

TOWN AREA PLAN WORK GROUP
Meeting of February 16, 2024, at 4:00 pm by Zoom
FINAL AND APPROVED MINUTES

Attending: Mary Anne Easley, Marsha Fader, Alison King, Mary Longacre, Mickey Rowland, Lee Saperstein, and Henry Terry.

Absent: Regen Horchow.

Attendance was verified by a roll call; there was a quorum at all times. The meeting was recorded and can be viewed at the following address:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3taO1mOFW0&list=PL49sKqpy7VAhF3WZ8xvh3sdHgJEvCabR6&index=38>.

1. Call to Order.

Chair Henry Terry called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. Attendance was verified by a roll call. Mary Longacre reviewed the rules on remote-attendance meetings and said that this meeting would be recorded.

She also noted that the Zoom log-in would be the same for all Friday meetings through the end of 2024: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86372255725?pwd=eovTDnLsSSnTJzeHbeHOAyipDNIMFe.1>.

2. Agenda Approval.

Henry Terry asked if there were any amendments to the agenda; hearing none, he asked for its approval. Such motion was made by Mary Longacre, seconded by Lee Saperstein, and approved unanimously by roll-call vote (Mary Anne Easley, aye; Marsha Fader, aye; Alison King, aye, Mary Longacre, aye; Mickey Rowland, aye; Lee Saperstein, aye; and Henry Terry, aye).

3. Approval of Minutes for January 19 and February 6, 2024.

Henry Terry reminded the group that the January 19th minutes had not been approved and would accept a motion to approve them plus those from February 6th. Mary Longacre asked if they could be treated separately and all agreed. She then moved approval of the January 19, 2024, minutes, Alison King seconded, and they were approved by a roll-call vote (Mary Anne Easley, aye, Marsha Fader, aye, Alison King, aye, Mary Longacre, aye, Mickey Rowland, aye, Lee Saperstein, aye, and Henry Terry, aye). Mary Longacre then said that she had several comments on the February minutes; the first was that the link for the Town Area map was not public and should be deleted; the second was that the term “Gardner Street bypass” in item 5. should be explained. Lee Saperstein agreed that these could be fixed easily at which point Mary Longacre moved approval of the amended minutes, Mary Anne Easley seconded, and they were approved unanimously by roll-call vote (Mary Anne Easley, aye; Marsha Fader, aye; Alison King, aye, Mary Longacre, aye; Mickey Rowland, aye; Lee Saperstein, aye; and Henry Terry, aye).

4. Public and Member Comments.

There were no members of the public present, hence no public comments.

5. Discussion on Circulation Issues.

Henry Terry observed that Circulation, topic number 8, was the remaining topic not yet discussed by the group. Lee Saperstein has written an essay, with draft conclusions, for discussion but it has not yet been reviewed by Mary Longacre, his subcommittee partner. She apologized and allowed as how this has been a very busy time for her. She agreed to the discussion and would give her opinions, including disagreements, when the topics came up. Lee Saperstein then put his document onto the shared screen; a few minutes previously, it had been circulated to the Work Group members. It is attached to these minutes.

He introduced the document by saying that it had four broad sub-topics: the road network, parking, public transportation, and other congestion issues, and then started to scroll down the document. There was tacit agreement to the proposed endorsement of roadway improvements in the Town's Long-Range Transportation Plan, LRTP. The statement of problems with Gardner Street elicited several comments. Mary Longacre suggested that, for improving the flow of traffic on Gardner Street, curbs should be lowered and sidewalks reinforced, thus allowing vehicles to go up on the sidewalk when avoiding on-coming traffic. Marsha Fader reacted by saying that such a move would reduce safety for pedestrians on the sidewalks and she disagreed with the suggestion. Mary Longacre added that high curbs could impede the peddling motion of cyclists when their feet hit the curb. She added that, no matter what conclusion is reached about sidewalks, the Town should develop a sidewalk construction policy.

His suggestions for moving utilities by burying them on Gardner Street or nearby on Howard Street or, at the very least, moving the utility poles led to a few more comments. Mary Longacre was not comfortable with the recommendation for moving utilities to Howard Street and said that residents along the street should be consulted before any such recommendation be made. Clearly, property owners along Gardner and Liberty Streets should be invited to give their opinions on how best to improve the flow of traffic.

Lee Saperstein then moved down to the comments on parking. Mary Longacre does not believe that comments about a parking structure are germane because none has been proposed. Also, the likely location is not in the Town Area. Lee Saperstein disagreed because a structure was endorsed in the LRTP and a number of design alternatives were included in the Wilkes Square study project. He noted also that the Civic League had conducted a survey of residents' interest in paid parking where one of the questions dealt with a parking structure. Although not necessarily a valid survey (respondents self-selected themselves), there was clear opposition to a structure in the survey. He noted also the comments about a parking structure impacting the flow of traffic through the Town Area.

The comments about modern ways to allow motorists to pay for parking led to a strong statement by Mary Longacre that there should be no meters or kiosks placed on Nantucket streets. Lee Saperstein replied by saying that smart telephones can easily make payments into a dedicated web site. He went on, however, to suggest that expansion of the parking district to include all of the Town Area, the CDT, and the waterfront would collect fees from anyone driving a car on Nantucket. With a valid parking permit,

motorists would then be able to park, as today, in designated spaces. Fees could be set at differing rates for residents, commercial vehicles, and non-residents. The last would be able to purchase on line permits of variable length. Fees would be used to pay for enforcement and for subsidies to the shuttle bus service. Lee Saperstein then suggested that the parking district rules should be year-round.

Mary Longacre said that she was uncertain about these recommendations and asked for the opinions of others. She believed, also, that the opinion of the Police Department on this proposal and all of parking broadly should be sought. Henry Terry said that he agreed with the proposal. Mary Anne Easley thought that winter-time enforcement was unlikely. Mickey Rowland agreed that there was little pressure for parking in the winter. Lee Saperstein said that while this was the case for private vehicles, the concern for uncontrolled parking by commercial vehicles, particularly those of builders, supported the case for year-round applicability.

Rounding out the discussion on parking was the suggestion that Nantucket find a way to make parking on sidewalks legal, where it is necessary for the passage of vehicles. Mary Longacre stated that while we may recommend pursuing this objective, it is not the prerogative of the Work Group to recommend a Home-Rule Petition. Marsha Fader said that identification of the problem is important and should be included. Mickey Rowland added that the Traffic Safety Work Group should be asked to study parking in narrow streets. He felt that parking on York Street should be banned. As a side note, Mary Longacre pointed out that India Street was wide enough to allow on-street parking although ruts in the sidewalk showed that wide vehicles often did drive there.

For the remaining issues of public transportation and congestion, there was general assent. Lee Saperstein noted that Gary Roberts, NRTA Administrator, had attended the previous meeting of the Work Group and spoke of changes coming to the shuttle service, several of which coincide with the suggestions in the draft. With the time to adjourn the meeting coming up, Lee Saperstein said that he would amend the draft to respect the comments made at this meeting and re-submit it to the membership.

6. New Business.

Henry Terry asked if there was anything else to come before the group. Hearing none, he suggested that a motion to adjourn was in order.

7. Adjournment.

At 4:59 pm, Marsha Fader moved to adjourn, Mary Longacre seconded it, and roll-call approval was unanimous (Mary Anne Easley, aye; Marsha Fader, aye; Alison King, aye, Mary Longacre, aye; Mickey Rowland, aye; Lee Saperstein, aye; and Henry Terry, aye).

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 3:00 pm. This meeting will be by Zoom. Please remember that the Zoom link for Tuesday meetings is different from Friday's link.

For reference: Subcommittee composition.

2. Land Use: Liz Almodobar and Mary Anne Easley
3. Housing: Marsha Fader and Mickey Rowland
4. Economic Development: Alison King and Mary Longacre
5. Natural and Cultural Resources: Liz Almodobar and Marsha Fader
6. Open Space and Recreation Plan: Mary Anne Easley and Henry Terry
7. Services and Facilities: Regen Horchow and Mickey Rowland
8. Circulation; Mary Longacre and Lee Saperstein

Lee W. Saperstein, Secretary, saperste@mst.edu

8. CIRCULATION

Draft for discussion by the Town Area Plan Work Group

Written January 22, 2024

The Circulation sub-committee (Mary Longacre and Lee Saperstein) of the Town Area Plan Work Group, TAP, offers suggestions for discussion by the entire Work Group on 1. the road network, 2. parking, 3. public transportation, and 4. other congestion issues. These are restricted to the Town Area although it is recognized that traffic and parking issues are deeply affected by the Commercial Downtown, CDT, core and the harbor front, both of which are surrounded by the Town Area.

1. The Road Network. The document from the Transportation Planners, “Nantucket Long-Range Transportation Plan, FFY 2024 to 2044 ” (<https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/45499/Long-Range-Transportation-Plan--FFY-2024-to-2044-PDF>), LRTP, contains, in several appendices, project descriptions for improvements to road intersections, streets, and transportation, which is, in reality, bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The sub-committee **endorses** every item of this list that is within the Town Area; although in different levels of readiness, each has been through a Town review process.

The LRTP does not include a plan for congestion on Gardner Street. The sub-committee **recommends** that attention be paid to this historic and over-used way. It provides a relief bypass around the town’s center but is narrow with insufficient room for passage of vehicles traveling in opposite directions without recourse to driving partially on the sidewalk. Utility poles restrict this practice and prevent any sort of widening. A recommendation that protects its historic nature but provides some relief is to either bury utilities in a “utilidor” under the street or to route the utilities down Howard Street thence to Howard Court and, finally, across private land to North Liberty Street. This option would require an easement to cross these lands.

The LRTP endorses a parking structure to relieve pressure on on-street parking and this will be addressed in the next section. It also endorses a paid-parking scheme.

2. Parking. It is understood that any parking and traffic decisions made for the CDT will impact the Town Area. Making parking more difficult or expensive will cause drivers to seek spaces just outside of the Downtown while making it easier or more available will most likely put more traffic pressure, i.e., congestion, on Union and Washington Streets. Any conclusion reached by the TAP for parking will, perforce, need to be considered alongside any made for the downtown.

In general, the sub-committee does not endorse any parking ban but it does consider schemes to make it more expensive. Given the additional pressure that a downtown parking structure would put on Union and Washington Streets, it **does not endorse a parking structure** located in Harbor Place (ex-Wilkes Square).

There are many paid parking schemes that do not involve coin-operated parking meters. If the Town creates a paid-parking scheme, the TAP endorses one that uses smart-phone and digital kiosk technology. It believes also that the current **residential parking district be expanded** to be an universal plan for the entire Town Area as well as the CDT.

It proposes that the Parking District (Town Regulations 375-6 C, “Establishment of parking districts; map”). be expanded to include the CDT, Harbor Front, and the Town Area. Under current rules, residents may buy annual permits and short-term visitors may buy daily permits. These rules could be amended to accommodate residential discounts and digital purchases of short-term permits. Expansion of the district as suggested would create paid parking for residents and visitors alike. Existing parking zone limitations (30-minute, 1- and 2- hour, loading, disabled, and no-parking) would remain. Within this scheme, it is suggested that **winter-time relaxation** of the rules would be removed. Parking fees, as explained later, should be dedicated to the public buses (WAVE).

Inappropriate overnight parking of commercial vehicles at the downtown Stop and Shop and the airport suggests that long-term, i.e., overnight-parking permitted, **parking lots be developed** on Town property on Fairgrounds Road and further afield off Bunker Road. Shuttle bus service would be necessary; perhaps paid for by parking fees. Parking at the Silver Street and Washington Street lots would be paid for by the residential parking permit fee. Shuttle bus-stop shelters should be installed at remote lots. The Jetties lot already has shuttle bus service in the summer time.

Nantucket has a practice of parking partially on sidewalks on those streets so narrow as to cause a blockage if cars are parked in the roadway (Academy Lane, Gay, Hussey, India, Liberty, Lily, Quince, York, among others). The practice is contrary to Massachusetts law, which given Nantucket’s need for parking and the long-term history of the practice, has not been enforced. The TAP believes that the practice needs to be defined and regulated but not banned. This would take a **Home-Rule Petition**, which the TAP endorses.

3. Public Transportation. NRTA has just announced a six-month trial of free passage on all WAVE buses. The TAP believes that this is an excellent idea and suggests that, if any paid parking scheme is created, **proceeds** from it be dedicated to the public’s use of the shuttle buses. The TAP is also in favor of any scheme that **encourages bicycle** use. Perhaps, the commercial bicycle shops could provide validated coupons to their customers that could be submitted to the Town for rebates on the rental fee. Again, the source of the rebates would be the parking fees.

To encourage visitors to Nantucket to leave their cars on the mainland, a frequent shuttle service could be initiated between the ferry terminals and the public transportation center (Greenhound Stop), which would allow ferry passengers to obtain their desired route without a lot of walking. Such a shuttle once existed between the Fairgrounds Road parking lots and the ferries. Consideration should be given to starting it up again. Additionally, shuttle routes could be adjusted to provide rides to major inns and hotels on the Island, also to the Mid-Island Stop and Shop.

4. Other Congestion Issues. The summer-time traffic jams on the Union/Washington Street corridor and North Beach Street, coming from the Jetties Beach, are well known. These, in general, are the result of Nantucket drivers’ deference to pedestrians at key intersections: Main Street/Straight Wharf and Candle/Easy Streets; also, South Beach and Broad Streets. While there may be move severe solutions such as crossing-guard control of traffic and pedestrians, the TAP is in favor of moves that reduce the use of private cars.

It is noted that jams exist year-round at the main Island rotary that links Milestone Road, Old South Road, Orange Street, and Sparks Avenue and frequently at the Sparks Avenue rotary. Jams exist also at “Four Corners,” which is where Atlantic Avenue, Prospect Street, Sparks Avenue, and Surfside Road

meet and is at the edge of the TAP. No suggestions are made for changes to these intersections because they are addressed in the LRTP.

In general, the TAP does not endorse congestion charges nor limitations on private-car ownership. It is hoped that that suggestions in the above sections, primarily Parking, will reduce demand on the road network.

[Following this draft is an earlier thought-piece created and annotated by Lee Saperstein.]

Circulation Issues for Discussion
Mary Longacre and Lee Saperstein
Notes added on November 8, 2023

The intent of this list of directed questions is to get the Work Group's consensus on elements of circulation.

- Should we endorse the Project List from the Long-Range Transportation Plan, particularly for those that impact the Town Area: Intersections, Complete Streets, and Active (pedestrian and cycling) Transportation. **Yes.**
- Congestion. How much of a problem is it for the Town Area? Washington Street is on the waterfront while Straight Wharf and Steamboat Wharf are in the Downtown Core.
 - Leave it alone. Locals will find ways around the congested streets. A publicity campaign for walks and bicycles might persuade visitors to leave their cars on the Cape. **I tend to believe that “benign neglect” is best here. I do believe, though, that the burial of utilities on Gardner Street or immediately adjacent on Howard Street and Howard Court makes good sense.**
 - Should we recommend ways to reduce private car use?
 - Limit car ownership on Nantucket by taxation and permitting. **No. It would hurt locals more than visitors.**
 - Increase the cost for bringing a car onto Nantucket. **Ferry fares are rising; we may not need to do anything.**
 - Find ways to reduce the cost of renting a bicycle: e.g., Town subsidies. **Yes**
- Parking, as described in the New York Times (Saturday, September 2, 2023, HENRY GRABAR, “We’re Taking New York City’s Streets Back — and Then We’re Coming for the Rest of the Country”), is a public provision, the streets, for storing private property.
 - Japan will not permit the purchase of a new car unless it can be demonstrated that off-street parking is available for it. This means that residential housing in the cities usually has its ground floor dedicated to parking. Frankly, this would not work in Nantucket’s Historic District. **A nice idea but not for us.**
 - Do we recommend ways to make parking easier or more difficult?
 - Easier: parking structure, say on Washington Street or Silver Street lots. **No**
 - Easier: Make parking partially on sidewalks legal and more extensive. **Probably not.**
 - Difficult: Extend the Residential Parking District to the entire Town Area. **Yes; this has real merit.**
 - Difficult: Make the Residential Parking District year-round, similar to the core. **Yes. Both of these would require a year-round parking permit: including increased rates for non-residents but with an ability for non-residents to buy a permit for shorter periods such as weekly and monthly. Bumper stickers would work but digital readers in the hands of parking enforcement officers might work better.**
 - Satellite Parking. Will satellite parking reduce the demand on in-Town parking places? **Commercial vehicles need a place to park overnight.**
 - Need additional parking lots in addition to 2 and 4 Fairgrounds Road. **Yes.**
 - Frequent shuttle-bus service and weather-protecting shelters would be needed. **Yes**

- Remote parking lots, say off Bunker Road or at Jetties Beach, could have long-in-time bus rides. **But they might work well for commercial vehicles.**
- WAVE Bus Service. What will increase the use of the shuttle buses and will this reduce the demand for parking? **We should endorse the idea of free shuttle service, with costs being supported by parking permit fees.**
 - From the ferries. Bus service exists from the airports but not from in front of the ferry terminals.
 - Would a bus reduce congestion on Straight Wharf? **I believe that it would**
 - The bus route could go past a number of inns and hotels and terminate at a parking lot.
 - For Shopping. Can routes be adjusted so as to make it easier to use the bus when shopping? **Yes.**