

Needham Design Guidelines Partnership

August 15, 1995

Sally Davis, Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Town of Needham
Needham, MA 02192

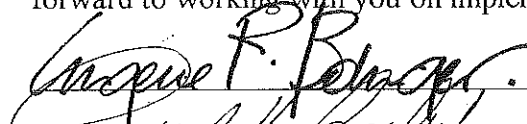
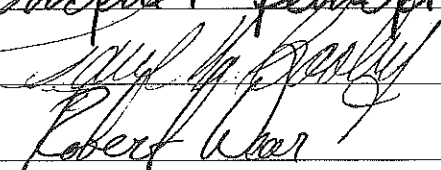
Dear Mrs. Davis & Selectmen:

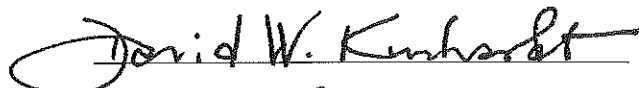

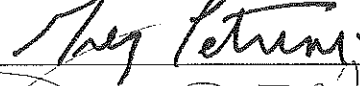
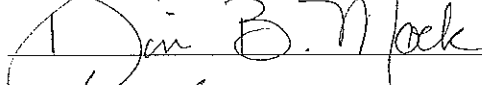
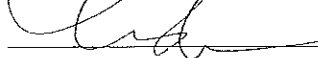
It is with great pride and satisfaction that we present the "Town of Needham Design Guidelines for the Business Districts" to you and to the Town. This document represents the work of literally hundreds of people throughout our community, from those who answered surveys and participated in workshops to those who worked many hours on drafting and editing the document. We have also been privileged to have helping us the top notch planning and urban design consultants: David Dixon/ Goody Clancy.

We will take even greater pleasure in watching as the recommendations contained in these pages start to shape future action. Most improvements will come from private stewardship. We are hopeful that property owners will begin to use these Guidelines as they consider improvements and upkeep. We know the Design Review Board and the Planning Board will start immediately to follow these Guidelines in their review of private development proposals. With your encouragement, the Department of Public Works will also start to use the recommendations for its purchase of lights, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, and all the ingredients of our public streetscape. We hope the Town can begin immediately to put these plans in motion, to show the Town's commitment to these recommendations. Improved crosswalks, sidewalks and other public amenities are modest investments that can be implemented quickly and will help make Needham more attractive for shoppers and more successful for businesses.

One thing is very clear to us: to make the most of this document, the Partnership approach used in producing the Guidelines should serve as a model for future efforts. As we implement the Guidelines and plan new initiatives in Needham's business areas, we need to involve residents, landlords, Town representatives and business owners in the process. Where the public environment is involved, this is the most lasting route to success.

Thank you for your support and encouragement throughout this process. We look forward to working with you on implementation.

Rick Mason

Needham Design Guidelines Partnership

Mrs. Davis & Selectmen:

We present the "Town of Needham Design Guidelines for the Business Districts" to you, and to the Town. This Culminates three years of work by a dedicated group, and the DRB, The Planning Board, Selectmen, the Needham Business Association, and the hundreds of people who answered surveys and participated in workshops. For the last year, we have been privileged to work with top notch independent consultants: David Dixon/ Goody Clancy and Associates as our professional team members.

Very briefly, this report contains two sets of Guidelines, intended for at least 3 groups:

First is: "Private Area Guidelines", intended to help private business owners and landlords, as they seek to renovate, improve, or redevelop commercial property, and also to help the Town Boards who interact with them.

Second is: "Public Improvements Guidelines," intended to help the Town as it undertakes public improvements in commercial areas. This includes not just streets and sidewalks, but also a stepped-up level of attention and care for such things as how we delineate crosswalks, how we dispose of trash, maintain parking areas, treat alleyways, light the Common, and think about the sharing of duties for keeping the Town looking good and making it more successful.

Today is a completion, but also a Beginning.

Now we start the implementation phase.

We know the Design Review Board and the Planning Board will start immediately to follow these Guidelines in their review of private development proposals.

The Public Sector recommendations require your assent and involvement to make them work.

We hope that, with your encouragement, the DPW will make immediate plans to improve crosswalks, sidewalks, and other public amenities that will contribute to a more attractive Needham. With your encouragement, the Department of Public Works will also start to use the recommendations for its gradual replacement purchases of all the ingredients of our public streetscape that it does anyway: trash receptacles, lights, benches, bike racks, and signs.

The last thing you want to hear is another way to spend money. What is suggested are some key investments, made in concert with an overall plan of improvements, that will have result that go beyond any single investment. The timing is key. The Town gives a little this year, the private community gives a little. Next year, the Town contributes in another area, and the private community responds as well. Each party will be more willing to make the effort and the investment, because each knows it will contribute to the broader vision, and thereby achieve the multipliers that lead us to success.