

March 29, 2016

To: Mr. David Frick, Planning Board Chairman  
Re: **Off-Street Parking Requirements for Mill77**

Dear Mr. Frick,

At the January 25, 2016 Public Hearing, we presented our Site Plan and Special Permit application to the Planning Board for the Mill77 project located at 77 Elm Street in Downtown Amesbury. The application seeks to restore and renovate the historic mill structure (shown in Figure 1) for reuse as a mix of office, retail and/or restaurant uses. At the hearing, we noted our continued effort to refine our program options for the use of the building through: evaluation of the findings of the Traffic Impact Report; further study of local market conditions; assessment of the availability of off-street parking; and coordination with the Office of Community and Economic Development in respect to participating in a Tax Increment Finance agreement for expanded parking along Elm Street. In response to these efforts, we have review completed our met with the Dennis Nadeau, the City's Building Commissioner and Zoning Compliance Officer, to determine how the zoning requirements, listed under Section VIII.A – the Table of Off-Street Parking Regulations, would apply to this project. This memo represents our findings.



*Figure 1 – Mill77, Elm Street, Amesbury, MA*

As presented in our revised site plans (presented at the March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting) we propose to create twenty-three (23) off-street parking spaces in two locations along Fruit Place behind the

existing mill building. As part of the roadway and utility improvements along the privately owned section of Fruit Place we are proposing to establish five (5) off-street parking spaces (see Figure 2). Additionally, we are also proposing to construct an eighteen (18) space off-street parking lot along the public-owned portion of Fruit Place. The parking lot will include drainage systems, landscaping and lighting.

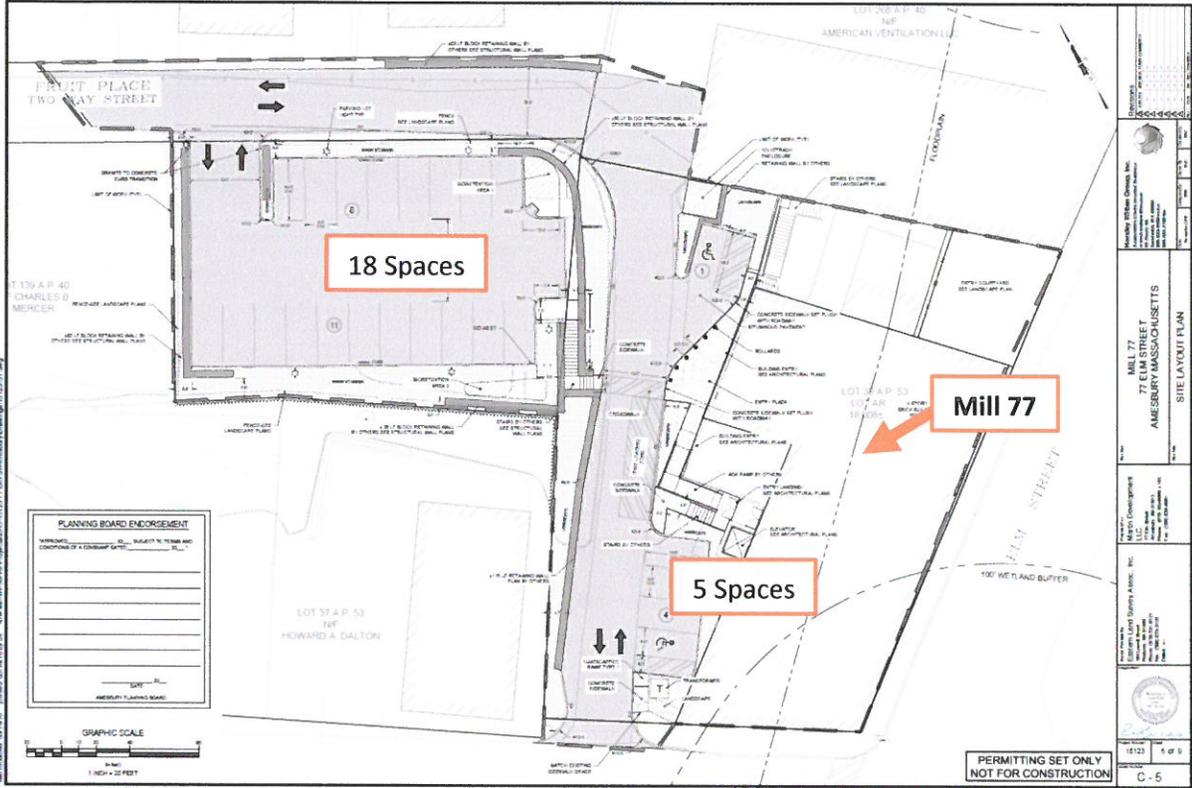


Figure 2 – Proposed Private On-Site Off-Street Parking for Mill77

Consistent with our application narrative submitted with the Site Plan, Table 1 shows our proposed program options while Table 2 lists the corresponding parking requirements under the Zoning Ordinance.

Table 1 – Program Options for Mill77

Program Option	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Use	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Use	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Use
1	Retail	Office	Office
2	Office	Office	Office
3	Restaurant / Retail	Office	Office

In accordance with the three program options shown in Table 1, Section VIII of the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Program Option 1 would require 70 off-street parking spaces which includes a retail use on the ground floor with the upper floors used as office space. Program Option 2, which includes three floors of office space, would require a total of 72 spaces. Program Option 3, which includes a 160 seat restaurant along with retail or office use on the ground floor, would require at least 94 spaces.

**Table 2 – Off-Street Parking Requirements for Mill77**

Program Option	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Use (6,761 SF)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor (6,761 SF) Use	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Use (6,680 SF)	Total Parking
1	Retail: 3.3/1,000 SF = 22	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	70
2	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	72
3	Retail: 3.3/1,000 SF = 6 Restaurant: 160 Seats/ 4 = 40	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	Office: 3.6/1,000 SF = 24	94

In meeting the requirements, the Ordinance lists a variety of off-street parking options including the use of *Joint Facilities* (Section VIII.E.) and *Public Parking Facilities* (Section VIII.F). Section VIII.F. allows a building or structure located within 300 feet of a public parking lot to use such lot to meet its off-street parking requirements when practical differences exist in providing off-street parking at the site. As shown in Figure 2, Mill77 is located approximately 300 feet from the public parking lot area located at the Costello Transportation Center. There are approximately 50 spaces located at the Center and overflow parking is provided at the lower lot on Water Street. The lower lot currently has approximately 80 spaces available for public use and the upper level parking deck has approximately 110 additional spaces. According to the City, the utilization rate for lower lot and the Transportation Center is estimated at between 50 and 60% during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).<sup>1</sup>



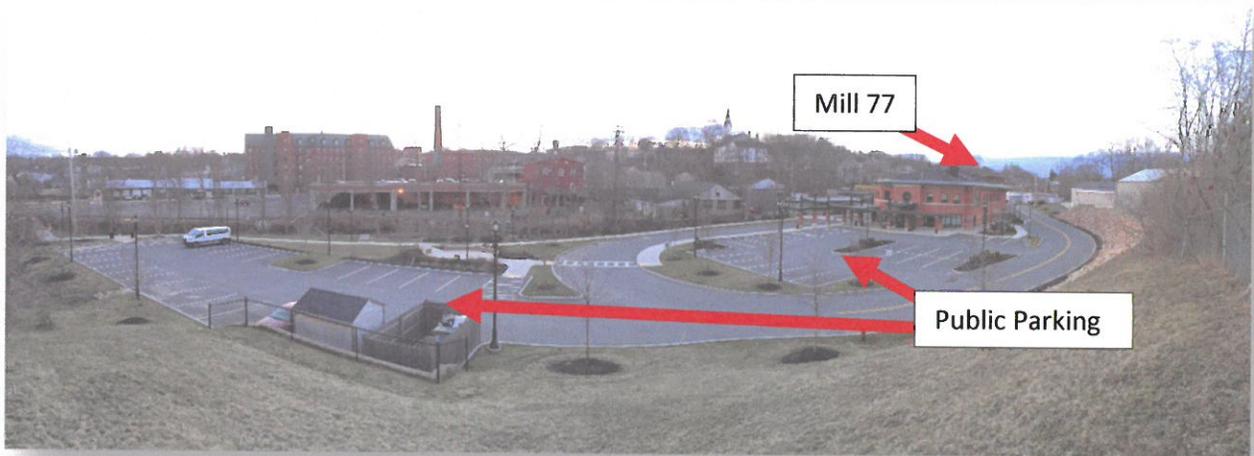
**Figure 3 – Mill77, the Costello Transportation Center & Lower Water Street Lot**

<sup>1</sup> Note that both these public lots have many spaces with high turnover rates for customers seeking retail, trade or other local services. Thus, parking availability fluctuates significantly between office, restaurant and retail uses.

After careful assessment of the Program Options and the availability of private and public off-street parking, at this time, we are proposing that the Planning Board consider approval of either Option 1 or 2 with the parking allocation as shown in Table 3.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 3 – Proposed Private and Public Off-Street Parking Allocation**

Program Option	77 Elm Street	Fruit Place Lot	MVRTA / Water Street Surface Lot	Total Off-Street Parking Spaces
1	5	18	47 +	70
2	5	18	49 +	72
3	NA	NA	NA	NA



*Figure 4 – Costello Transportation Center, Elm Street, Amesbury, MA*

In addition to the public parking at the Costello Transportation Center, the lower public parking lot at the Water Street Parking Deck represents overflow parking to the Center and is directly linked via a pedestrian bridge over the Back River as shown in Figure 5. Importantly, this larger and interconnected public parking area, the largest in downtown Amesbury with over 250 spaces, was established in order to support redevelopment of the: Lower Millyard; the Elm Street Commercial Corridor; and the adjacent Carriage Hill historic mill buildings - all severely lacking in private off-street parking.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Note that we are currently working with the City’s Community and Economic Development Director to secure a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement for redevelopment of a new 24 space off-street parking lot on Elm Street directly adjacent to the Pride Gas Station. If we are successful in developing a final TIF agreement with the City and the property owner, we will request an amendment of the Site Plan / Special Permit in order to construct the parking lot and modify the program to potentially include a small restaurant within Mill77 (Program Option 3).

<sup>3</sup> Notably, without the Water Street parking facility many of these historic mills would have been rendered obsolete and required significant portions to be demolished in order to create private on-street parking.



*Figure 5 – Water Street Parking Deck and Lot, Water Street, Amesbury, MA*

For over thirty years, since the Master Plan update and Zoning revision was completed 1985, the Amesbury Zoning Ordinance has recognized the importance of encouraging shared parking and the use of public parking facilities to help revitalize and repurpose most of the city’s historic mill buildings in Downtown Amesbury. Without such a provision in the zoning, much of the city’s recent success at revitalizing the Upper and Lower Millyards would have fallen short.<sup>4</sup> As such, we believe the request to allow Mill 77 to utilize up to 49 spaces of the public off-street parking within the larger public parking facility associated in the Costello Transportation Center and the Lower Millyard is both appropriate and supported by the City’s planning and economic development goals, as expressed in the Master Plan, for this area.

In closing, due to the high level of investment being proposed with this project, along with our effort to provide at least a third of our off-street parking along Fruit Place, we believe this proposal is consistent with the City’s Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. Moreover, our proposal to use nearby public parking to meet the off-street parking requirements is also consistent with many other recently-approved downtown mill building redevelopment projects.<sup>5</sup> Approval of this project will revitalize a long derelict mill structure, located on a key gateway to the downtown, and it will significantly improve and expand the economic vitality and pedestrian experience of visiting, shopping and working in downtown Amesbury.

We thank you in advance for consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Nick Cracknell at 978 270 3789.

Sincerely,

David Martin, Owner  
Mill 77, 77 Elm Street, Amesbury, MA

Cc: Dennis Nadeau, Building Commissioner

<sup>4</sup> Imagine the downtown without Flatbread Pizza, the Newburyport Five Cent Savings Bank, the Ale House or the Amesbury Industrial Supply. All of these business rely almost exclusively on the provisions listed in Section VIII that allow the use of shared public parking in order to meet the off-street parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

<sup>5</sup> The Upper Millyard (2004) used the Friend Street lot for a portion of the off-street parking requirement.