

# Former Brown Property, 260 Foreside Road

## Report on Community Event held on September 21, 2009

Draft: October 6, 2009

On September 21, 2009, the Town held a community event to discuss (a) possible uses for the former Brown Property, (b) ways for the Town to manage parking for the nearby Town Landing, and (c) next steps for the Council to take. This report summarizes the findings of this event.



### Invitations

The event was open to whoever had the interest and time to attend. Several Town e-mail lists were used to broadcast the event. Over 600 notices were mailed to property owners in the neighborhood. Flyers were posted in the neighborhood. An advertisement was placed in The Forecaster. The event was also announced on community cable TV and the Town's website. (See event announcement in appendix 1).

### Attendance

Some 90 people attended the event, including six Town councilors and Town staff. Seventy-five (75) members of the general public registered on the sign-in sheets. Below are the statistics of these attendees:

#### Residence:

➤ Town Landing Neighborhood	42	56%
➤ Foreside, but other than Town Landing Neighborhood	29	39%
➤ Falmouth, but other than Foreside	4	5%
➤ Outside Falmouth	0	0%

#### Have boat at Falmouth Anchorage:

➤ At Town Landing	21	28%
➤ At Portland Yacht Club	7	9%
➤ At Handy Boat	3	4%
➤ At Other Private Location	1	1%
➤ Have no boat at Falmouth Anchorage	27	36%
➤ Am on Mooring Waiting List for Town Landing	3	4%

Note: About 22% of attendees did not answer this question.

### Event Program

Councilor Breen gave a welcome, and Town Manager Nathan Poore provided an introduction to the site, the issues, and the small group questions. Councilor Breen closed the program. Theo Holtwijk led a brief site walk before the meeting. (See Town Manager presentation in appendix 2.)

### Small Group Discussions

Attendees were randomly divided into nine (9) small groups with about eight (8) people each. Each was group was asked to discuss three questions:

1. What use(s) should/could the former Brown property be put to?
2. How can the Town best manage the parking needs for the Town Landing?

3. What next step(s) should the Town Council undertake?  
Councilors and several Town staff acted as small group facilitators and note takers during the discussion which lasted about one (1) hour. (See small group discussion notes in appendix 3.)

### **Public Comment**

Written comment was received at and prior to the meeting (from Richard Getz and Dick Sweeney). It is included here for sake of completeness. Communications with staff leading up to the event are not included. (See written comment in appendix 4.)

### **Former Brown Property Purchase History**

Some people wondered how the former Brown property was purchased. The property was purchased in March 2007 and the Town used available fund balance from the November 2001 land acquisition referendum, which authorized spending \$1,500,000 for open space and/or land for any other municipal use. (Note: This is separate from the November 2007 referendum question authorized spending \$5,000,000 for open space (limited to only open space).



### **Major Findings**

#### **1. What use(s) should/could the former Brown property be put to?**

- Residents wanted to see the Brown and Underwood parcels combined and treated as one parcel.
- Residents wanted to see the Brown property preserved as neighborhood open space.
- Active recreational uses suggested include play fields and community gardens.
- Residents were divided on the idea of splitting off a house lot.

#### **2. How can the Town best manage the parking needs for the Town Landing?**

- Residents questioned the stated need for more parking for Town Landing.
- Residents felt that peak parking needs were limited in duration and that the solution should be commensurate.
- Residents want to limit use by non-residents of the Town Landing, by limiting availability of moorings for non-residents and/or setting higher non-resident fees including for parking.
- Some residents felt that off site parking could be provided at existing paved lots in the area and a Town shuttle or Metro bus service provided.
- If any parking were to be provided at the Brown parcel (which most were not in favor of), residents wanted no asphalt, but stone dust or grass pavers.
- Some residents felt that the Falmouth Anchorage was too large and should be managed better.

#### **3. What next step(s) should the Town Council undertake?**

- Some residents suggested more study of the actual parking needs and/or parking suggestions.
- Others recommended immediate action on the ideas suggested above.

### **APPENDICES**

1. Event Announcement
2. Presentation by the Town Manager
3. Small Group Discussion Notes
4. Public Comments Received

## APPENDIX 3: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

### **Councilor Payne's Group:**

*Will Rooks, Betta Connor, Glen Brand, Fred Leighton, Lindsay Richmond, Tommy Johnson, Ryan Nitz*

- we need better data particularly around pedestrian users of T/L to determine if they are counted as mooring owners but do not have parking needs
- use Brown property as a multi-use, multi-generational facility for expanded playgrounds, gardens, basketball, tennis courts etc.
- add 20-40 parking spaces at the front of combined properties to support expansion of park use and T/L
- raise mooring fees to at least \$10 for residents and \$500 for non-residents
- give residents priority for new moorings as they become available but do not expand the number of moorings
- improve mooring utilization by revoking "ownership" if the mooring goes unused for a period of time
- leave back of the property as green space
- ensure safety for pedestrians/cyclists with expanded parking
- don't pave any new parking unless they are grass pavers
- use new parking spaces for trailers and free up lot across from T/L
- explore shuttle service for peak periods
- Council needs to get good data for decision-making

### **Councilor Breen's Group:**

*Don Staples, Dan Groves, Matt Arrants, Anne Hyland, Kevin Farnham, Sam Rudman, Suzanne Quinn, Kathy Drake, Mary Honan*

The group consisted mainly of residents of the Foreside and the owner of Town Landing Market. About half were boaters.

General comments about parking demands in the area:

- Skepticism about validity of Harbor Committee report findings and data related to need for additional spaces
- Some spaces (and cars) at the Town Landing are underwater at high tide
- Non-residents should be charged for parking near the Landing
- Use Falmouth school buses to shuttle to remote parking
- Walking up and down the steep hill of Town Landing Rd. seems to be a deterrent to people parking in other areas
- Concerns were voiced about gentrification of Town Landing that may occur with increased fees for parking or mooring permits; this resource remains one of the last affordable places for average people to access the water
- What about extra parking capacity at Handy Boat, PYC and Holy Martyrs? One person reported that Handy Boat currently rents spaces for \$10 (per day or per hour not known)

Question 1: To what uses should the Town of Falmouth put the former Brown property?

- Incorporate the parcel into Underwood Park and create a multi-use active recreation area with ball fields and ice (in winter)
- Increase recreation opportunities for all ages
- A gazebo for concerts in good weather

- Increase parking for recreation use; use that for additional spaces when needed for Town Landing (high season, events, etc.)
- Let professional Planners design the specifics of field placement, which trees to conserve, parking needs, access, etc.
- Keep existing trails in wooded areas
- Improve existing trails so that they link up to back of Falmouth Shopping Center – pedestrian and bike access only
- Parking surface: avoid asphalt; first choice was stone dust or some other similar, low cost, permeable material
- What about the house lot? The group was divided on this point: some thought the town should sell, recoup some funds and get at part of the parcel back on the tax rolls; others felt that this part of town is rich in houses on small lots and poor in open space and that the town should not sell it off

Question 2: What other ways can the Town of Falmouth address the parking needs of the Town Landing?

See general parking comments above.

Question 3: What next steps should the Town Council undertake to make its decisions regarding the former Brown property?

- More study is needed; the Council should re-examine the basic premise that we need to construct more parking spaces to serve the Town Landing
- Enough money spent on studies! Listen to the people who really see, inhabit and know the area and its patterns
- Talk to Handy Boat, PYC and Holy Martyrs Church regarding rentals of additional parking spaces during peak season
- Build ball fields and parking
- Get professional plan and present several options for above
- Charge non-residents for park for mooring access from Town Landing
- Don't increase on-street parking
- Examine overnight parking needs and address them
- Study remote parking/shuttle idea further

**Councilor Pierce Group:**

*Charlie McBrady, Susan Chapman, Rob Wood, Elizabeth Rudenberg, Susan Dench, Rowan Morse, John Doughty*

**Question #1**

Minority opinion:

- Sell the front, retain back as open space, there is enough parking, we have a park already that meets the needs, it is used everyday.
- Recoup some of the money by selling front: this will keep all the property values high in the area. Parking should only be for residence.

Majority opinion:

- Keep all open, there isn't enough open space in the area for residents. (this was said many times)
- Great place for dog owners to walk dogs, nice place for community to come together, we don't need more parking. We only need parking for 3 months of year (summer), 24 days a year. Don't over build for a small need.
- Don't sell front, too much opportunity for controversy with new owner and the use of the land not sold. i.e. "who wants a parking lot in their back yard or a busy park?"

**Ideas: community garden, recreation of older kids, basketball, tennis court, keep open for spontaneous play, make playground bigger, make the front park the garden, keep the trails.**

### **Question #2**

Unanimous: WE DO NOT HAVE A PARKING PROBLEM! Just because the report says we need more parking do we really?

We feel it is easy to find parking.

Does the town get any complaints about the parking?

Don't increase the anchorage, the Town Landing is not just for boaters, if you allow in more boaters it pushes out the other users, i.e. fishing, beach goers, walkers, kayakers.

If you do need to increase, use a SHUTTLE. Fabulous idea, eco friendly, uses METRO bus for this service. Only charge the non-residents.

Only do a "softscape" type of parking if you do it.

Could more parking occur along Town Landing Road?

Could you use the "paper street" off Johnson Road next to Holy Martyrs?

Could we share the H.M. parking lot?

### **Question #3**

1. Determine if there really is a parking problem.
2. Explore sharing with H.M.
3. Explore the Paper streets in the area
4. Make decision soon.
5. Post the notes and the power point on-line.

### **Amanda Stearns' Group:**

*Joan Blauvelt, Ann Goggin, Katie Rooks, Rick Scala, Michael Stone, Councilor Fred Chase, John Taxter, Jeff Waites*

- Park used by family
- Need for additional parking – town landing not safe
- Neighborhood safety
- Multiple uses park & parking – add sidewalks on Foreside, lower speed limit
- Balanced concept 30 years – opportunity. Need is seasonal – 3 months. Dozens of kids in the community – need to be accommodated.
- Road used until 2am in summer; professional fishermen 4am. Speed bumps/boat trailers
- Land for boats and boat trailers

- Advocated for purchase - double width of park. Upset if sold. Look in conjunction with Underwood
- One way parking – in front. 30 years. Was parking on 88, used to have race night
- Hold onto center – make sure market is viable – make sure they have parking
- Use shoulder as passing land – bike lane needs painted. No passing in bike lane
- Uses:
  - Community garden
  - Basket ball court
  - Playfield
- No pavement of parking lot
- Have informal grass space in park – not official fields
- Don't sell property
- Parking access to water – pavement out – July 4 to labor day
- Church goes park on street
- Need for parking – 115 spaces. Triple parking (no passing)
- Little more open space
- Very small access point for Town Landing – questions about growing anchorage
- Only accommodate so many
- Newcomer 2005 – 3 young children safety a priority
- Off waiting list, need additional parking. 8-10 trailer
- Safe places to play
- no pavement but parking ok – green space parking
- Preserve Town landing
- Uses:
  - Community gardens
  - Add swings
  - Ice rink in winter
  - Lighting near play area; no lighting for parking
- Parking closer to street – with screening
- Possible bus stop
- Sidewalk connection to Town Landing & Depot Rd.
- Overnight parking – maybe
- Parallel parking?? Maybe on some area
- Shuttle parking?? Use one lots – environmentally not friendly
- Don't charge for parking
- What should Fred do??
- Don't sell the land
- Don't expand the anchorage
- Be conscious of neighborhood impact
- Limited parking
- Scofflaw – enforcement – touring
- Know more about water quality

**Jay Reynolds' Group:**

*Jenny Grimm, Stephanie Fairchild, Lon Blauvelt, Peter Lafond, Hugh Coxe, Bob Swerdlow*

1. What uses should the former Brown property be put to?

- Lon explained the current practice of people being dropped off at TL then find a parking space, then return to TL.
- Lon stated a major safety concern at 88 and TL road, in relation to the existing parking at TL market. Others agreed.
- Hugh suggested that the Brown property could be partially used for parking in the future.
- It was suggested to increase the grass field space and incorporating it to Underwood Park.
- A community garden space area was suggested by Stefanie. It was stated that there is a waiting list with the Audubon for plots and they are in increasing demand. Others felt that this would be a good ‘community use’ of the property.
- The concept of expanding the existing Underwood Park parking space area was explored and seemed acceptable if the Brown property was to be incorporated into Underwood Park.
- It was suggested that the existing trailer spaces in the TL parking lot could be converted to more vehicular parking spaces.
- It was stated that parking is better suited in existing ‘impervious’ areas, such as along the Route 1 corridor, Plummer/Motz school parking lots, high school parking lots.
- A shuttle program was recommended that would utilize any one of these existing parking areas, so to not create a new parking area at the Brown property.
- One group member walks to TL and has noticed that there are only certain times when parking appears to be an issue.
- Hugh pointed out that the anchorage study states that the parking problem is only during peak times, which is a small time frame.
- Further discussion about the time frames occurred, being that the peak times are only on 2 days out of the week and only 8 to 10 weeks out of the entire year. The group agreed that the solution should be proportionate to the issue.
- One member recommended that the parking issue should be borne by the users of the TL facility. Financially, it was suggested that the fees be raised or new parking fees be created.
- Peter further recommended the Brown property/Underwood Park be utilized as a community garden.
- Bob recommended leaving the wooded area (rear) in its’ natural state and combining it with Underwood Park. Large, contiguous tracts of land with trails on them are an asset to the Town. He also suggested adding more parallel parking spaces in front of the Brown property, similar to the 5 new gravel spaces in front of Underwood Park.
- The group agreed that selling the property was not in the best interest of the Town, even parceling out the front portion.

## 2. How can the Town best manage the parking needs for the Town Landing?

- Utilize the Lunt, Plummer/Motz, and Route 1 area parking to provide a shuttle service.
- Try to incorporate Metro into the solution. Metro now runs from the shopping plaza up Route 1 and down Foreside twice per day.
- It was suggested to try to use existing businesses’ parking areas to be part of the solution. Utilize existing parking areas first before creating a new one.
- Explore a different shuttle service model. It was noted that the cost that was suggested in the presentation was very high, and that there may be smaller scale services out there that would cost less.
- A valet type service was suggested and the group thought that might be a potential solution.

- Generally speaking, the group felt that the severity of the parking issue defined in the anchorage report may not match the actual conditions in the neighborhood.
  - It was stated that reducing the number of moorings could also lower the demand for parking.
  - One group member suggested that the Town take an incremental approach to the parking topic.
3. What next steps should the Town Council undertake?
- Adopt the recommendations of the groups, specifically recommending the transfer of the Brown property to Underwood Park. This would include the expansion of the field space and incorporating the wooded space to the trail network (rear).
  - Consider the transfer to the park, and also consider all the parking suggestions that were explored at the meeting.

### **Councilor Rodden's Group**

*David Gooch, Rebecca Dilworth, Rebecca Pride, Chris Dilworth, Judy Tounge, Stacy Smith, Anne Staples, Kristen Sciacca, Colleen Coxe, Cyrus Noble, David Bartholomew*

Although a few people said some parking may be needed, most of the 11 members of the group were adamantly against creating parking spaces on the Brown Property. They felt it would increase the traffic that already exists and make Route 88 more unsafe than it already is. "The weekend is when people go to Mass. Having parking on the Brown Property is a recipe for disaster," said one neighbor who lives across from the property.

There were comments that a parking lot would become a hang-out for young drivers and would be trashed the way Town Landing is. Apparently the dumpster at TL overflows with trash on the weekends.

One gentleman suggested it was ridiculous to pave green space to put up a parking lot that is needed only about 12 days a year. Then a couple of people sang a few lines in homage to Jimmy Buffet.

As part of the discussion on traffic, a resident on Town Landing Road said some vehicles speed down Town Landing Road, including officers in the Harbor Master's vehicle.

1. Most want to use the Brown Property for recreation. Ideas included a soccer field, a skating pond, more play space for young children particularly since the Maze Craze is gone. Seven said they would use a community garden. They view Underwood Park as a community gathering spot, the only one on the Foreside. They also want to keep access to the trail system and avoid cutting as many trees as possible. There was some interest in a basketball court but generally they wanted to keep the area green.

2. This group did not feel there was enough data establishing the existence of a parking problem. They generally approached the parking issue from a macro-view. Some feel parking pressures and issues in the harbor would be greatly reduced if moorings were limited to Falmouth residents. There were less disturbed about boaters from Maine than those from out of state, who sometimes leave their vehicles for several days on neighborhood.

They want spaces at Town Landing to be reserved for town residents and no parking should be allowed on the southern side of the landing where the tide comes in.



One suggested that the town buy property on Route One and people could walk to Town Landing via Johnson Road.

If a parking lot is created, they don't want gates. Green pavers are preferred to blacktop. It's okay to sell part of Brown property to raise money. Consider building a Habitat for Humanity house on the site.

### 3. Steps for the Council

- Regulate the mooring field. It's too large already.
- Falmouth residents should get priority for moorings.
- Enforce existing parking rules:
  - Tickets for those without town stickers
  - Park on one side of the street
  - Don't allow churchgoers to park in the street on bike lanes
- Move forward with recreational use at Brown Property, playing fields more than basketball hoops.
- Put in a crosswalk at Johnson and Route 88.

### **Lucky D'Ascanio's Group:**

*Alicia Faller, Claudia Kinnear, Richie Garrett, Suzanne Fox, Sherry Miller Welch, Mary Pennell Nelson, Daniel Richman, Stanley Reed*

### **Questions 1: What use(s) should the former Brown Property be put to?**

- Open Space
- Community Garden/Children's Garden (Applegate Gardens)
- Some additional parking spaces – "Falmouth Residents Only"
- Outdoor Amphitheater
- Basketball Courts
- Tether Ball
- NO Tennis Courts – "people drive to tennis courts this is a neighborhood park"
- More trails – nice to preserve trails in this part of Town of Falmouth]
- X-Country Ski trails
- "Real estate is too valuable to put pavement on"
- Picnic tables
- Pavillion
- Teen Center
- Bike Racks
- Town could sell a portion back for residential use only

### **Question 2: How can the town best manage the parking needs for the Town Landing?**

- Never seen the parking lot full (majority of group – only one person disputed)
- The majority of the group (7 out of 8) see NO parking problem
- Contract for spaces from Handy Boat
- Group upset that 46% of moorings were non-residents
- IF problem exists, it is only a few weekends

- “If we are the largest anchorage north of Marblehead, we are doing something wrong!”
- Has there ever been an environmental impact study done? Why not?
- Environmental impacts include boat wakes too – not just by products.
- “Issue IS 46% non-resident moorings!”
- Shuttle parking from Shaws parking lot using Falmouth Flyer
- Lease space from Holy Martyrs
- Utilize FCP Van (Rangers shuttle from off-site possibly school lot– WEEKENDS ONLY)
- Additional fee for non-residents assessed to preserve open space for parking permits
- Increase mooring fee to make it unpalatable

**Question 3: What next step(s) should the Town Council undertake?**

- Determine if there really is a parking problem? Is it just 10-12 days a year? If so, NO problem.
- Environmental Impact Study of the anchorage
- Parking census of Resident vs. Non-Resident
- Look at demographics of children on Foreside with walking distance from park

**Albert Farris’ Group**

*Chuck Blier, Vicki Swerdlow, Bill Gardiner, Dick Sweeney, Paul Dobbins, Jody cady, David Drake, Jacob Merson, Dan Merson*

**Potential uses**

Community resources- beyond playgrounds  
Pool, fields outdoor stuff, tennis courts, basketball courts  
Offer children a good place to grow – growth of town.

Devote so much space for very seasonal need?

Parking is needed for whatever we do, because Brown & Underwood Parks = expanded community.

Resource-

Need least offensive presence of parking- hidden?

But parking = more traffic – maybe, but perhaps not great increase traffic.

Land (Brown) was purchased to support expanded moorings, would be used for that.

Eliminate bike lane- not needed- put 75 spaces along road.

More parking to support more moorings- eliminate wait list

If concerned about traffic, look to community park – yes, busy at certain seasons, but wonderful year round

Other uses? Community gardens, ect?

“green light” red light” shared use of Holy Martyrs lot

Other passive uses; trails, cross-country skiing  
Leave choice on use of land up to local area residents

Combination of types of parking: some paved, some ground?

Use of Handy Van? As a shuttle bus, really \$60k p.a.?

Some more parking needed – don't build for biggest crowd

Lots of uses of bike lane – do not put spaces in road

Two separate issues:

Waterfront access-needs to be addressed – lots of ways to solve access issues

Use of Brown land – absolutely could have some parking on it, but don't put it Foreside Rd frontage

No interest in sale of house lot

### **Next steps for TC.**

Accurate data collection – to understand fiscally prudent choices.

Ig. Maint. Lost of parking lot

Definitely consider both Brown & Underwood together.

Proceed to a charrette- type process.

Look into solving waterfront access info impacting Brown/Underwood move promptly and mindfully.

### **Councilor Libby's Group**

Question 1:

\*Parks and Rec ONLY - open space

\*Splitting lot to put single family out front OK

\*Why is this the answer to Town Landing's parking problem?

\*Trash is an issue now!

\*Original Underwood Park was proposed with 27 spaces and Gazebo, was scaled back to 5-7 parking spaces and no Gazebo

\*Horse trade this parcel for another closer to TL?

Question 2:

\*Shuttle from Shaws, School lots, Handyboat, Stepping Stones?

\*Another lot/location closer?

\* No parking problem except on a few peak days/holidays

\*INCREASE residents mooring fees to \$100 from \$50 and NON-residents to \$500 ASAP!

\* Install parking meters at TL lot

\*Parking on side streets?

\*Church lot parking options?

Question 3:

See #1 & #2 above, group thought they were addressed there.