

## Szekely, Brian

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**From:** Patrick Fortin <patrick.fortin@commonmoves.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 4, 2021 9:19 AM  
**To:** Szekely, Brian; Rudolph, Beth  
**Cc:** Patrick Fortin  
**Subject:** FW: rankings/recommendation  
**Attachments:** Parking Survey results.xlsx

Brian and Beth, I did just receive this survey over the weekend so I wanted to include it for the Task Force and for public posting. This was sent to customers/shoppers/clients of the downtown businesses. Nearly 700 customers responded. 65% said that there is NOT adequate parking downtown. 71% of customers said that they often or sometimes shop/dine/run errands outside of Winchester due to current parking. This is very scary and should pull back the curtain on downtown parking problems. Any staff or resident who did not think there were parking issues downtown, should now have a different view. This truly proves that 1. The Waterfield development cannot making the downtown parking situation worse and 2. Town leadership needs to find a downtown parking solution that adds more parking.

### TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS BY PATRICK J FORTIN

The Waterfield Task Force was created in reaction to a Town wide majority No vote which cancelled the Waterfield Development. My belief is the majority of No voters were opposed to the project because of "Availability of Public Parking" and "Revenue to The Town". The Task Force has been asked to "rank" 6 predetermined topics from the Selectboard, including the two above. Additionally, the Task Force has been told the Selectboard's next step will be to use these rankings to re-negotiate with CIVICO to amend/improve the initial deal that was rejected by Town voters.

Based on the initial RFP and Task Force meetings, I believe it is impossible to renegotiate the CIVICO deal to an extent that will address the Town voters' concerns and create an acceptable project. The initial RFP creates barriers to addressing and correcting the Town voters' concerns.

#### 1. PARKING

Parking is addressed in the RFP as a "Medium" priority asking that "proposal provides sufficient parking for building residents and addresses the loss of public parking".

- "Medium" is not an appropriate category priority for Parking. This is very clear from Task Force discussion, Town businesses and residents' feedback. Many Town No voters were focused on Parking as a primary issue.

- Regarding "sufficient parking for the building residents", the CIVICO proposal provides 45 spaces for 106 bedrooms. This proposal uses a .75 spaces per unit metric but never addresses bedrooms. There has been no information presented to show the 45 spaces are near enough to create sufficient resident parking. The Task Force did learn that similar, surrounding towns use .75-1.5 per unit parking requirements. With the current lack of parking downtown and additional loss of Waterfield lot, it would seem logical to require the 1.5 spaces per unit. I believe there will be substantially more cars, potentially even up to 100, leaving 55 cars with no parking solution. Civico's proposal does not "provide sufficient parking for building residents".

- the Town does currently issue "CBD Resident" parking passes (\$10/yr.) for center residents with no parking. Potentially, all residents of the new development could acquire these and take any currently available Town parking, just adding to the current parking issues. This pushes the Waterfield residents parking issues into a Town parking issue. Increasing parking requirements within the development for residents solves this issue.

- Regarding the RFP requirement to “Address the loss of public parking”, the CIVICO proposal provides 40 public parking spaces. The Waterfield lot currently has 93 public parking spaces. So there is a net loss of 53 public parking spaces. CIVICO’s proposal does not “address the loss of public parking”.
- Since the creation of the RFP a few years ago, the Town has lost or will lose roughly 120 public spaces to safety changes, MBTA construction and outdoor dining. We cannot expect the Waterfield project to fix all downtown parking issues but the loss of these 120 spaces makes replacing the Waterfield 93 spaces even more essential. It also raises the issue of providing onsite parking for all 106+ residents of the building. Many No voters have point this out as a concern that needs to be addressed.
- The Town currently issues over 1,000 downtown parking permits to Town center employees, Town center residents and resident commuters. These programs created by the Chamber with the Town have worked to keep employees and commuters off the streets and has been essential in leaving valuable, core customer parking spaces open. Eliminating any current Waterfield spaces along with the lost MBTA spaces will do serious harm to this successful program and jeopardize the vibrancy of our Town Center.
- To create the 40 public spaces, Civico proposes an underground garage that they forecast will cost \$2.8 million dollars to build. The Task Force asked if CIVICO would give the Town the \$2.8m and remove the garage and 20 spaces. The thought was that the Town could dedicate those funds to creating downtown parking, ideally with a garage. CIVICO has said they are “open” to negotiations regarding this but were not prepared to make a commitment. Without any changes here, not only is the loss of public parking not addressed but \$2.8m is spent and dramatically impacts the potential revenue to the Town.
- The Task Force discussed including the Aberjona Lot in an updated RFP with both Waterfield and Aberjona lots. The RFP terms would add criteria to create a 2 story parking garage on Aberjona lot. The Town already has a parking study for a garage on the Aberjona lot.
- the CIVICO agreement does have language that that allows CIVICO to change the of building public parking. It does appear the Town has veto power here but why would this wording even be added?

## 2. REVENUE TO THE TOWN

The original RFP never mentions Revenue. There are Zero developer requirements to make any effort to create any Town revenue. This is a major concern of Town tax payers and no voters.

-Because the RFP criteria never include Revenue to the Town, Civico (or any of the developers) would never need to consider Town revenue in their proposals. The net result is a CIVICO project with very little revenue to the Town. The Task Force requested revenue forecasting or valuations on other types of development for comparison but we were given no data. Many of the Task Force questions related to finance were answered with, “this will get addressed in the permitting process” or “once CIVICO has a Land agreement we can address it”. It appears the Town did very little exploration, at minimum, to understand the potential value that was being left behind by the CIVICO proposal. It has been expressed that Town residents want and deserve to know these numbers as to what the Town has decided to give up. I would guess that Town Meeting members would want these numbers also.

-The 99 year lease would fall into the Revenue to Town bucket in my mind. The Task Force asked many questions regarding lease term, other potentially shorter terms, financial data on value of different terms and more. It appears there was never any analysis of financial impacts of different terms, even if only to help Town residents understand the reason for this long of a lease. The Task Force was told that MassHousing recommends a 99 year lease but their priority and focus is not about protecting the tax payers of Winchester. Town Meeting and Town residents should have neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party advice in this area with detailed financial forecasting.

-Most of the revenue to the Town in the CIVICO proposal is highly speculative. Many numbers related to CIVICO’s deal have changed to reduce revenue and/or increase expenses, just in our 5 weeks exploring the financials. No numbers have improved. The Task Force has repeatedly been told “these numbers always change” and “this is normal”. I do believe the Town residents deserve a more predictable and contractual commitment related to shared revenue. If Revenue to Town was a priority in the RFP, I do believe there would be more focus on this part of the project.

## 3. MIX OF AFFORDABLE AND MARKET RATE UNITS

I do fully support the current affordable units as proposed by CIVICO but I also believe there are opportunities here for potentially more affordable units and more Town revenue. The Chamber of Commerce also supports the CIVICO affordable proposal.

- Enzo Rascionato correctly pointed out that certain affordable unit types and bedroom numbers can create higher rents to the developer and ultimately revenue for the Town. The unit mix should be analyzed by the Finance Committee to create more details in the amended RFP on how developers would need to meet criteria in this area.
- it appears MORE affordable units could add more value to the project by way of special tax credits. This could create additional Town revenue and I would be in favor of more units if they could work in the scope of the project

I would recommend the Selectboard amend the RFP to address my concerns and the Town voters' concerns and rebid the project. It appears this could potentially move quickly and be ready for Spring Town Meeting

#### RECOMENDATIONS

- Rebid with an amended RFP with parking and revenue as top priorities
- Rebid with Affordable Housing requirements as presently required
- Require the 93 Waterfield spaces be replaced as part of the development
- Require more resident parking on site using a 1.5 space to unit requirement.
- Encourage developers to create the affordable unit mix with AMI and bedroom numbers that maximizes revenue
- Remove barriers like open space, retaining Waterfield building, free town community space so developers can be creative and improve Town revenue from the project. This would also help developers deal with additional parking requirements
- explore an expanded RFP that includes both Aberjona and Waterfield Lots with development criteria that requires a 2 level garage on the Aberjona lot.

### Patrick J. Fortin

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