

Maren Toohill

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2021 3:22 PM
To: Maren Toohill
Subject: 289 Great Road Site Walk

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Planning Board members,

I would like to thank the Board for allowing the residents of Robinson Road to be a part of the site walk for 289 Great Road that took place on July 15, 2021.

There are two items that need to be addressed: The lot for 25 Robinson Road and the lack of planned housing in the proposed Great Road development.

When Northern Bank purchased the 25 Robinson Road property, they met with the residents and we had a long discussion about their intent for the property. It was not part of land proposed for the revitalization and the residents all expressed the importance to keep the property residential. Not once was it mentioned that the bank had the intention of tearing down the house and to try to change its zoning for inclusion into the revitalization plan. At the site walk on 7/15/2021, we were told it was never the intention of the bank to keep the site as is and it was always their plan to tear down the house. We should have been told the intent from the very beginning.

When the Form Based Code was presented to the town residents during the Board meetings and diagrams for the revitalization for this area of Great Road was presented, there was inclusion of new residential housing. The current plan from Northern Bank includes no such facility nor are they willing to commit to doing so. Wasn't housing one of the key selling points for the town on the revitalization plan? Why do we seem to be backing away on the initial intent proposed for revitalization?

My perception is that even though the proposed building design for the bank is really beautiful and aesthetically appealing, it is still trying to put a round peg in a square hole. I don't feel that the bank has responded to Mr. Montanari's request, from the June 3rd meeting, to put a plan together that includes 25 Robinson Road intact and no curb cut onto Robinson Road. All we hear from the bank is they are trying to put the best design forward. The bank is willing to go in front of the town and ask the residents to rezone the 25 Robinson Road property so they can backdoor it into the revitalization plan as commercial property. We have also heard that 25 Robinson Road was excluded from the revitalization to get Form Base Code passed. Was it always the intent to go forth and rezone 25 Robinson Road so it could be included at a future time? That seems misleading to the town and the area residents if that was the "plan" all along.

There needs to be clarification as to entry and exit from the site. During the last Planning Board meeting, there was a lot of discussion that vehicles would enter the site from Great Road at the bank and exit at the other curb cut further down Great Road. At the site walk, we were told the cars can enter and exit by the bank's entrance from Great Road. Which is it?

Why can't the bank consider reducing the footprint of the building and/or asking for setback variance so the building could be moved closer to the corner of Great Road and Robinson Road to possibly accommodate the drive-through and keep 25 Robinson Road intact?

Are we so convinced and determined that this building at 289 Great Road needs to be the bank? The design can be used for any type of operation. An upscale boutique or a nice restaurant or café with outdoor patio or dining. This would eliminate the need for the drive-through and possibly allow 25 Robinson Road to remain. You would still have the WOW of the design that everyone seems to want.

Why would we need 149 total parking spaces that are proposed on the plan? The bank has said it is for overflow parking so people won't park on Robinson Road. By my calculation, that is 46 parking spaces. If the bylaws and FBC require the right number of parking spaces for each type of business proposed, why is there a need for this many "overflow" parking spaces? Can there be a reduction in the number of spaces to reduce the size of the parking area and introduce more green space? If you look at the design of the 149 parking spaces, there is no allocation for oversized vehicles, campers or trailers. If a driver comes off the highway pulling a camper or even driving a camper, where do they park...Donelan's and then walk across Great Road? It would be beneficial to design some of the existing parking spaces to accommodate oversized vehicles.

There are 29 registered voters on Robinson Road. If/when this is brought before the town to ask for a rezoning vote to commercialize 25 Robinson Road, who is our champion...who is our advocate? No one can really understand the impact this will have on the Robinson Road neighborhood if you do not live here and are not a part of it.

We are not opposed to change and think the overall design is very nice and will provide great opportunity for the town. Let's please make sure that we are putting in the right design and layout.

Sincerely,

Sandy Swartz
Robinson Road