

Renee Balter
Box 106
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

May 15, 2008

MV Commission
New York Ave
Oak Bluffs, MA

Re; Bradley Square parking

I know that I have already written a letter in the matter of Bradley Square as a project, however, it has occurred to me that the issue of on-street parking should be considered in every possible light.

Historically, parking in the downtown areas of Oak Bluffs has been rather unorthodox in some respects, especially in the residential/commercial locations. It is a fact that so many residential properties in this part of town are so tiny they cannot provide off street parking for their vehicles. The only solution for them is to park on the street. Even in the Dukes County Avenue corridor, there are a few residential lots that do not have enough property to park a car and so must use the street.

This has been an established procedure for downtown Oak Bluffs for about 100 years. The town has even given out a limited number of parking permits for residents who need to park in the street when there are signs limiting the parking for a specific number of hours. I believe that this is the case in Vineyard Haven as well.

The town has designated handicapped parking locations throughout the B1 area of downtown placing these spots in areas where there is a need. I am certain that once the traffic study for the Dukes County Avenue area is complete, the town will wish to allocate parking places for handicapped parking in several locations. A request by the Bradley Square Project for one close to the Memorial Church is logical and I am sure will be considered.

All other on-street parking is available to anyone who wishes to use it. Right now, without the Bradley Square Project in place, there are many, many on-street spots that are unused – even in the height of summer. There is a parking shortage during an art opening, but this is not very often (10 – 15 times during the summer) and then for only a few hours (4-7PM).

There are similar situations in the Copeland/Cottage City Historic District when there are events that take place at the Union Chapel or church services at Our Lady Star of the Sea or the Fireman's Muster in Waban Park and on and on.

I am a big believer in using common sense when trying to make a plan for the future of our town . For me, I feel it is so important to work together to address the important issues and needs of residents. Affordable housing / work and sales space for artists, historic preservation and public access to the building that once was a thriving and bustling center for the African American community are reasons enough to try for a doable plan.

Sincerely (twice)
Renee Balter