

Hi Gretchen,

I'd like to offer my support of this letter, with a few comments. I thank Jennifer for her hard work.

We know all too well the frustrations and unforeseen problems that ensue from construction projects not carefully planned and monitored. Wayland has unfortunately learned some hard lessons after the fact, where irreparable damage to the Town has resulted. Let us not have history repeat itself. Case in point, Wayland Commons, where (1) extensive soil mining occurred, only to prompt Officials to revise Town Bylaws regarding soil removal – however too late; (2) a lack of supervision resulted in the catastrophic wrongful felling of Town trees – with little to no consequence; (3) the construction of an unsightly cement wall along the road was permitted (contrary to an agreement between the developer and Town) which was to be in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood; (4) we neighbors endure an ongoing, sickening assault of dust – 2+ years and without remedy. The list goes on. And not to digress further on the countless inexcusable errors of Wayland Commons, my point is that we simply cannot afford to make mistakes when dealing with projects of magnitude. Yet, we do need to be realistic.

I am not opposed to the Town Center project. But I am cautiously concerned, and further troubled at the prospect of ANY premature alterations to the dwindling Historic Town Center and surrounding roads until, and only when, proven necessary. On one hand, I do feel that the professionals involved (civil engineers, architects, planners, etc.) are best suited to evaluate these issues and make recommendations, as they have. The design team has conducted exhaustive studies and numerous iterations of design, and has determined the proposed alterations must happen and will be beneficial. Unfortunately we “laymen” as such, are somewhat disadvantaged on credibility and validity in our opposition based upon how much professional thought and effort has gone into these design.

But here's where my radar goes up: I suspect a similar “pro” argument was waged by the professionals who designed and previously implemented changes to the Rt. 20 and 126/27 intersection – where the end results are an inadequate turning lane onto Rt. 126/27 N from Rt. 20 W; a rather confused Pelham Island egress onto Rt. 20 W; and too narrow a roadway in the 27 N/ 20 E turning lane, etc. Bottom line is that traffic studies/proposed design alternations are done pre-construction, and (as only they could be) are hypothetical, and based upon worst-case scenario data. Yet ironically, designers don't always get it right as we've seen. So in light of this, I respectfully offer the following thoughts with all concerned:

1. What if the proposed HTC alterations are made, and prove insufficient, excessive, or worse, unnecessary when all is said and done? We will have again sustained irreparable change and damage to the character and landscape of Wayland – never mind the costs to the TC developers.
2. I propose a wait and see approach, and support that no alterations take place prior to near, if not total completion of the project (as Jennifer cites in Item 5 of her letter).
3. Furthermore, I support the prospect of revisiting “alterations” at such time of project completion. This way the design team could review and revise (a/r) the current proposed alterations; could evaluate the other items listed in Jennifer's letter; could review if the extent of road widening, location of lights, etc. is truly warranted (as voiced in several points in Jennifer's letter); could evaluate anything else now unforeseen.

4. Ensure the sidewalk between the Depot and Wayland Commons (South-bound side of Rt. 27) is reflected on the TC design plans/coordinated, and ensure the Wayland Commons developer follows through with the commitment to pay for this.

Once we have actual proof and experience with traffic flow post-construction, a design and game plan should be clear, and the TC design team could present a true alteration plan based upon fact, not hypothetical study. I think we would all be more accepting of change, however welcome or not, with tangible proof of its soundness.

Respectfully, I think you may have greater success in proposing something along these lines, rather than to simply delay granting a permit based upon our hopes, concerns, and opposition to the current design. With all due respect to the HDC, to Jennifer, and to my neighbors, we've already been told what the TC design team thinks should happen, and we've told them we don't like it. We are at somewhat of an impasse. Perhaps we could achieve cooperation on the concept of revisiting alteration when and if the need for such exists, and is proven, rather than to create potential friction by simply delaying the permit for the same reasons and arguments presented repeatedly over the past year. If I recall correctly, the design hasn't changed much through all this. Just my two cents...

Regards,  
Cindy Oliver