

Appendix E -- Master Plan for Municipal Facilities

The following describes the master plan for the Warren Municipal facilities, as adopted by the Warren Selectboard on June 12, 2007. It is not a detailed plan, with building specifications, schedules, cost estimates, etc. Rather it is a general plan and direction that provides solutions for how to best use town properties for planned future requirements for the municipal offices, the Library, the Town Hall, possibly a Post Office, expanded and accessible parking facilities, and a desired Town Green. A drawing of the long term vision is included at the end. **Editors Note: With the passage of time, portions of this Master Plan are out of date, and will need to be further reviewed and updated by the Planning Commission.**

A. Long Term Plan:

- 1) Town Green and parking:** The best solution for long term parking requirements is to create a lot to the east of the Library on portion of what is currently private property, parcel # 004-002-900. There is a very large area, approximately 145 feet by 225 feet by 95 feet by 270 feet (approximately 1/2 acre), that is very level and lies below the bluff on which the house is located. This land extends back in a southerly direction behind the Library, the Blair property and parcel # 004-003-500 and could accommodate approximately 75 automobiles. (To put this in perspective, the current municipal lot is approximately 160 feet by 85 feet and can accommodate about 39 vehicles.) Given the topography, a parking lot here should be a minimal intrusion on the adjacent property owners' privacy. Also, it would be the best place for parking to access the various municipal facilities, it would be adjacent to a new Town Green (see below) and it is away from Main Street and fairly well hidden. Care should be taken to provide screening, shrubbery, etc. to provide as much privacy as possible to adjoining land owners. The town could create parking here in a phased approach, extending it further back in two or three stages depending how much parking is needed at the time and cost considerations. It is recognized that it may be necessary to make some minor modifications to the corner of the current Library to facilitate vehicular traffic up Cemetery Road into the new parking area.

Warren needs a Town Green for the community to enjoy that is logically and physically connected to as many of the municipal facilities as possible, including parking. A Town Green could be used for picnics, meetings, art shows, farmers' markets, social gatherings, and many other uses. The best place for the Town Green is the Blair property. This way there will be connected green space from Main Street up and into the area between the major municipal facilities. These facilities would be adjacent to and connected to the Town Green. In addition, it would be adjacent to future parking to be created on the 004-002-900 parcel. Once the Town Green is created, the gazebo, currently on Main Street, could be relocated there.

The current municipal parking lot was created on land that had been a Town Green. At some point, once there is enough additional parking on the 004-002-900 parcel and elsewhere, some of the current municipal lot can be reclaimed for use as an additional part of and extension to the Town Green. This additional green space would flow from Main Street up and into the cemetery green space and over to the other Town Green. Vehicle

access to the Church and Fire Station and handicap parking and perhaps some other parking would need to be retained, but part of the lot could become green space. The precise configuration of the right amount of parking and access will be determined in the future.

- 2) **Town Hall:** Town Hall needs some improvements and maintenance, especially handicap accessibility. These improvements should be made, but the Town Hall should remain largely as it is today, with the same configuration and facilities so it can be used and enjoyed by the most people.
- 3) **Library:** Once the Blair property is available, this will provide more than adequate space for a new Library facility to be built. The Library could either be an addition to the west or to the south of the Municipal Building, or in a new stand alone structure built between the Municipal Building and the Town Hall. Building new space will facilitate a Library that can be designed in an optimum way for efficient operation, rather than retrofitting it into an existing building. The location shown on Master Plan Drawing is not necessarily the final or optimal place but one of several alternatives. Specific decisions about size, building configurations, etc. will be made in the future.

The Blair property will provide more than adequate space for future expansion for a new Library and even a new Post Office, if required, as stand alone structures or as additions to the existing Municipal Building. The new Library should be built in an architectural style that is in keeping with the Municipal Building and the Town Hall. The future Library design should also allocate some space for a Historical Museum. It is not clear now how much space might be desirable for a Historical Museum, but such a facility would be a valuable addition to the Town.

- 4) **Municipal Building:** The best solution to provide for future needs in the town municipal offices is to keep those facilities in the Municipal Building and expand them into the current Library space. This should easily provide enough space for the foreseeable future. However, before any expansion can occur, the Library needs to either move to temporary facilities, or a new Library must be built.
- 5) **Blair Property:** Once the Blair property is available to the Town that the building should be removed from that site. This will facilitate using the property for a Town Green and provide space for building expansion for a new Library and a new Post Office, if required.

While the building is very old, it does not appear to be architecturally significant and probably needs significant repairs. Once it is possible to evaluate the building, it may turn out that some or all of the structure could be moved and reused – either for affordable housing or possibly as a structure to house a new Library or Post Office. But in either event the building would need to be moved from its current location in order to optimize the use of the Blair property for a Town Green and future building expansion. Before the Blair building is removed, it is important that the Town facilitate the replacement of the affordable housing units that are currently in that building.

- 6) **Fire Station:** The best solution is to keep the Village Fire Station in its present location. If and when more “people” space is needed, additional space can be added to the current second story to the north fairly easily since the first floor and foundation is already there. While no one has currently defined such a need, at some point in the future, the Fire Department may need to acquire equipment that is taller and/or longer than the present equipment. It is most likely in that case that the best place to keep that equipment would be up at the Sugarbush Fire Station, which would then have to be expanded or replaced. Such equipment would more likely be needed up at Sugarbush Village given the height and density of the buildings. However, if such larger equipment were needed in the Warren Village Fire Station, the least cost alternative would be to lower the level of the equipment bays to accommodate larger equipment in the existing building, rather than abandoning the Warren Village Fire Station for a new facility.

While it is perhaps not as important to be in the center of the Village as some other Municipal facilities, the Fire Station has become an integral and vital part of the fabric of the Village and would be missed by many if it were no longer there. It appears the Fire Department also favors keeping it in the Village. It is certainly the least costly alternative to keep the Fire Station where it is.

- 7) **Post Office:** The Post Office has recently added a trailer to provide extra office space. This may satisfy their needs for some time, but will do nothing to fix the parking problems. It is vital to keep the Post Office in the Village. In the long term, if the present location is deemed inadequate and no other space can be found in the Village, there will be adequate room on the Blair property for a new Post Office – either as a stand alone building or as an addition to the Municipal Building or the new Library.
- 8) **Other parking alternatives:** There are possibilities for modest incremental parking locations. They can be implemented when needed and built for very low cost. The more of these alternative spaces that are created the easier it will be to reclaim the current municipal lot for additional Town Green space. The small .3 acre lot across from Town Hall has approximately 50 feet of frontage on Main St. This could accommodate 6 or 8 off street parking spaces at street level. The remainder of this lot should be cleared for green space and access to the river.

While the Millstone lot is currently available for parking, it is greatly under utilized. A grant has been received by the Town that will be used to provide appropriate signage, paving and defined parking areas. This should increase utilization. Having lighting and a sidewalk from the Millstone lot into the center of the Village would also greatly increase the utilization of this lot.

It would be possible to allow parallel parking on one side of Flat Iron Road. There is enough room to accommodate up to 15 cars. To make this workable Flat Iron Road would have to be made a one way street, going from Main Street to Brook Road. There is also room to accommodate parking for 3 or 4 cars on the edge of the .25 acre Town owned parcel # 003-000-300 adjacent to the covered bridge.

If the Post Office is ultimately relocated, that property could be acquired and used for parking (or housing).

- 9) **Town Garage:** Planning for necessary improvements and enhancements to the Town Garage has been on-going. An architectural firm was hired, using grant funds, to assist the Planning Commission in considering various options and doing life cycle cost analysis to help determine the best alternative. The Town Garage is not part of the integrated Municipal Complex and an independent decision can be made whether to improve it on its current site or build a new garage somewhere else. Additional study is required by the Selectboard before a final decision can be made.

Two good alternate locations have been identified - part of the Bobbin Mill property, or some of the Summit Ventures (i.e. Sugarbush) property adjacent to the town owned Aldeborgh / Roe parcel by the Kingsbury Bridge. If the Town Garage is relocated the property could be used to accommodate affordable housing – as an extension of the Luce Pierce Road neighborhood. It may also be possible to put some limited housing across School Road from the Town Garage site. Sales of the house sites could help offset the cost of relocating the Town Garage.

B. Short Term Plan:

Before the Blair property is available, many actions can still move forward in the short term. Most importantly, the Town should move ahead to secure rights to a portion of the 004-002-900 parcel. Necessary improvements are being planned for the Town Hall and the Library has been approved to move into the Town Hall temporarily. Then the Municipal Building can begin to expand into that vacated Library space. Additional parking can also be expanded when needed, independent of the Long Term plan for the Municipal Complex. The lot across from Town Hall could be enhanced for parking and green space as described above. Other incremental parking solutions outlined above could be implemented. A decision can be made and implemented for the Town Garage – either improving it in place or moving it to the preferred locations recommended above. Whenever the Fire Station needs more space, addition second story space can be built to the north over the existing first floor. Finally, the Town should plan for the best way to replace the affordable housing that could be lost when the Blair house is removed.