers; they eat in area restaurants, spend in our shops, and help the local economy thrive.

So when our customers tell us that finding parking is one of their biggest frustrations, that not only is a concern to the Cinema but it has a larger impact on the Amherst community and economy. In the worst-case scenarios, some patrons have left their movies to feed their parking meters.

It is our opinion that the scarcity and inconvenience of parking options must be addressed and is solvable. Rezoning the parcel of land to make way for destination parking is an important first step.



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In my short tenure as Executive Director of Amherst Cinema, my work has been focused on bringing people back to the big screen to experience the magic of the movies. That hinges on creating a rich and holistic customer experience that will make people feel welcomed, wanted and part of a community.

There are exciting developments to come as we envision what the future holds, re-engage with our community, and offer new films and educational programming. We are working closely with partners like the Amherst Chamber of Commerce and Amherst Business Improvement District to collaborate on community programming. And on a national level, we recently learned we were selected as a Sundance Festival Satellite Screen, one of 7 independent arthouse cinemas across the US that will showcase a specially-curated selection of Sundance 2022 films during the festival's closing weekend.

I am honored to be a part of the business community, and the caretaker and curator of our shared cinematic home. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Chin Eisenhauer,
Executive Director