

14 Wadsworth Street
Thomaston, ME 04861
March 30, 2024

Thomaston Green Park Ad-Hoc Committee Co-Chairs
Thomaston Town Office
13 Valley Street
Thomaston, ME 04861

RE: April 3rd Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Dear Ms. Bowman and Mr. Eaton,

I'm writing in response to your letter inviting me to attend the upcoming Thomaston Green Ad Hoc Committee meeting on Wednesday evening at the Town Office. As a current neighbor of The Green, who has memories of growing up in the shadow of the prison wall, and who represents the fourth generation of our family to live on this property, I'm very fond of our beautiful open-air park. And, I am interested in the future plans and proposed improvements for the former grounds of the Maine State Prison.

As you noted in your letter, I do have hopes, questions, and concerns about the Park's status, but unfortunately am not able to attend the April 3rd meeting due to an ongoing family commitment that takes me out of town on Wednesdays to care for my grandchildren. I'm writing to confirm that my absence from the meeting is not due to lack of interest or from an absence of thoughts and dreams about the future of The Green. For what it's worth, I'm jotting down some of my thoughts in hopes that you might include my input with those of the folks who are able to attend the meeting.

First, I want to say that I truly love seeing how often The Green is frequented by a wide range of adults and children of all ages, who often include dogs, soccer balls, kites, remote-control toys, cross-country skis, photography equipment, bicycles, and strollers in their recreation time on The Green. I also love taking my own grandchildren there to walk, run, play, draw with sidewalk chalk, chase butterflies, roll down the hill, watch airplanes fly over, have a quick picnic in the gazebo, and cross paths with the people and pups who are enjoying the wide-open spaces that the park provides.

I am also grateful that the property is so well cared for and respected by those who use it. In my experience, there has been very little evidence or concern about trash, graffiti (some but, not a lot), other damage, or misuse of the property. But, I do worry/hope that any changes to The Green—and especially the addition of new facilities there—will not alter the sense of caring and stewardship that currently exists among those who use and enjoy the park. With my young grandchildren visiting and using the park from time to

time, I am also concerned about the amount of vehicle traffic and any changes to the traffic pattern/parking capacity there.

Because the front of my home and the end of my driveway are located directly across from the entrance to The Green (the intersection of Wadsworth and William King Streets), I am well aware of the vehicle traffic that accesses the park on a daily basis. The traffic at that intersection is compounded by the visitors to the Prison Showroom and others who also frequent the Showroom parking lot. School buses, delivery trucks, tour buses, and utility vehicles often use that parking lot as a staging point, adding to the complexity of the vehicle traffic in the area. One of my major concerns about future changes to The Green is related to incremental increase in traffic flow that may result.

It is my understanding (and a concern) that the Knox Clinic's parking lot may be added to The Green side of their future facility. I recognize the intended benefit of increasing parking area is for park users, since it would provide a larger/shared space for vehicles. However, it would also greatly increase the traffic flow into and out of the William King Street access point. I am hopeful that the Clinic developers and those who plan modifications and enhancements to The Green will carefully consider their decision.

As for my hopes and suggestions, I offer these thoughts for the committee. It would be my preference to keep as much open space in the park as possible to allow for flexibility of the property to be used for a soccer field or an outdoor "theatre" and space just to run, play, enjoy, and exercise. The perimeter walking trails are great for strolling, jogging, and walking the pups. Making all paths wheelchair & walker friendly would be a benefit to folks who could then enjoy them. Adding flowerbeds, garden plots, a labyrinth-type walking path, a sculpture garden, etc., would be wonderful, and would be an opportunity to collaborate with existing local expertise from garden clubs, farmer's markets, soil & water conservation, county extension, artist groups, etc. The existing (but deteriorating) signage and placards that show historical perspectives of the Maine State Prison property need to be replaced and might be a source of collaboration with a historical society (or other entity) to maintain or even upgrade them w/QR codes and links to additional online information and videos about The Green and our town, etc.

These are some of my top-of-the-mind thoughts and concerns for the Thomaston Green. I am grateful for its existence. I appreciate the Committee's efforts, interest, and leadership in determining the best path forward for the park and its possibilities. Thank you for the work you are doing and for the invitation to participate in the process. Sincerely,

Jean B. Faustini

Jean Beckett Faustini