

Planning Board Results

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REBUTTAL OF PLANNING BOARD MEETING, OCTOBER 20, 2021

I thank the Amherst Planning Board for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion against the proposed North Prospect Street Parking Structure. It was eye opening to see how the Planning Board operates especially under the auspices of an impersonal zoom setting.

To my knowledge, the Ross/Ryan proposal was for a 3 level parking garage having 65 parking spaces per level. Under the guidance of Nate Malloy and agreed by the Amherst Planning Board, it might forever be known as Malloy's Folly. This monolith now has the possibility of 2 subsurface levels and 3 above ground levels with the ability to have a solar system of an additional 12 feet for a total height of 48 feet in a residential area.

As soon as the Planning Board member's et al., were introduced, it seemed there was a complete lack of enthusiasm by them. Also when the topic of the parking structure was broached, it seemed like most of the Planning Board members showed disinterest. I wasn't impressed with Mr. Long's chuckle when the noise level of the garage was referenced and he said something to the effect, "it's a garage and they are noisy". This shows that he has not been there because the present parking lot is always at least half empty and there is very little noise. I doubt if Mr. Long lives across the street from a garage! Ms. Chao's attitude from the beginning was let's approve this and move on. To me this shows little interest in the wishes of the people affected by the garage. Mr. Jemsek's reasoning that it's needed because of the perception of no parking in the area, is ludicrous. Of course, it's probably the fact that there is no parking advertising and only one parking sign which is on a small residential street located 15 feet before the North Prospect Street entrance into the CVS parking area. I would like to thank Mr. Marshall for seeming impartial and of course Ms. McGowan for her caring and professionalism. It seems that the Planning Board repudiated Ms. McGowan new proposals in order to proceed with the vote, however, they gave Mr. Malloy weeks to rework and prepare his scheme. Also of note is that all the opinions voiced by the public were against the garage proposal. Since these hearings started, the only pro garage voices were entities having self-interest, consequently this proposal was rushed to pass by the Planning Board without due diligence and the only studies stating that there is no need for a parking garage. This gives me the feeling of impropriety and subsequently will

request that Ms. Maura Healey, Massachusetts Attorney General to look into this situation.

Of course, the proposed garage was approved by the Planning Board this evening (October 20, 2021) to go forward to the CRC, even though there were no due diligence and no documentation stating a need for a new parking garage. The Planning Board opened a can of worms that is harmful to residential neighborhoods throughout Amherst. The 9 residential houses in the immediate area of the proposed garage structure have at present a tax base in excess of \$100K. Because residential real estate values will decrease by this monolith, I will seek 40 to 50% tax deduction on my residential tax bill and will urge my neighbors to follow suit. The Planning Board made it clear that these recommendations may or may not occur, however, when selling one of the affected homes, a prospective buyer will view it as a clear and present reality.

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