

Technical Review Group (TRG)
Tuesday, November 6, 2018
Town Council Chambers
18 Main Street Parking Lot
NOTES OF MEETING

TRG members present:

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
Michael Bradley, Historic District Commission
Audrey Cline, Building Official
Dave Kurz, Police Chief
Mike Lynch, Public Works Director
John Powers, Deputy Fire Chief
April Talon, Town Engineer

Applicants present:

Pete Murphy
Mike Sievert

Mike Sievert presented the project. There will be 2 access points to the site – one existing on Main Street and a new one on Cowell Drive. The variance will be presented to the ZBA on November 13 as well as an appeal on the same issue. The site plan is for a parking lot only. Both lots have student housing now. There is no change to the current use. The parking lot will serve residents from on site and off site. There will be a net gain of 28 parking spaces.

Drainage will go to Cowell Drive. The ditch line there will be improved. The runoff will be treated on sight. They are slightly reducing the runoff from current conditions.

There will be 2 new pole lights, 1 new light on the building on Cowell, and 1 new one on the building at 18 Main Street. There is one light now on the building at 18 Main Street. There will be some new landscaping.

The drive aisle in the parking lot will be 24 feet. The spaces are 9 x 18 feet. The entrance off Main Street will be retained and not changed.

There are 15 residents at 18 Main Street. There is more parking at the Red Tower across the street. This lot will be open to residents at both properties. Pete is open to designating some spaces for downtown businesses. He could install meters for that if needed.

Mike Lynch asked about the access at Cowell Drive. There could be a conflict with the parking area there and the driveway coming in. Mike Sievert said the opening is not wide enough to install a median to separate the two. The garage is on that side of the house (right side facing the house) so that's where the driveway needs to be.

Mike Lynch suggested having a one way loop. Enter at Cowell and exit at Main. Mike Sievert said there won't be a lot of use. Michael said it might be helpful to have a site walk to look at this. He asked about a one way circular driveway in front. He said it would probably not violate the zoning prohibition against parking in front of the building as long as it was a narrow driveway. Audrey said this would probably be okay under zoning.

Michael said there are challenges with both access points: Cowell Drive is in a predominantly single family neighborhood but the access there is better. Main Street is tighter and in the Historic District. Mike Sievert says the Main Street access works pretty well. 60-70% of the use would be shifted to Cowell drive. Michael asked about having right turns only at Main Street. Mike Sievert said sight distance there is not too bad.

Mike Lynch asked about snow storage. This is shown on the plan with cross hatching. April said they need to be careful with the snow. Piles could cause meltwater to run off along the driveway.

Michael Bradley, who is also the rector at St. George's, said they need to truck off snow at the church sometimes. He asked how they would handle enforcement of use in the parking lot. Pete said they have stickers for tenants now. They use Smitty's on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights and on busy days like Homecoming. Smitty just comes through automatically and tows anybody without a sticker. He also comes during the day when needed. Visitors get a temporary pass.

Michael Bradley asked about one way in from Main Street. Audrey said a left in could be difficult. Mike Sievert said one way only entering at Cowell Drive would be better. It was noted that a left out at Main Street could be difficult. Left in at Main Street during peak times is difficult.

Michael Bradley said that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday are busier days. Peter said most people who will use 18 Main Street are tenants at the Red Tower. He said 20-25 spaces will be used by tenants at 18 Main Street and the Red Tower. 15-20 spaces will be used by his tenants at other properties.

Chief Kurz said it is not a concern where the users come from. He is pleased to see a parking lot here rather than more housing.

Audrey said if there is no variance all traffic will come from Main Street. Chief Kurz said that would not be terrible but the traffic would back up. He prefers most traffic use Cowell Drive. He said the use would be minimal. Students would not be using their cars regularly.

Michael Bradley said they have had trouble with people parking at St. Georges in the past. They put some boulders there a while ago. He said they should preserve the pedestrian pathway at St. Georges. Mike Sievert said they would look at that.

Michael Bradley said there are windows on the side of St. George's toward the parking lot. Michael Behrendt asked if the lot should be visually screened there. Mike Sievert said they could install a fence. Michael Bradley said pedestrian access there along the building should be retained. He said there is not a lot of activity in this part of the building at night. He asked about litter from the parking lot.

Chief Kurz asked about Pete providing some parking on the lot for the downtown. He said the Town's parking provisions downtown are not for making money but to provide a service. Pete could sell parking passes for businesses. It would make more sense for him to manage it.

John said the Fire Department supports the project. It will improve access to the site. He suggested having ingress at Main Street and egress at Cowell Drive.

April said it looks like not much runoff will get into the sediment forebay. Mike Sievert will look at this.

The staff set a meeting time on site to look at these issues for Tuesday, November 13, at 11:00 am (open to anybody interested).

Audrey noted that the front setback on the plans on Cowell Drive should be 30 feet, not 20 feet. She said the lights proposed are not shielded (unless one is located higher than the light fixture).

Michael Behrendt asked about using permeable pavement. Mike Sievert said the soils are okay and there is some ledge. He said there have been problems at other sides and the required maintenance sometimes isn't done. He said he didn't think it was appropriate here. April said if the sites are maintained they work fine. She said we should not necessarily push for permeable pavement here.

Michael Behrendt asked about installing a charging station for electric vehicles. Pete said he would think about that.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Behrendt, Durham Town Planner/TRG Chair