



Comprehensive Plan Special Board

Meeting Notes From "Two Main Streets" Public Forum

May 1, 2010 – 2:00 PM – VFW on Kemble Avenue

Notetaker: Catharine J. Square

Facilitator Improving Parking Section: Michael J. Armstrong

GROUP ONE

Mike Armstrong Parking Section: discussed ways of increasing the number of spaces available, ways of increasing the turnover in spaces to improve access, and ways of improving the configuration of parking. The number of spaces could be increased by adding parking east of the Metro North station, adding parking at Marathon, or persuading property owners of the lots behind the shops along Main to consolidate into a single large lot with one way flow, or by erasing the lines between space (typical gain in access is about 15%). Metering increases access by boosting turnover. Diagonal parking might be considered for sections of Main Street, to make it easier to pull in and out.

Comments and questions included:

- Last public meeting at the firehouse on parking she attended she never received or got a follow-up report of final answers of what occurred at that forum. At that particular public meeting she was opposed to meters, but would now consider metering if there is some permitted residential parking.
- What was accomplished at the 2007 public forum regarding parking and how can this metered parking work without it affecting side streets? Armstrong stated that the parking subcommittee evaluated and suggested three approaches to manage parking and possibly generate some revenue, which were permits, metering and parking benefit districts. He said the area west of the railroad is currently a residential parking permit zone and could work within other areas in the Village but would require a change in state law. He went on to say that residents in that particular area are exempt from time restrictions that have the effect of discouraging commuter parking, which eliminates crowding from parking commuters, but leaves spaces under-used. Mike then further explained permit zones. He stated it requires New York State legislative approval and any changes would entail significant effort and time, and probably the combined effort of many communities in New York. However he said metering is a possibility for Main Street and Depot Square, where there is high demand for parking, especially on weekends, where metering could make parking more convenient for visitors. Metering does not require state approval. He said people were concerned that metering Main Street would cause people to crowd neighboring streets, but he thought this would not be a problem. He said the third approach would be parking benefit districts that would allocate the benefits of parking between residents, commuters and visitors.

- Can you touch on where we are with metering? Armstrong stated the study found that the impact of metering will allow incoming revenue up to \$180,000 per year and increase access to parking spaces by increasing turnover. He said meters work well in many communities. It was important to manage supply and demand for parking spaces by using the market, and charging. The village government has not acted on the proposals largely because of concerns that side streets would be affected by people avoided the metered spaces on Main.
- Village Trustee, Bruce Campbell said he could not recall why the dividing lines were once removed from parking spaces then replaced, but he thought that people may have thought that when people parked without the lines they were sloppy and didn't leave room for other cars.
- Asked if a parking study had been done. Armstrong said that an extensive parking study and presentation was done in 2007 and 2008. Square said you can find these studies and reports on the Village website under Comprehensive Plan/LWRP Board under reports.
- Participant: Metering could free up space along Main Street. He also asked, why are we giving away this asset for free and if there is a charge it should be at a fair and reasonable price. He went on to state that he thought that parking along a Main Street is not a definite right but a privilege and should be treated as such.
- What would be the time allowance on meters? Armstrong stated it could be four or eight or twelve hours, it depended on what you were trying to do. Four hour limits are designed to keep commuters from taking the space. [Participant?: It was pointed out that you would incur the same problem of over-usage of continuous parking on Main Street.] Square suggested limiting to four hours as done in other communities. Some communities, especially along their Main Streets limited them to two hours.

GROUP TWO

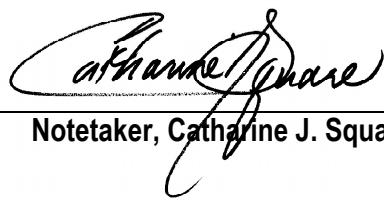
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Comments and questions included:

Is the consolidated parking for business owners and their employees only? [Catharine: this makes no sense: my reference is to the street parking, not the parking behind the shops.]

- A worry about meters is that after a certain hour or two the patrons would continue to worry about having to move their cars because the time has run out.
- Talked about a great opportunity of using the property off Kemble Avenue at Boulevard [Marathon site] as overflow parking as to alleviate the stress from Main Street.
- Property off Kemble Avenue at Boulevard belonged to Kearney and his plan is to do a townhouse/multi-unit development for that property but had offered to donate some green-space to the Village which would accommodate parking spaces.

- Maybe shop owners could be offered some sort of incentive(s) enticing them to park at the MTA lot and other designated lots.
- Statement – that sit down restaurants still require a set number of spaces per three people [seats? The reference seems to be to off-street parking requirements] even if the business owners agree to park elsewhere.
- Maybe instead of punitive fines there could be some sort of incentive and/or rewards system set up to encourage business owners to park in the Metro north lot on weekends.
- Brought up the fact that when the Putnam County News and Recorder relocated down the street, they worried that because of off street parking requirements they would not be allowed to change the use of the building to something needing more spaces. But when a historical review revealed the building had once been a boarding house, it meant that they actually had grandfathered rights to many more spaces than they needed for the new use. This is where the law is flawed – it restricts changes in use. It was also pointed out that the Zoning Board is skeptical of businesses renting spaces to meet parking requirements, since how do you enforce that? How do you know they continue to pay the rent?
- Asked that the three Parking Zones on the maps be explained. Armstrong:
 - ✓ Zone 1 – Waterfront area with unique parking rules because of commuting traffic and parking issues, this area exempts residents from time-limited parking. On-street parking over time limit, residents are required to have a sticker/permit.
 - ✓ Zone 2 – The area east of train tracks, Main Street to Chestnut and Morris
 - ✓ Zone 3 – Residential areas Route 301 (mostly school parking issues)
- If you starting metering tomorrow, what would you charge and would metering provide employment? Armstrong said it would be based on supply and demand. You might start at a dollar an hour, but If access to spaces was inadequate, raise the meter fees and keep raising them, until you have a 15% vacancy rate during heavy periods.



Notetaker, Catharine J. Square