

6 December 2018

To: Town of Middlebury  
Selectboard  
Planning Commission  
Design Advisory Committee

From: Faith Terry  
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An established timeline seemingly requires the Town of Middlebury to finalize its recommendations to the Agency of Transportation in determining the specific character and technical nature of the two public areas, Triangle Park and Printer's Alley/Lazarus Park, by December 11, 2018.

While the public process and its ensuing discourse has been invaluable in identifying enumerable criteria for consideration by the Town Officers, at the same time it indicates an underlying need for the creation of a master plan by the Town of its broader public spaces, now, and into the future.

While the project consultants are doing their best to listen to the many voices, the two public spaces currently under consideration need not serve *all* the proposed public purposes. It will be up to you, the Town's Officers, to make the final determination as to what best serves the Public Good in these specific locations, at this specific time.

In light of this reality, I respectfully put forth the following additional observations and recommendations for your consideration:

### **Triangle Park**

From all indications, Triangle Park's proposed best use is as a focal point and gathering place for the community. The consultants have listened to the public, addressed technical and aesthetic concerns, and have responsibly put forth a *flexible* schematic that addresses the identified best uses. In the next few days, they and you will further refine the schematic and will provide the Middlebury community and its Selectboard with a clear recommendation for its approval.

### **The Middlebury Farmer's Market**

The Middlebury Farmer's Market organizers have put forth their criteria to better serve their constituency and the greater community: a central and visible location, expansive and level open space, safe and easy access, adequate public parking, etc. As currently proposed, these two Town parks are not a good fit and may never be. If the Town's Officers deem the Market to be a vital community asset, for all the many reasons, would it not be meaningful to approach Middlebury College for its reconsideration of College Park for use as an officially sanctioned seasonal farmer's market?

### **Printer's Alley/Lazarus Park**

I join these two entities together as they need be considered as a whole. Printer's Alley/Lazarus Park, as defined in public discourse, most importantly need serve as a safe, public, vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfare providing connectivity between the upper and lower commercial districts, the proposed railway station, and recreational Falls Park. Elevational change between the two districts, and spacial limitations put forth by existing deed restrictions, provide additional challenges.

In this instance, I believe the Town has the responsibility to provide connectivity and safe passage by physically accentuating these aforementioned best uses.

If the deed restriction by the National Bank of Middlebury holds and a walkway need be provided along its building for use by its employees as well as the public, then their safety need be a priority. The grade would require that the “*Bank*” walkway be a tiered stairway with a sturdy and aesthetically pleasing railing installed street side for pedestrian stability and to protect them from oncoming traffic. The vehicular passage should be maximized in scale to further protect pedestrians, accommodate commercial vehicles, and to offer a more visible connectivity between the upper and lower districts.

Lazarus Park is really not that large and its best use is as an accessible, wide, promenade and lovely, calming, greenspace for use by all pedestrians. This promenade need be graded appropriately to guarantee easy accessibility. If design for accessibility requires that the promenade extend onto the Marbleworks private property, then it would be in the Town’s and in the Marblework’s joint benefits to negotiate the right of way. Printer’s Alley is designated as one way, therefore bicyclists could potentially use the vehicular passage downhill, as well. Uphill, bicyclists would probably be required to walk their bicycles to utilize the shared thoroughfare alongside pedestrians with strollers, rolling luggage, and/or wheelchairs. Use or non-use by skate boarders and scooters need be taken into consideration, as well.

The proposed circular hardscape at the base of Lazarus Park, facing the Marbleworks, appears to be set atop the similarly shaped area recently excavated as the result of the rail project. Due to the potential lack of soil depth in this area, the proposed hardscape design with its open, flexible, public gathering space may be well-considered.

Attractive, functional, signage would and should define the park’s public use.

Of note: I do not understand why the consultants are recommending that the extremely large, black, industrial, waterpipe currently made visible from the Main Street during the railroad tunnel reconstruction remain visible upon the project’s conclusion. As it was not visible before, why should it need be visible afterwards?

### **Form follows Function**

I realize that this has been an intense and lengthy deliberation. I also recognize that this is a very healthy process. I sincerely appreciate the community’s articulation of its goals and objectives and the resulting informed refinement of the project’s schematics. As this process winds down, I thank you *all* for your heartfelt and enduring efforts on behalf of the Middlebury community and in providing enlightened guidance and direction in the creation of these two pivotal public spaces.

Respectfully,

Faith Terry

