

**Technical Review Group (TRG)**  
**Tuesday, November 10, 2020**  
**Town Council Chambers and ZOOM**  
**Notes of Meeting – 19 Main Street Parking Lot**

**TRG members present:**

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner  
James Bubar, Planning Board Representative  
Audrey Cline, Building Official  
Rene Kelley, Deputy Police Chief  
Rich Reine, Public Works Director  
Christine Soutter, Economic Development Director  
April Talon, Town Engineer

**Applicants present:**

Pete Murphy, applicant  
Mike Sievert, engineer  
Robbi Woodburn, landscape architect

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Mike Sievert explained the project. The site is 3.2 acres. There are student rentals in four buildings. Now there are around 43 parking spaces. They will remove one of the four buildings and retain the other three.

The entrance is problematic. The new one will be a boulevard style with lanes 14 feet wide. Mike said it would be easier for access. The lanes will be further from the buildings.

There will be an 8% slope in the middle. There will be a precast block retaining wall at the bottom. It will be 19-20 feet high at the highest point. There will be a 100 foot undisturbed buffer at the back except for the new sewer line which will need to run through it.

Drainage will go to the islands that are 10 feet wide. There will be preliminary treatment with a large underground storage system. There is one overflow outlet. Most of the water will not go there and will percolate underground. Mike could add a second outlet if desired. Rich said he is not a big fan of infiltration systems. He said they fail eventually. He asked if the 100-year storm was modeled. He said there typically would be a reserve area.

Mike said they modeled this to mimic current conditions. It will disperse the run off. It will come out at the bottom of the wall or below the wall. There is a restrictive layer below that breaks out into the wetlands below. The storage system would be around 5 feet high inside so you could almost walk inside. The manholes will be large so you can get inside and clean.

The block retaining wall will be like the one at the high school Rich asked who designed and will stamp the wall. Mike said he would stamp [as structural engineer] the plans and have

the designed also stamp them.

Mike said the parking lot will have a grade of 2-3%. He said they can put in additional protection at the catch basins if needed.

The sewer line comes out on Chesley Drive. They will install a new sewer line down the property as the existing one is in bad condition. The rental house on the lot is tied in to the sewer (but not shown on the plans). Several houses on adjacent lots are tied in to the sewer and will be reconnected at the applicant's expense. They are trying to figure out where the line ties in with the Town line on Chesley Drive. It has been like this for many years. They may need to do some work off site. Rich said they might have a prescriptive easement to do this on another property. He said they could not get the sewer up to Main Street without pumping it. Michael B asked if an easement for the sewer should be given to the abutters who tie in there. He suggested that Mike Sievert coordinate with those abutters.

Rich asked about other drainage and grading plans that had been considered. Mike said they want to preserve as much of the buffer as possible. Rich said they need to consider the worst case scenario for drainage.

Robbi Woodburn presented the landscaping and screening plan. She said there are three parts: 1) the entrance, 2) screening the parking lot, and 3) landscaping within the parking lot. They are not landscaping the medians because they are used for drainage. The arborvitae will grow quickly. The trees and shrubs used for screening will be 7-8 feet and 10 feet at installation. Michael B asked if it would make sense to also plant ivy on the wall. Robbi said she did not think it would be needed. At Riverwoods the view toward the wall will be softened with the trees.

River Birch will be used along the entrance boulevard. They are multi-stemmed and vasselike. They are fairly salt tolerant. Rich asked about low impact development, such as using tree filters. Robbi said the trees in the islands function like that.

Rich suggested putting the stopping sight distance on the plans.

There will be decorative pavers at the entrance. Michael B suggested making a wider band of pavers both because they look nice and they will calm traffic. He said the ones across the street at 18 Main Street looked good. Mike Sievert questioned adding more due to the cost.

April asked if the mulch will hold in the medians at the slope. Robbi said that riverstone mulch is actually stones with around 1-1/2 inch diameter. Rich said stones with a 2" diameter won't move at a 3% slope.

Audrey said there will probably be cans and bottles in the medians that will need to be cleaned out.

James said there is a loss of existing tree canopy. Is there an estimate of how much will be

lost compared to the new tree canopy? He said on the site walk conducted earlier a lot of the existing trees did not look real healthy. Mike said there is a report on the tree cover. Christine read aloud part of the report. There is an infestation of emerald ash borer. Those trees would be removed.

Michael B said more study will be needed for the lighting plan. The proposed lights are fairly high 14-16-18 feet and would need to be very well shielded to prevent glare onto neighboring properties. Mike said they don't have lights at the 18 Main Street parking lot and it seems to work fine. There are two building lights there.

Mike said they might be able to use the grass boulevard at the entrance for more stormwater management. He doesn't think tree boxes would work there. Rich suggested looking at rain gardens. Mike said the median could serve several functions.

Mike said the retaining wall would rise above the grade of the parking lot and there would be a fence above that.

Mike said the traffic report was done on the preliminary plans. It is a little out of date. They will update it. He said there would be a minimal change in level of service at the intersection at Main Street. They looked at cars at 18 Main Street and here at 19 Main Street and the cars don't move much there. Christine read an excerpt of the report which said the road will operate well below capacity.

Michael B asked if there could be any improvements at Main Street to enhance traffic flow. He questioned if this would be possible since we are not going to add turning lanes. He said the Planning Board has been reluctant in the past to restrict left turns. Mike said putting in the boulevard should enhance traffic flow. Mike said there is no space now for vehicles entering next to the white building. They are removing the cars that are parked in front which will be the best thing.

Michael B said the parking ordinance limits the width of driveways within the Town right of way to 12 feet (not including the radius) unless Public Works okays a wider driveway. Rich said he did not see any issue with that at this point.

Rene Kelley said he did not have any concerns at this point.

Michael B asked about Mill Plaza using the site. Mike said the applicant is going forward independent of Mill Plaza. Pete Murphy said they are going forward on their own. There is a market for the parking lot. They will rent to anybody. Without Mill Plaza they could fully rent the site.

James asked how this would affect traffic if it is not rented to Mill Plaza. If the people renting spaces are businesses there could be more impact from the parking lot. Pete Murphy said 99% of the people renting the lot at 18 Main Street are students. He would rent to anybody but other rents spaces would not change the overall impact.

Christine asked how much he rents to nonstudents. Pete said very little. Christine said she has talked to many businesses and they do not want to walk far. James said this issue warrants further thought.

Michael B encouraged the applicant to speak with the Durham Community Church to see if they could get another back up access if needed in the future. Mike said he would talk with Pete Murphy about this.

Pete said they would like to start construction in the spring/summer of 2021. Mike said they would start construction from the rear of the site.

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