

From: [Doug Karo](#)
To: [Karen Edwards](#)
Subject: Proposed 19-21 Main Street Parking Lot
Date: Thursday, December 10, 2020 5:35:36 PM

Karen Edwards,

I want to register a comment about a proposed parking lot at 19-21 Main Street.

I am more than a little puzzled. On December 20, 2019 I wrote wondering how a parking lot expansion in the historic district then under consideration could fairly be judged to satisfy even one of the conditional use requirements and also wondering whether the Town had stopped trying to discourage car travel to, from, and within the Town in favor of more use of alternative transportation. The answer I got was that the Town remains committed to encouraging alternative transportation and other related goals, and that property owners have a legal right to develop property in accordance with zoning ordinance and site plan regulations, and that conditional use approvals for parking lots can be granted (I suppose only if requirements for them are met). But a proposed parking lot large expansion in the historic district remains under consideration today and, given the effort expended upon it, there must be some who believe that conditional use approval still is possible.

I am not an expert, but it seems to me that in pursuit of development we have modified or bent the requirements a bit here to allow more density, a bit there to allow more height, a bit here on setbacks, a bit there on use, etc. This might reflect prudent and justified decisions and conditional use approvals but it looks more to me like finding ways to approve projects that don't really meet the requirements we once wanted to impose on everyone but now want to approve to assist in Town development.

I believe it to be bad practice to nibble away at protections rather than have clear guidance and rules. Conditional use approvals should be very rare exceptions if we have set requirements to reflect what we want and then have clearly stated them. It seems to me that if the Town now desires to encourage more reliance on automobile use within the historic district, then the Town should follow a transparent process including citizen input and produce clear guidance and new rules and then should apply them. If the Town does not desire to encourage more reliance on automobile use in the historic district then we should keep our rules and not grant conditional use approvals unless the use clearly meets the requirements.

So take public input that insists on following our rules and their application and take public input to learn when our current rules and their application should be changed because they no longer meet the needs of our community.

Doug Karo

95 Wiswall Road

Durham, NH 03824