

To: Steven Ledoux, Acton Town Manager

From: Acton Arboretum Abutters and Neighbors

CC: Corey York, Acton Town Engineer; Tom Tidman, Natural Resources Department

RE: Safety and Traffic Concerns Related to the Acton Arboretum Parking Lot Expansion

Date: October 20, 2014

The abutters believe the “Acton Arboretum Parking Expansion” proposal to double the parking spaces and cut in a separate entrance will have a **significant negative impact** on our neighborhood’s safety and traffic. We strongly request that the project as currently designed be stopped until an agreement with the abutters is reached. We would like to work collaboratively with our town to revise the plan to insure maximum safety and minimal impact on our neighborhood. Please see our concerns and suggested solutions below:

TRAFFIC CONCERNS

- Increasing the parking lot size will encourage more vehicular traffic to the Arboretum.
- Taylor Road is a narrow and busy secondary road used as a shortcut to Route 2.
- Many commercial vehicles, including semis, make use of this route as a substitute for a main thoroughfare. School bus traffic is heavy due to the school and the bus parking lot.
- The Road Safety Audit dated May 2010 stated that the posted speed limit of 25 mph is routinely disregarded.
- The proposed new entrance location will exacerbate already existing problems with the flow of traffic on Taylor Road.

SAFETY CONCERNS

- There is a rise and curve in the road proximate to the proposed new entrance. Vehicles traveling north have limited visibility to see an Arboretum visitor traveling south and turning left to enter the proposed entrance.
- The driveways of residents at 11 and 15 Taylor Road are immediately across from the proposed entrance and already have poor visibility exiting their driveways.
- One access road to the Arboretum has sufficed for many years, with due consideration to the number of vehicles which actually go to the Arboretum to enjoy its offerings.
- Because of the new sidewalk, many neighbors now walk instead of drive to the Arboretum. By adding the second entrance, residents and children on bikes will have to cross two public driveways instead of one, thus creating a safety concern.

RECCOMENDATIONS FOR TRAFFIC CONCERNS

- Currently large potholes prevent visitors from using the entire parking lot fully. Repairing the potholes for the short term would increase the usable space in the current lot without expanding the footprint.
- Collect objective (rather than anecdotal) data on the number of days that additional parking is needed.
- Installing numbered parking signs in the existing lot could systemize and maximize the parking without enlarging the parking lot.
- Develop and make known the Arboretum entrances at Wood Lane, Concord and Minot Roads. Many dog walkers and hikers park at Taylor Road only to access these rear trails.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFETY CONCERNS

- Enforce permit requirements for Arboretum events and limit the event size to 25 attendees (per Bettina). Inform event attendees of parking availability and restrictions. Direct larger events to NARA Park.
- Installing “no parking signs” on one side of Taylor Road would ensure safe on street parking.
- Direct overflow visitors to the additional parking at the library and town hall.
- Our perception is that the speed and volume of vehicular traffic has increased since the last Road Safety Audit. We strongly request that a new traffic study be conducted prior to any change in the traffic pattern on Taylor Road.
- Install traffic calming measures such as speed bumps on Taylor Road and the Arboretum entrance to reduce speeds.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

We also have environmental concerns about enlarging the parking lot and installing asphalt in the wetlands buffer zone, which was shared at the public hearing on October 15, 2014. At that meeting, the Conservation Commission asked us to direct our traffic and safety concerns about this project to the Town Manager and Engineering Department, as these are not under the Conservation Commission’s jurisdiction. However, the issues overlap. Increasing the parking lot and cutting in the new entrance affect both traffic and safety, as well as the environment and wetlands. Our environmental concerns are briefly outlined below:

- An asphalt-lined parking lot is not in keeping with the concept of a conservation area. Maintaining and resealing it will continue to introduce chemicals in the wetlands buffer

zone. An Environmental Impact Report should be conducted to determine the project's impact.

- The issues to be addressed by the CPA funding for this project are valid- fixing potholes, improving the drainage and systemizing the parking. But, we request that the project promoters consider these environmentally friendly options to address the problems:
 - Keep the existing foot print of the lot
 - Re-grade to fix the pot holes with an eco-friendly material
 - Ensure the slope of the grade is towards the existing drainage trench
 - Increase handicap parking by doubling the existing concrete pad

In closing, we request that the proposed project be delayed until these concerns can be resolved. As stakeholders we want to work together with the Natural Resources Department to define the current problems through objective data collection. We want to work together towards solutions that respect our environment and the abutters while ensuring the safety of our neighborhood.

Please contact us as soon as possible to arrange a meeting this week. Our neighbors are waiting to hear from you.

Respectfully,

Renee & Roman Brozyna- (978) 263-0273

Pam Curran

Steve Ledoux

From: Steve Ledoux
Sent: Monday, November 03, 2014 9:06 AM
To: 'Renee Soluk'
Cc: Tom Tidman; Bettina Abe; Corey York; Christopher Prehl; Janet Adachi
Subject: Arboretum

Good Morning, Renee;

After our site visit at the Arboretum on October 24th, Town staff met to review the situation and the concerns that the neighbors have raised.

At that staff meeting, we developed the following action items:

Action Items for Acton Arboretum Abutters on Taylor Road:

- Acton Police Dept. will install portable, electronic speed indicator on Taylor Road.
- Town will add 25 MPH speed sign(s) along Taylor Road
 - By the Arboretum
 - After entering onto Taylor Rd. from Minot Av.
 - After entering onto Taylor Rd. from Coughlin St.
- Town will install: "Arboretum Entrance Ahead" sign on Taylor Rd. south of the proposed one-way entrance point; and north of proposed entrance point.
- Town will add "No Parking" signs along Taylor Road in the vicinity of the Arboretum [or whatever the proposed specific area].
- Town will make sight-line improvements to the south side of the existing Arboretum parking lot entrance/exit, which is the proposed one-way exit to Taylor Road.
- Town will install portable speed bumps to be utilized in the parking lot entrance and exit lanes. Speed bumps will be removed during winter months.
- Parking lines will be painted diagonally to assist visitors in pulling in and backing out according to one-way traffic pattern.
- Natural Resources will develop an evergreen planting plan, specimens to be planted prior to parking lot expansion. Evergreen species serve as screening for neighbors and as landscape plantings meeting Arboretum design standards.
- Natural Resources will add informal signs in kiosk, identifying additional, alternate parking locations at town hall, library, fire station, Wood Lane.
- Natural Resources will add sign stating: "Arboretum Closed Dusk to Dawn."
- Town will consider ways to address drainage issues in front of #11 Taylor Road
- Town will evaluate the pros and cons of installing gates at parking lot entrance and exit.

Staff still maintains that the one way traffic flow in and out of the Arboretum would be the best solution.

If you and the neighbors disagree, I would suggest that this issue be discuss with the Board of Selectmen. The next meeting is November 17th. I would need to know if you and the neighbors plan to attend by noon on November 12th, so it can be placed on the agenda.

Steven L Ledoux
Town Manager

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