

Appendix A

Meeting Minutes

This Appendix includes minutes of the Mill Plaza Study Committee's meetings and workshops.

D-R-A-F-T

**MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2007
DURHAM TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Howland, Thomas Newkirk, Julian Smith, Edward Valena, Michael Davis, Perry Bryant (arrived at 5:15 PM), Chuck Cressy, Warren Daniel, Lorne Parnell, Crawford Mills (sitting in for Leslie Schwartz)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Douglas Bencks, Edgar Ramos, Leslie Schwartz

ALSO PRESENT: Todd Selig, Town Administrator; Jim Campbell, Planner; members of the public: Nicholas Isaak, Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Richard Houghton, Edward Garcia, Neal Ferris, Malcolm Sandberg, Annmarie Harris

I. CALL TO ORDER

Administrator Selig called the first meeting of the Mill Plaza Study Committee to order at 4:04 PM.

II. MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND INTRODUCTIONS

At the request of Administrator Selig, members of the committee and members of the public introduced themselves.

III./IV. OVERVIEW OF HISTORY LEADING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE AND CHARGE FOR THE COMMITTEE

Administrator Selig provided a brief history of how and why the committee was formed. He explained that the Library Board of Trustees was interested in the Mill Plaza area as a possible future site for the library. This interest resulted in a subsequent meeting between the Town and John Pinto, owner of the Mill Plaza who indicated that he would be willing to evaluate the possible redevelopment of this site. The idea was then brought to the Town Council who, after holding discussions, passed Resolution #2006-25 forming a Mill Plaza Study Committee and establishing a charge for the committee. Administrator Selig read through the charge for committee members.

V. REVIEW OF GIS MAPPING AND PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPHY OF MILL PLAZA

Jim Campbell, Director of Planning and Community Development, displayed an aerial panoramic photograph of the Mill Plaza area that was provided by Condor Aerial Image System. Mr. Campbell also displayed a map created by means of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology depicting the Mill Plaza site and parcels surrounding the plaza. Members were provided copies of these two images.

VI. REVIEW OF RSA 91-A, THE NEW HAMPSHIRE RIGHT TO KNOW LAW

Administrator Selig provided members with information relative to the Right to Know Law (RSA 91-A) and meetings open to the public. He informed the committee that its

meetings were to operate in an open manner to the public, that agendas were to be prepared and posted 24 hours in advance of each meeting date, and that minutes of each meeting were to be kept and would include who was present, topics covered, actions taken, and decisions reached. He also informed members, in response to a question posed by Julian Smith, that nonpublic sessions could be held in accordance with RSA 91-A. He said that in the committee's case, the only time it would possibly have the occasion to conduct a nonpublic session would be as it relates to land matters.

VII. PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Administrator Selig explained that he had contacted four local professionals (William Schoonmaker, Schoonmaker Architects; Nicholas Isaak, working with Mr. Schoonmaker; Walter Rous, and Roberta Woodburn, Woodburn & Company) to determine if they would be interested in creating visuals and working with the Mill Plaza Study Committee to help the committee create a "vision" for the Mill Plaza area. All four expressed an interest and agreed that working through a "team" approach, using each of their individual skills, would be a possibility.

VIII. PLAN NEW HAMPSHIRE APPLICATION

Administrator Selig explained that the Durham Planning Office had submitted a Plan New Hampshire grant application to assist the Town and the Mill Plaza Study Committee in conducting a Charrette, and that the Town hopes to hear whether or not it is eligible for the grant sometime in March 2007. He said if the Town receives the grant, it is anticipated that a Charrette could be conducted sometime in April 2007. Administrator Selig asked Nicholas Isaak, who volunteers with Plan New Hampshire, to explain what the organization does. Mr. Isaak said Plan NH helps communities who may not have a full-time planner or support staff to conduct Charrettes on planning or economic development-related matters.

Administrator Selig said that prior to selecting the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary for the committee, he would like for each member to provide a brief description/ reason for their interest in serving as a member on the committee.

Crawford Mills said he was asked to sit in for Leslie Schwartz and that he was representing the Historic District Commission (HDC). He said the main concern of the HDC would be in looking out for the interests of the historical aspects of the Mill Plaza area and to ensure that any redevelopment would be coherent with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Dave Howland said he felt the potential existed to make the plaza, which is already nice, even better. He felt there was potential to create and expand Main Street and create mixed uses of commercial and residential properties. He said if done right, it could be wonderful for the Town and the neighborhoods surrounding the plaza.

Thomas Newkirk said he was interested in the idea of the plaza as a possible site for a new library. He felt that aesthetically it could be made more attractive, and felt that close monitoring for possible encroachment into surrounding neighborhoods would need to be done on any redevelopment of the plaza site.

Julian Smith said he hoped for a “revision” of the plaza as opposed to a “vision”. He explained the parcels surrounding the plaza that the Library Trustees would be interested in acquiring for a library site. He also felt there was a real potential for redevelopment of the plaza.

Michael Davis said he felt that John Pinto had great vision for the plaza and was willing to work with the Town and that this positive attitude is why he was interested in being on the committee.

Town Planner Jim Campbell said he felt there was a lot of potential at the plaza to create more green space and develop a Town Center. He felt that its redevelopment could attract more residents to spend more time and money in their town. He also felt there was an opportunity to protect the brook. He added that traffic analysis would need to be a large part of any redevelopment effort.

Lorne Parnell said he had a concern for the economic viability of whatever is proposed for the plaza and felt that input from property owners was imperative and would need to be obtained on a constant basis.

Chuck Cressy said that John Pinto’s people had visited Durham to assess the Mill Plaza and that they have already given Mr. Pinto an amount of what it would cost for redevelopment. Mr. Cressy said having a vision is one matter, but if Mr. Pinto cannot make money on his return, it will not happen. He said the community needs to think of this early on to determine what will be the reality of anything going forward.

Edward Valena said that the Library Trustees consider the Mill Plaza area as the number one spot for a new library. He said the process for redevelopment of this site will be very complicated but Durham needs to have a success and should strive very hard to make it a success.

Warren Daniel said an opportunity existed that does not happen often where the owner is willing to discuss redevelopment opportunities with the Town. He said it has to be market-driven and enhance economic development in the Town, and that the Town needs to be looking to expand retail development as well as residential development. He said that expanding Main Street through the Grange property is also important.

IX. SELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON, VICE CHAIR, AND SECRETARY

Ed Valena NOMINATED Dave Howland to serve as the committee’s chair. Julian Smith SECONDED the nomination and it PASSED unanimously.

Dave Howland NOMINATED Julian Smith to serve as the committee’s vice chair. Ed Valena SECONDED the nomination and it PASSED unanimously.

Julian Smith NOMINATED Ed Valena to serve as the committee’s secretary. Dave Howland SECONDED the nomination and it PASSED unanimously.

X. NEXT STEPS

Administrator Selig provided a brief overview of the next steps needed to move the committee forward including discussion on the project path, gathering information, maps, and photographs as needed, determining uses, density, and build out allowed by the Durham Zoning Ordinance, and determining to what extent the committee believes professional assistance would be beneficial.

Members asked that Jim Campbell provide the necessary maps and any other related information for the next meeting. He was also asked to speak to Plan New Hampshire about placing the Town's consideration for the grant on a "fast track".

Robin Mower, a member of the public in attendance, urged the community to not look at this as a "mall" but as a rejuvenation of a Town Center, and to ask itself what does the Town want instead of a "build it and they will come" mentality. She said the committee should determine the specifics of what kind of character it desires for the community before it begins discussions for the future of the plaza.

Warren Daniel cautioned that the Town should be careful not to micromanage and instead to give consideration to what its needs are from a broader perspective.

Dave Howland said that in moving forward, he would suggest the committee acquire data quickly. This may include assessing what residents think via a survey and conducting a brainstorming session. There was some discussion around the idea of using interns at the University to help with a survey and having a consultant/facilitator attend a meeting.

Dick Houghton, a member of public in attendance, suggested that the committee may find it very informative to review the Community Development Plan that was developed in 1995.

XI. NEXT MEETING

The following were suggested agenda topics for the next meeting:

- ? Provide history of the Mill Plaza property.
- ? Discuss the content of the Community Development Plan.
- ? Discuss zoning of the property as it currently exists.
- ? Hold a round-robin/brainstorming discussion for a vision and invite Jim Varn to facilitate.
- ? Discuss schedule for holding a public hearing.
- ? Discuss deadline for submission of a report to the Town Council.

Consensus was to hold meetings the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 4:00-6:00 PM in the Town Council chambers. The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 7, 2007**.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ADJOURNED at 5:50 PM.

Jennie Berry, Administrative Assistant

D-R-A-F-T

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes Wednesday, March 7, 2007 Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers 4:00 PM

Members Present: Crawford Mills (sitting in for Leslie Schwartz), Thomas Newkirk, Stephen Pesci (sitting in for Douglas Bencks), Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Warren Daniel, Lorne Parnell, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Ed Valena (Secretary)

Members Absent: Leslie Schwartz, Douglas Bencks, Michael Davis, Edgar Ramos

Also Present: Todd Selig, Town Administrator; Jim Campbell, Planner; John Coon, facilitator; members of the public: Dick Houghton, Henry Smith, Ed Garcia, Diana Carroll, Robin Mower, Jody Potter, Annmarie Harris, Bill Schoonmaker

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM.

II. Comments from the Chair

Chair Howland commented on the enormity of the task facing the committee and expressed the premium that would be placed on public participation, while at the same time noting the importance for the committee to stay on task. He recommended a fifteen minute maximum public comment period at the start of each meeting (restricted to two minutes per speaker) with the possibility of more public comment opportunities at the end of the meeting (time permitting). He also expressed the desire to keep the process informal and based on consensus, rather than on formally voting.

III. Approval of the Agenda

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Jim Campbell. It was noted that Mr. Campbell did not have the authority to second the motion given that he is not a formal member of the committee; however, nobody seemed to mind and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the February 21, 2007 meeting (as presented by Jennie Berry, Administrative Assistant) were met with general approval and were not amended.

V. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public at this time.

VI. Discussion of Proposed Timetable for Committee Work

Chair Howland presented a work plan he had developed for the committee comprised of four phases. Phase I: develop a vision statement through brainstorming, public feedback, and conversations with the architects; Phase II: generate preliminary designs with a public charette and conversations with the architects; Phase III: adopt a superior design or synthesize the designs into a hybrid plan; and Phase IV: craft a final report for presentation to the Council by the first week of June.

Bill Schoonmaker, member of the architectural team, commented that this was a reasonable, but aggressive, plan.

Chuck Cressy wondered what the timetable for the finished project would be – three years, or as long as seven years? Chair Howland responded that the committee only has control of their own work. It was generally agreed that an optimistic attitude would be most productive.

Ed Valena asked that the goals of the public hearings be enunciated. It was noted that there would be three major public hearings. The first, early in the process, would be for general brainstorming. The second, a charette session, could be a multi-day affair that could include activity at the site. The third hearing would be in the late stage of the process and would be for final feedback. Bill Schoonmaker remarked that there should be an alternative method for public feedback for individuals who can't get to the meetings. It was noted that Luke Vincent, manager of Information Technology, would be setting up a page for the committee at the town web site which would report agendas, minutes, and would allow for public comment.

Tom Newkirk asked if the work schedule was doable. Bill Schoonmaker answered that it depends on the detail of the drawings, but was optimistic that a good package could be assembled in the allotted time frame. There was general appreciation to Chair Howland for a job well done.

VII. Discussion of Professional Assistance (Including Architectural Team)

This discussion was moved forward to the *Other Business* section of the meeting.

VIII. Staff Reports

A. History. Julian Smith presented a short history of the plaza and displayed a number of vintage photos and maps. He also noted that Ed Lehoullier, one of the original developers, might be in possession of other archival items of interest.

B. Zoning. Jim Campbell offered a short lesson on zoning in the Central Business District and distributed tables from the zoning ordinances that spell out permitted uses and dimensional requirements. He noted that four story buildings are allowed in the district (50' maximum height) and offered a number of build-out scenarios and the impact on parking requirements.

C. Relevance to Durham's Community Development Plan and Master Plan. Copies of relevant chapters in past planning documents were distributed.

IX. Committee Brainstorming with Facilitator

John Coon was introduced as the facilitator. Mr. Coon is an instructor and Ph.D. candidate at UNH and is a former trial lawyer. Mr. Coon asked that members of the committee offer their visions for the property.

Crawford Mills recalled a member of the public saying how we should stop referring to the property as a "mall" and that a better operating word would be "village". He assumed that a major component of the project would be housing and expressed that this should be mixed with the inclusion of young families. He stated that the buildings should be architecturally coherent with either the brick university buildings to the west or to the "colonial" look of Main Street and Church Hill. He expressed his desire for small restaurants and a movie theatre, and called for the possibility of a parking garage so as to limit expansive parking areas. He said that the thought of 50' high buildings was scary. He referenced Westwood Village (which is adjacent to UCLA) as a model for the project.

Perry Bryant stated that the project should be re-oriented towards Main Street and should have a mixed use where people could eat, shop, and live. He noted that parking would have to be addressed.

Tom Newkirk said that the property should be the town center and that siting the library there would be important. He noted the inadequacies of the current facility. He also noted the importance of creating a better pedestrian flow, rather than the current "car to store to car" activity he observes.

Steve Pesci stated he was a member of the campus planning staff and offered whatever assistance they could in the process. He mentioned the importance of an enhanced downtown to the prestige of the University. He noted that C Lot was also a problem, but no plans for its redevelopment are currently in the works. He referenced the free transportation bus loop that regularly circles the campus and how this loop could tie in to the plaza. He also spoke to the call for more student housing in the University's Master Plan, but how it appears that it will be difficult for the University to deliver on this need in the near future. Therefore, the housing component of the project is viewed as an opportunity. Crawford Mills asked where students live now. Mr. Pesci stated that he would prepare a report.

Ed Valena spoke on locating the library at the plaza and mentioned the importance of it being sited on town owned land. He stated his wish for a larger grocery store which could offer more services (meals to go, salad bar, etc.). He referenced an information kiosk similar to those seen in European squares for announcing public events. He said it would be important to develop the stream side of the property which is presently a receptacle for snow piles and trash.

Chuck Cressy noted that his store is currently 17,000 SF, but that he could reasonably use a facility as large as 25,000 SF. He mentioned the imminent opening of two new Hannaford supermarkets in the local region. He said that the plaza is a “boring” place and could have more exciting uses. He also said that parking is key, and that if an attendant didn’t currently mind the lot, then it would be overrun by student commuters. He offered that he liked the look of Hanover. He said that he is afraid that the pace of the planning process as conducted in Durham could slow things down and kill the project.

Lorne Parnell agreed that the property would have to be multi-use to improve the economics of the site and that the tax payments reaped from the apartments could pay for a library. He liked the concept of the village and the small town commons. He noted that parking must be well thought out.

Warren Daniel said that it would be important to link the plaza with the downtown and the university for parking and noted that C Lot is a tremendous waste of valuable space. He said that it would be important to link the property for pedestrians with Main Street and that expanding retail opportunities was key. He argued that municipal uses should be limited unless more adjacent land is purchased.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer said that the present development doesn’t promote community and that the library should be sited there and should be of the proper size and fitted out with a reasonable number of public meeting rooms. She supported the idea for an informational kiosk and argued for an architectural style with “character” (possibly with an emphasis on New England with uses of colonial references and granite). She called for outdoor public meeting areas. She said that housing should be mixed and expressed the opportunity for some affordable housing. She referenced the Portsmouth parking garage.

Julian Smith said he was in general agreement with what had been said. He offered the idea of utilizing the Grange property as vehicular access to a parking structure from Main Street. He also noted that there is a significant area of land not currently being utilized at the plaza. He remarked on there having to be a better way of handling the snow and that a stormwater management system for College Brook should be a priority. He spoke of the importance of cooperation with the Town

government to deal with this and thought that it might represent an opportunity for tax increment financing. He said that he would like to see the Town purchase a vacant parcel to the east of the plaza for siting a library/town hall.

Dave Howland said that any project would need to work well with the neighborhood including the flow of cars and people. He spoke of the importance of a buffer and how this project represented an opportunity for the clean-up of College Brook which has historically been treated like a drainage ditch. He echoed the call for a mix of shops and housing (including housing for families) and how the University could play a role in this. He spoke to the importance of year round public spaces and reiterated the need for orienting the property towards Main Street.

Chair Howland noted that it was 6:00 PM and the meeting was extended to 6:15 by general agreement. Chuck Cressy excused himself from the proceedings.

Dave Coon asked if there were any fears held by members of the committee in respect to the project.

Warren Daniel noted that there are past created documents sitting on shelves and that timing is key. He said it was important to keep moving along.

Perry Bryant noted that Durham has a history of being a place where it's hard to get things done.

Ed Valena noted that it would be important for the committee to take on the role of advocacy once the charge created by the Council was met. Warren Daniel thought that adding advocacy to the timeline was a good idea.

Dave Howland said that he would work with John Coon to draft a broad vision statement from the remarks made in the meeting.

X. Other Business

General discussion was held concerning the hiring of an architectural panel made of four local professionals. Perry Bryant made a motion to direct Town Administrator Todd Selig follow through on this action. The motion was seconded by Deborah Hirsch Mayer and it passed unanimously (Steve Pesci abstained).

Time was made at the end of the meeting for public comment.

Robin Mower cited a significant environmental impact associated with this redevelopment and that environmental regulations must be followed. She spoke of the importance of hiring professionals to meet this need. She further noted that future meetings should also be held at a time more conducive to the schedules of working people.

Annmarie Harris stated her concern that too much retail development in the plaza might hurt businesses located on Main Street. She also expressed her concern that building student-oriented housing on the plaza site might import the problems associated with partying along Madbury Road to an area adjacent to a dense residential neighborhood.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, March 21, 2007
Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers
4:00 PM

Members Present: Crawford Mills (sitting in for Leslie Schwartz), Thomas Newkirk, Douglas Bencks, Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Warren Daniel, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Ed Valena (Secretary)

Members Absent: Leslie Schwartz, Michael Davis, Edgar Ramos, Lorne Parnell

Also Present: Todd Selig, Town Administrator; members of the public: Henry Smith, Ed Garcia, Robin Mower, Bill Schoonmaker, Robbi Woodburn, David Clark (UNH Campus Planning), Shelley Mitchell, Doug Greene, Walter Rous, Jen Thompson, Michael Behrendt

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

II. Comments from the Chair

Chair Howland reported on his activities as chairman since the last meeting. These included: 1) offering a public comment at the March 19th's Town Council meeting on the committee's kick-off and meeting privately with Council Chair Neil Niman; 2) sending a personal update to John Pinto, Plaza property owner; 3) arranging weekly meetings with Bill Schoonmaker, contact person for the architectural team; and 4) progressing with a grant with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for technical support (It should be noted that Durham is on a short list with two other communities for consideration. Representatives of AIA will be visiting the town on March 27 for a tour of the property. Edgar Ramos, representative of Mr. Pinto, plans to be in attendance and committee members are welcome. The group will meet in the Council Chambers at 9AM on Tuesday, March 27).

Chair Howland also commented on a presentation on public spaces to be organized for the next meeting by Bill Schoonmaker. Committee members are encouraged to email photos to Mr. Schoonmaker (schoonmakerarchitects@verizon.net) which show development elements that they find particularly pleasing and inspiring (and also, those that might show the opposite).

III. Approval of the Agenda

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the agenda (seconded by Tom Newkirk). which passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Warren Daniel made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 7 meeting which was seconded by Julian Smith. No amendments were offered on the minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Comments from the Public

Robin Mower expressed her belief that setbacks from College Brook should be thoroughly discussed before the design process moves too far forward. She argued for maximizing pervious surface area between the brook and any improvements (including pavement) in order to increase the filtration potential of run-off.

Doug Bencks wondered if Ms. Mower had a specific distance in mind.

Ms. Mower responded that a minimum of 50' seemed reasonable.

Mr. Bencks offered the possibility that an expert on the university staff might be able to assist the committee. Chair Howland agreed on the importance of this issue and would seek out a list of professionals who might act as resources.

There were no other comments from the public at this time.

VI. Set First Public Hearing (tentatively 7PM, Wednesday, April 4)

There was general discussion concerning the time, setting, and promotion of the first public hearing.

The tentative time of 7PM, Wednesday, April 4 was agreed to after it was decided that an attempt to move the date to the Tuesday before would conflict with the Passover observance. (motioned by Ed Valena, seconded by Tom Newkirk and unanimously approved). A conflict with a presentation by the Carbon Challenge (at the Durham Public Library) on the same evening was acknowledged.

It was generally agreed that the Council Chambers would not support the expected crowd for the Public Hearing. Other venues were discussed and the availability of multi-purpose rooms at the middle or high school was raised. Doug Bencks offered to investigate the availability of space at the University, if necessary.

Various methods of promoting the Public Hearing were discussed. These included: 1) creating a thorough news release for Fosters to consider for a news story, 2) posterizing Durham Marketplace cash registers with news of the event (Chuck Cressey agreed to this.), 3) inserting a notice in the Friday Update, and 4) announcing on DCAT.

Discussion was held regarding a catchy slogan for the process. (One showing great promise was “It takes a village to build a village.”) It was wondered whether this activity could get public involvement on the committee website which will be online soon.

VII. Report and Discussion about Status of AIA Application

Chair Howland and Doug Bencks explained the scope of work with which the AIA team could be helpful. Mr. Bencks specifically spoke to aid the group could provide in bringing a project to fruition, and especially in the permitting process.

Chuck Cressey reported on a recent meeting with Lisa Miller, Vice President (Real Estate) of Hannafords. Hannafords is the primary leaseholder in the Plaza and holds a number of pass throughleases. Mr. Cressey reported that he expressed his idea to Ms. Miller that it would behoove the committee to try to create a number of development scenarios for the Plaza representing various degrees of complexity. This menu could then be presented to the property owner. Mr. Cressey reported that Ms. Miller agreed with this strategy.

Chair Howland voiced that the committee is energized and is on course “to set a high bar”. He stated given the scope of the possible redevelopment, the process holds the potential for phasing.

Warren Daniel spoke to the scope of the project and supported Mr. Cressey regarding multiple design scenarios. He further stated that the involvement of the Town complicates the process.

Chair Howland followed that there are three major participants – the public, the property owner, and UNH. He also spoke to the concept that large commercial properties in town centers, such as the Plaza, constitute “public space” and thus the public has a role in planning for the future.

Ed Valena reminded the committee to always remember that they are discussing private property.

Julian Smith spoke to keeping the property owner’s “bottom line” in consideration, but extended the term to include the legacy that could be created. He also extended the context of stakeholders to include tenants, Library BOT, shoppers, students and the environmental community (in respect to College Brook). He also suggested the possibility of a scrubber drainage system for run-off that could be financed by a TIF.

Chair Howland expressed his view of the committee as receiving ideas from the public, synthesizing those concepts into a summary report, and presenting those conclusions to the Town Council (and further to the property owner).

VIII. Report and Discussion about our Committee's Draft Project Statement

Chair Howland led a roundtable discussion on amending the working draft of the project vision statement. Ten statements were proposed concerning participation of the public, uses of the Plaza, design considerations, and goals for redevelopment. A number of line items were discussed (referencing the draft numbering system).

6. Design Concept. The word "original" was struck with the general belief that this goal contradicted the goal of visually fitting in with the neighborhood.

Ed Valena thought the concept of sustainability should be incorporated into the design concept and specifically speaking to the energy efficiency of the buildings. There was general agreement to include this reference.

Chuck Cressey reported on the purchase of the Laundromat building located on Main Street by Roger Hayden and his intention to redevelop it and a neighboring property. Mr. Cressey thought this represented a design opportunity. There was general agreement that Main Street property owners should be apprised of the Plaza Committee's progress and Chair Howland asked Town Administrator Todd Selig to develop a list of those concerned.

7. College Brook. There was general discussion concerning College Brook and the natural fringe of the property along the southern and eastern borders of the property. There was agreement that this natural corridor would be an important element in any redevelopment of the property.

8. Municipal Facilities. There was minor discussion as to the importance of municipal facilities being sited on town owned property.

10. Parking. There was general discussion concerning parking and whether a garage should be specified or left more open (referenced as a facility). The word "likely" was altered to "possibly" to offer a less definite tone.

Chuck Cressey believed an additional item referencing access and egress (pedestrian and vehicular) to the Plaza should be included in the vision statement. Some members believed it was "in there" while others believed in needed special mention. To break the impasse, Chair Howland included this item as an eleventh statement.

Chair Howland was encouraged to make the minor changes offered by the committee in order to finalize the vision statement.

IX. Site Zoning Visualization Exercise (Begun)

A visual brainstorming session involving an oversized map of the Plaza site and model building components was unpacked by Doug Bencks and David Clark, a member of the UNH planning staff. Given the nature of this activity, Chair

Howland thought it appropriate to move the second public comment session forward as the next agenda item. There was general agreement that this was a good idea. Chair Howland emphasized, as before, that this initial exercise was intended to provide the committee a sense of three dimensional space on the site and a sense of what existing zoning will allow on the site. He said the map and blocks can be used as a resource in future meetings to try out new concepts and to tweak plans that emerge.

X. Other Business

There was no other business.

XI. Public Comments

Robbi Woodburn spoke to the property owner's point of view and the need to acquire a list of their needs and wants in order to create a synergy with the town's vision. Ms. Woodburn likened the project to her own experience as a landscape architect and the necessity of involving both spouses in the design process from the start.

Chuck Cressey spoke to John Pinto's natural caution with the process given a rocky history with the town. Chair Howland offered that the committee was working diligently to not be blind to Mr. Pinto's needs and hopes, and that his participation is being encouraged.

Ms. Woodburn reiterated her opinion of the importance of knowing what "excites" the property owner

Micheal Behrendt spoke to the vision statement and believed a reference should be included that expressed the complexity of the challenge that lay ahead. He spoke of College Brook and the need to incorporate it as a design element for pedestrian enjoyment, rather than view it as a place to "set back from". He spoke of engineered treatment of run-off.

Mr. Behrendt believed the idea of a parking garage should be kept in the mix and that surface parking should be shielded from pedestrians. He believed language should be inserted in the vision statement that spoke to creation of a "fabulous sense of space" and referenced "new urbanism".

Robin Mower suggested the upcoming public hearing should be aired on DCAT. She thought a menu of topics should be presented prior to the public hearing to promote a more productive process. She spoke of including space in the Plaza for public events. She expressed concern that opening up College Brook to pedestrian traffic would lend the area to more littering which is already a problem.

IX. Site Zoning Visualization Exercise (Continued)

The committee returned to the brainstorming session. Doug Bencks, UNH Planner and committee member, explained the process. An oversized two-dimensional map

of the Plaza site and immediate neighborhood had been created which showed the footprints of the current improvements and College Brook. A foam core overlay depicting the elevation of Main Street in respect to the low lying topography of the Plaza. Colored blocks representing different uses (retail, residential, parking, and municipal) could be laid and stacked on the map to visualize different development scenarios. It should be noted that it was assumed in this exercise that the Grange Building had been razed in order to provide vehicular access/egress to the Plaza below.

There was animated discussion including input from the public. Two scenarios developed:

- **Concept 1.** A loop road entering at the current entrance off Mill Road, following College Brook, circling the rear of the property, and connecting with Main Street at the Grange property. Anchor stores located to the rear of the Plaza with a library site at the Main Street/Mill Road intersection. A pedestrian shopping corridor running from the Library to the anchors to the rear with the possibility of more retail along Mill Road. Residential space was depicted above all the retail space at one and two levels. The possibility of a parking garage was seen in the northwest corner of the site built into the hillside.
- **Concept 2.** A main boulevard was imagined entering the site off Mill Road north of the current entrance. Mixed-use buildings would line each side of this access road (anchor stores again located to the rear) and the focal end of the road could be the site for a municipal building. A hybrid scenario was also imagined where the municipal building site was moved to the side and an anchor store filled the rear center. A vehicular tie-in with Main Street was again assumed at the Grange property and likewise a parking garage in the northeast corner was considered.

A number of issues known already to the committee became more apparent. 1) The complexity of vehicular and pedestrian traffic (including large truck delivery) was discussed; 2) The difficulty of creating open public spaces when land is also needed for parking became more evident; 3) The problem of meeting the needs of various interest groups (tenants, townspeople, neighborhood) with a single design became obvious.

It was generally agreed that the exercise was a worthwhile activity and should be attempted again by the committee, as well as opened up to the public in a charette format.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

D-R-A-F-T

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes Wednesday, April 4, 2007 Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers 4:00 PM

Members Present: Crawford Mills, Thomas Newkirk, Stephen Pesci (sitting in for Douglas Bencks), Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Ed Valena (Secretary), Lorne Parnell,

Members Absent: Michael Davis, Edgar Ramos, Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Warren Daniel, Douglas Bencks

Also Present: Todd Selig (Town Administrator), Jim Campbell (Town Planner); members of the public: Dan Sheehan (Plaza property manager), Robin Mower, Roger Hayden, Bill Schoonmaker,

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

II. Comments from the Chair

Chair Howland noted that he had just that day been discharged from the hospital after a short stay for a back injury, and was walking with a cane. He reported on activities since the last meeting. These included: 1) sending news releases to a number of local papers and getting positive feedback from *The New Hampshire* and *Foster's*; 2) receiving news that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) had selected the Plaza project over a number of applicants to provide technical support to help bring the project to fruition. He also reported that a similar grant had been applied for with Plan New Hampshire. He noted that the AIA selection committee had visited the town the previous Tuesday and had met with members of the committee, as well as Edgar Ramos, representative of the property owner. He noted that Mr. Ramos also had an opportunity to meet with a number of town officials on his visit. Chair Howland also noted that AIA wished to speak with other applicant communities before making a formal announcement of the grant award. He further spoke on the initial work schedule that was set up for the committee which would likely change with the AIA involvement; and 3) arranging for the public hearing to be held that night at the UNH MUB. He noted that the hearing would be videotaped and spoke of the handout that would be distributed to the public which contained a letter of introduction and the project vision statement.

Chuck Cressy wondered if it would be a good idea to notify John Pinto, the property owner, concerning the AIA news. Todd Selig, Town Administrator, reported that he had emailed Mr. Pinto and Mr. Ramos concerning this new turn of events.

III. Approval of the Agenda

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the agenda (seconded by Tom Newkirk), which passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 21 meeting which was seconded by Perry Bryant. No amendments were offered to the minutes and the motion passed unanimously.

V. Comments from the Public

Robin Mower spoke to her concern about setbacks from College Brook, and noted that these setbacks should be agreed upon early in the process so that the footprint for the developable area could be determined. She said that College Brook needs an expanded natural buffer area and that the town standard of 25' was not adequate. She noted that many towns call for 100'. She requested that the committee invite an expert on the subject to deliver an educational presentation on the benefits of natural buffers.

There were no other comments from the public at this time.

VI. Report and Discussion about Preparations for Public Hearing on that Evening at the MUB

There was general discussion concerning the handout which contained the project vision statement.

Ed Valena thought there should be more emphasis in the statement on vehicular access and egress issues.

Chair Howland believed that issues such as this could be addressed by various sub-committees, spoke to changes to the vision statement, and thought reference to vehicular traffic "was in there".

Julian Smith spoke to issues of traffic counts and vehicular access - and said that the opening of Chesley Drive was definitely off the table.

Chuck Cressy spoke to the viability of the Plaza today being based on the perception by the public of a "quick in and out". He said that this concept should be a "given" for any plan.

Steve Pesci thought that the word "transit" should be added to the list of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. He also noted that including language that spoke to a

balance of the needs of these different traffic patterns with the existing street network might speak to Mr. Valena's concerns. There was general agreement to both of these suggestions.

Julian Smith spoke to the visual tie-in with Mill Road, as well as UNH and Main Street.

Chair Howland spoke to Mr. Cressy's concept of "givens" and how the scope of the project would change with the involvement of AIA. He spoke to how AIA wishes to determine site capacity in order to determine the maximum amount of development. He again spoke to the role of sub-committees and various subjects on which they could deliver data, e.g. traffic, student housing, etc.

Steve Pesci reported that UNH is currently conducting a transportation study (as is done once every six years) which focuses on student use and residency patterns. He stated that data from this study would be available within three weeks.

Chair Howland spoke to the crappy weather to be expected that evening and mentioned that a second public hearing could be scheduled if there were a poor turnout. He mentioned that the format for the public hearing would include a brief introduction by himself and some historical background of the Plaza by Julian Smith. He again noted that the hearing would be videotaped and subsequently aired on DCAT.

Tom Newkirk opined that it would be best if the vision statement wasn't overlaid at the hearing so that individuals could speak to their own visions.

Perry Bryant wondered if a second public hearing should be scheduled (given the weather) and offered a second option of scheduling some of the regular meetings in the evening hours.

Chair Howland noted that the process has become more fluid with the added involvement of AIA and thought a "wait and see" attitude would be best.

VII. Report and Discussion about Status of AIA and Plan NH Applications

It was generally agreed that the AIA issue had been discussed in the Chair's opening remarks; however, there was more on the subject that needed to be covered.

Julian Smith spoke on the need to consult with AIA about their time schedule.

Chair Howland spoke on how the process would change with AIA involvement. Previously, it was thought the process would include coming up with a conceptual plan, presenting that concept to the Council and the property owner, and hopefully the property owner would return with a working plan which would resemble the concept offered by the committee. He noted that he believed that AIA would be

more aggressive in working with the property owner/developer in acting as an advocate for the committee's work. He also spoke of the technical support that they might offer.

Lorne Parnell wondered what form this technical support would take.

Bill Schoonmaker, a local architect working on the project and a member of AIA, noted that the group's involvement represents a celebration of the organization's 150th anniversary and includes the involvement of many professional persuasions (engineers, architects, landscape architects, etc.) including such groups as the Jordan Institute (renowned for sustainability and "green building" issues). He noted that they wanted to do something "meaningful", but he really didn't know what they would have to offer.

Chair Howland spoke to the advocacy role of both AIA and the committee.

Chuck Cressy wondered if Brooks Drug Store had been brought into the loop of the committee's work. He thought that a forum for the Plaza merchants might be a good idea.

Jim Campbell spoke to the imminent buy-out of Brooks by Rite-Aid and wondered who the appropriate individuals to contact would be.

Chair Howland urged committee members to talk to their constituencies, i.e. merchants to merchants, and neighborhood residents to neighbors.

Perry Bryant thought that Brooks should be formally contacted.

There was general discussion on the matter. Tom Newkirk spoke to the importance of contacting all of the merchants given the effect of any redevelopment on their livelihoods. Dan Sheehan, Plaza property manager, noted that Brooks' Plaza location was one of the highest producers for the chain. In the end, it was suggested that Todd Selig, Town Administrator, craft a letter to the Plaza merchants explaining the activities of the committee, and Dan Sheehan send a second letter as a representative of the property owner. It was noted that Mr. Selig would coordinate with Mr. Sheehan concerning contact names and addresses of the merchants.

Chair Howland noted that a representative from AIA would be contacting him within the next week.

VIII. Presentation and Discussion of Photographs of Public Spaces

A slide show had been assembled by Nick Isaak, local architect, of photos of various public spaces submitted by committee members. These included: 1) an in-town supermarket previously owned by Hannafords and located in Kennebunk, Maine; 2) mixed-use modular buildings (some with outdoor seating) located on the

campus of Stanford University; 3) a plaza in Berkley, California which mixed permeable hardscape with trees; 4) a pedestrian mall in Ithaca, New York showing a mix of two and three story buildings, a fountain, and public chess tables; 5) a performer's section of a farmer's market in Ithaca, New York showing granite slabs used for seating; 6) an open air farmer's market in Ithaca, New York showing architecture of the facility and farmers' stalls; 7) a temporary art's festival space in State College, Pennsylvania; 8) a European sidewalk café; 9) a pedestrian mall in Boulder, Colorado; 10) a pedestrian mall in Burlington, Vermont; 11) a temporary farmer's market in Chico, California; 12) a sidewalk café in Geveva, Switzerland sited among 4-5 story mixed-use buildings; and 13) a pedestrian mall in Ithaca, New York which showed a re-used building utilized with first floor retail, second floor professional office, and third/fourth floor residential.

IX. Other Business

There was no other business.

X. Public Comments

Roger Hayden, owner of a number of retail businesses along Main Street, commended the committee on getting started. He spoke to the issue of parking and wondered if a parking facility was in the mix. He wondered if the town would participate in funding the construction of a parking facility. He thought it was important for all Durham merchants to be involved in the process.

Robin Mower spoke to the concept of "givens and constraints" and the importance of keeping a running tally of them as the committee discusses various options. Chuck Cressy spoke to parking needs and how they could be determined for his store by the square footage of the store and the traffic count.

Steve Pesci spoke to the customer base of downtown Durham and wondered how many users were pedestrian students and who, in particular, was supporting the smaller retail and service businesses.

Chuck Cressy spoke to his own business's appeal to the general public and how if he just depended on the student population he would likely fail.

Roger Hayden spoke of conversations held by the Durham Business Association about promoting Durham as a destination town. Mr. Hayden noted that this already exists with the students, their parents, and attendees of various sporting events. He noted the need to entice local residents, as well as the large number of university employees, into the mix.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

D-R-A-F-T

**Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, April 18, 2007
Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers
4:00 PM**

Members Present: Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Crawford Mills, Thomas Newkirk, Stephen Pesci (sitting in for Douglas Bencks), Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Chuck Cressy, Ed Valena (Secretary), Lorne Parnell, Warren Daniel

Members Absent: Michael Davis, Edgar Ramos, Perry Bryant, Douglas Bencks

Also Present: Members of the public: Robin Mower, Ed Garcia, Bill Schoonmaker, David Clark (UNH Planning)

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

II. Comments from the Chair

Chair Howland reported that he would be talking with Patricia Sherman of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to set up an initial meeting. He suggested that this planning meeting be limited to himself and Vice Chair Julian Smith as representatives of the committee and would also include Town Administrator Todd Selig. He also noted that AIA had selected a facilitator for the project: Patrick Field of the Cambridge Consensus Building Institute. He outlined business items on the agenda which include 1) revisiting the draft vision statement, and 2) reviewing photos of public places and maps of the Plaza property in order to begin to construct a vision for project.

III. Approval of the Agenda

Ed Valena moved that time should be created in the meeting to incorporate discussion of the April 4 public hearing. It was generally agreed that this topic could be incorporated as Item 5A. Julian Smith seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 4 meeting which was seconded by Lorne Parnell. The motion passed unanimously. There was general discussion concerning availability of draft and approved minutes at the meetings and it was decided to deal with this procedure outside of the meeting given the limited time.

V. Comments from the Public

Robin Mower referenced a letter she had sent to the committee and questioned the accuracy of a statement regarding setback requirements from College Brook attributed to her in the minutes of a previous meeting. Ed Valena and Julien Smith said they believed the minutes in question were accurate.

There were no other comments from the public at this time.

V-A. Reflection on the April 4 Public Hearing

Chuck Cressy noted the number of comments at the meeting concerning the amount of litter at the Plaza. He noted a meeting of the Plaza merchants held on the previous day where this topic was further discussed. He mentioned the history of litter blowing onto the Plaza property from neighboring properties along Main Street. He reported that a maintenance person was to be hired for the Plaza to attend to the litter as well as to the brush growing along the perimeter of the property.

Lorne Parnell asked if this would also include the brook area.

Mr. Cressy said that it would.

Tom Newkirk asked whether brush growing along the roadside of the neighboring residential condominium could also be cut down. He noted that this brush created a dangerous situation for drivers trying to exit the Plaza.

Julian Smith offered to bring this matter to the attention of the town administrator.

Chair Howland asked if there were further general comments on the public hearing.

Warren Daniel noted the general positive feedback presented at the hearing. He also noted Malcolm McNeill's characterization of the process being "backward", with the town telling a private property owner how to redevelop his property, but also noted that Mr. McNeill seemed to become more open to the idea as the evening progressed.

Ed Valena thought it would be a good idea to incorporate a copy of the initial charge letter from John Pinto in future presentations so that the public would understand that the work of the committee is in response to a request by the property owner.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer reported that though she hadn't attended the hearing, a friend of hers discussed how she didn't want to see Durham become a destination center. Her friend was afraid that Durham would become "yuppified".

Warren Daniel reported he had heard the same thing a few times and opined that some people are just uncomfortable with change.

Julian Smith mentioned that the town is already a destination point and mentioned UNH sports and other activities as being regional attractions.

Steve Pesci spoke to the concept of traffic. He noted that while a revitalized Plaza might bring more traffic to the center of town, it would decrease the amount of traffic leaving town in search of goods and services elsewhere.

There was discussion on whether the public hearing received adequate press coverage. It was reported that it was covered by Foster's and The New Hampshire.

Julian Smith noted that Chair Howland had done a heck of a job in pulling the mechanics of the hearing together, including arranging for the videotaping of the meeting for future airing on DCAT. It was reported that the meeting would air on Friday and Sunday evenings of the upcoming week.

Warren Daniel noted that the MUB theatre proved to be a good location.

VI. Discuss Draft Vision Statement

Julian Smith spoke to the vision statement and how Chair Howland did an excellent job tying the ten principles in it to the Master Plan (2000), the Community Development Plan (1995), the Council charge, John Pinto's early letter, the AIA's Ten Principles on Living Communities, NH's Open Meeting Law, and comments from the public hearing (as well as letters and emails).

Chair Howland spoke to the assistance he had received from Michael Behrendt (town resident and Rochester city planner) in providing subheadings to the ten items. He then offered to walk through the ten items and discuss those which required further elaboration or change.

Secretary's Note: The Mill Plaza Study Committee Working Vision Statement is available at the committee website.

- **Open Process.** Warren Daniel suggested that in addition to the references listed, it should also be noted that public comments are solicited at all meetings.
- **Community-Oriented Space.** Chair Howland noted Malin Clyde's comment at the public hearing that it was good the Plaza had emerged as a public gathering space for the summer concert and that a development could improve upon the current "beach chairs on pavement".
- **Mixed Uses.** No additional comments were made.
- **Linkage.** No additional comments were made.

- **Balanced Access.** Chair Howland spoke to bicycles and the importance of considering them in respect to traffic safety.

Chuck Cressy spoke to the importance of smooth vehicular in and out traffic flow and how the bulk of the Durham Marketplace's trade is with folks who arrive by car. He noted how Hannaford considers 5.5 parking spaces per 1,000 SF of store area a minimum requirement. He expressed his concern that the statement, as written, downplayed the importance of easy parking for patrons of the Plaza and overplayed the significance of bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Steve Pesci expressed his concern for Mr. Cressy's fears, but spoke to a balanced approach.

Ed Valena thought the present wording on traffic (cars, bikes, and pedestrian) spoke to requirements of all interests in that "commercial viability of businesses" is mentioned up front.

Chair Howland believed the present layout of the Plaza is more suburban and is typical of a 1970's development. He expressed his desire to incorporate more urban elements into a redevelopment scheme.

Chuck Cressy spoke to previously hinted-at desires by the committee for more retail space as well as service uses in a Plaza redevelopment. He recounted that his "biggest nightmare" is that patrons will come to the Plaza for the long term and monopolize the "easy parking" for their own use, and therefore deny the "in-and-out" shopper a quick shopping experience. In the end, he thought, he would lose customers to more easily accessible stores in Lee and Dover.

Warren Daniel agreed that easy access and egress was a key to his restaurant's success. He estimated that driving customers account for 60%-65% of his gross sales.

Julian Smith wondered what the breakdown was for Plaza customers in respect to "walk-ins" and "drive-ins".

Chuck Cressy spoke to how his summer business decreased by 35% in the summertime when he first started up his business, and how it decreases by only 5% in the present. He attributed this fact to targeting his business to the local resident who drives to his store and does significant shopping, rather than to the walking student customers who can only purchase what they can carry. He also spoke to his belief that 40% of parking spaces at the Plaza go unused. He pointed out areas of unused parking on the oversized photo of the Plaza.

Steve Pesci spoke to his belief that the availability of parking does not drive success and that Mr. Cressy's experience proved this point. He also wondered what the current ratio of parking to retail space was.

Chair Howland noted that this would be excellent homework for a subcommittee to study.

Warren Daniel expressed the need to study vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It was generally agreed that pertinent questions to patrons would be: 1) How did you get here? and 2) Was your trip linked with other business in town? Steve Pesci noted the need to design any redevelopment so that all traffic requirements could be met.

Chair Howland expressed the need to take a time out from the agenda item to allow Bill Schoonmaker, local architect and lead member of the support design team, an opportunity to speak to the architects' involvement with the process. Mr. Schoonmaker spoke to Steve Pesci and David Clark's work in developing maps of the Plaza area for a design exercise. He spoke of the competing interests surrounding the Plaza (Main Street, UNH, and the faculty neighborhood) and how the committee should view the "severity and softness" of the linkages between the Plaza and these elements. He also spoke of the future process and how the design team would base its work on the groundwork of the committee.

Chuck Cressy expressed his view that the committee should arrive at a bare bones list of needs for redevelopment and have the architects draw something up. He also wondered if neighboring vacant properties were being considered in the mix.

Bill Schoonmaker expressed his desire for more initial input from the committee.

Tom Newkirk wondered how the relationship between the local design team and AIA would evolve.

Bill Schoonmaker thought this was currently vague, but would become more clear in the future.

Warren Daniel spoke to John Pinto's desire to maximize his investment. He wondered if the committee had enough information to meet the task.

Lorne Parnell agreed to the need for more information. He spoke to how the Plaza property is not an open field and how advice on construction was necessary.

Steve Pesci noted that the Plaza couldn't be better hidden from Main Street traffic.

Warren Daniel wondered how the preliminary plan would be completed. He spoke to his belief on how the design activity by the committee might prove to be a waste of time.

Chair Howland spoke to the work already accomplished by the committee. He noted the articulation of the ten principles in the vision statement and the importance of using them for guidance in directing the design team. He noted the anxiety he was hearing in respect of the lack of hard data. He also noted AIA's involvement and the change in the level of thoroughness it offered. He spoke again to the ten principles in the vision statement and how they speak to the town's values.

Chuck Cressy spoke to "givens" in any redevelopment. As an example, he offered how the current delivery system for tractor trailers to the rear of the grocery and drug stores were successfully hidden from nearby neighborhoods. A given would be to continue to keep these unloading areas out of view.

Bill Schoonmaker left the meeting and discussion concerning the vision statement resumed.

- **Quality Design.** It was generally agreed that the photo exercise would speak to this matter.
- **Restored Buffer.** Julian Smith noted he had studied the history of College Brook in old planning files and believed this was an opportunity to fix a long-term problem.

Steve Pesci reported the role of the College Brook restoration in the University Master Plan and noted the future plan of returning C Lot into a "natural space".

- **Civic Elements.** There was general discussion concerning siting a library or other civic building in the Plaza and the possibility of locating such facilities on neighboring properties were they to become available.

Tom Newkirk spoke to "conflicting elements" and how the vision statement was too aggressive. He questioned if it was possible to "do it all" and thought that "something has to give".

There was general discussion concerning the role of neighboring vacant lands in the redevelopment were they to become available.

- **Fiscal Enhancement.** No additional comments were made.
- **Public Parking.** There was general discussion on parking at the Plaza and the relationship to overall downtown traffic needs. There was also

discussion concerning the seasonal effect of parking needs. Following considerable discussion, it was determined that parking requirements at the Plaza should include reference to Plaza patrons, employees, and possible future residents, as well as including possible use by patrons of downtown businesses outside the Plaza.

Warren Daniel noted his desire to include some reference to a partnership with UNH in any redevelopment of the Plaza.

VII. Mapping and Photo Exercise

Given the lateness of the hour, it was agreed to shift this exercise to a future meeting.

VIII. Other Business

There was no other business.

IX. Public Comments

Robin Mower thanked Chuck Cressy in regards to dealing with the litter issue around the Plaza. She spoke to making the committee more accessible to the public by offering evening meetings. She agreed that cleaning roadside brush located on a neighboring property was a good idea for safety's sake and that pedestrian safety in the parking lot in general should be considered. She reiterated a past comment concerning the need of creating a list of "givens" in any redevelopment and thought that reference to the Master Plan in respect to item #9 of the Vision Statement (Fiscal Enhancement) would be appropriate.

X. Adjournment

Just prior to adjournment, Chair Howland recalled Tom Newkirk's concern that the committee's emerging vision statement was too full and that "something has to give." Chair Howland said the vision statement reflects the many interests of stakeholders around the table, which he said are best articulated up front to reveal, sooner or later, where cooperation and compromise might be required in the future. He thanked everyone for a job well done so far.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

D-R-A-F-T

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes Wednesday, May 23, 2007 Mill Plaza and 110 Gregg Hall, University of New Hampshire 7:30 PM

Members Present: Deborah Hirsch Mayer (attended reconvened meeting but not the Site Walk) , Crawford Mills, Thomas Newkirk, Douglas Bencks, Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Chuck Cressy, Edgar Ramos, Warren Daniel.

Members Absent: Michael Davis, Ed Valena, Perry Bryant, Lorne Parnell. (Valena, Bryant, and Parnell participated in Site Walk).

Also Present: *From AIA:* Pat Field, Mike Castagna, Patricia Sherman, Maura Adams, *Members of local architects group:* Walter Rous, Bill Schoonmaker. *Members of the public:* Lorraine Murphy, Greg Grigsby, Dan Sheehan, Ed Garcia, Marty Coyle, Joe Friedman, Mary Robertson, Diane Wood, John Carroll, Sarah Mayer, Doug Greene. Nick Issak.

1. Call to Order—Welcome from Chairman

Dave Howland welcomed those assembled for the Site Walk and explained the purpose of the Site Walk.

2. Approval of Agenda

Julian Smith added an item to the published agenda—a time for reaction to the Site Walk. The amended agenda was moved by Crawford Mills, seconded by Julian Smith and approved unanimously.

3. Site Walk

Julian Smith conducted the Site Walk, explaining the history of the site and the land ownership of property adjoining the site. The Site Walk concluded at 7:10 with everyone invited to the reconvened meeting in Gregg Hall that would begin at 7:30.

4. Meeting Reconvened in Gregg Hall.

Chair Howland reconvened the meeting at 7:30. He handed out copies of the Vision Statement, minutes of the previous meeting, and copies of the Town Council resolution forming the Study Group. He explained the purpose of the evening session, and noted that the agenda had been approved (before the walkthrough) with one addition item—a time for response to the Mill Plaza Site Walk.

He welcomed representatives from the AIA, and everyone present briefly introduced himself or herself.

5. Responses to the Site Walk

Chair Howland invited reactions to the Site Walk, beginning with AIA representatives and committee members.

Mike Castagna—So many possibilities. The ultimate project will greatly enhance the property. It will be a very comprehensive project.

Patricia Sherman—She has a background in site evaluation. Impressed with the natural features. Impressed with the beauty of the site, the quietness, and trees. Need to preserve natural environment and still help create a vital site for business. The site brings everything you want (university connection, natural beauty, etc). Very pleased with the site.

Maura Adams: How can you make more out of what you already have there? Can there be more attractive structures using what is already there? How can you make that possible?

Doug Bencks: Mill Plaza is a wonderful resource, vital to day-to-day life of town and university. Other towns would like these assets in a downtown. There is the potential to make this a special place—this is in the interest of the university.

Warren Daniel: Never walked the space before. Struck by the opportunity for creative work and by how well the landscaping has been done.

Crawford Mills: Impressed by the beauty and space of the Plaza.

Chair Howland opened the discussion to the public at this point.

Walter Rous: First time he walked the perimeter. Impressed by the texture of the perimeter, the outcropping of trees—and the contrast with the two big “things” of the Plaza, the buildings and parking lot. Would like to see a design that meshes them better.

John Carroll: One source of ugliness in the Plaza—the parking lot. Need to pay attention to role and visibility of motor vehicles. Need varied transportation options including public transportation. Need to consider the energy realities of the future.

Lorraine Murphy: Notes there is currently one place for access and egress from Plaza. Won't the potential development be driven by how traffic is handled? Only so

much can be done until this is figured out. Hopes the AIA can look at this without being limited by recent debate on the issue.

Chuck Cressy: In response to John Carroll, emphasizes the need for automobile traffic for a successful supermarket.

6. Approval of the Minutes

Tom Newkirk moved that the minutes of the May 3 meeting be approved. Julian Smith seconded and the minutes were approved by the committee.

7. Discussion of Collaboration with AIA

Patrick Field moderated this portion of the meeting which focused for the explanation of four documents key to the combined efforts of the Town Council, the Mill Plaza Committee, and the AIA. Julian Smith began by giving background on the Town Council resolution creating the Mill Plaza Committee. He noted the goal of increasing taxable property, creating a community gathering space, and perhaps developing parcels adjacent to the Mill Plaza. He mentioned a letter from John Pinto in which he gave support for this effort. After this brief presentation, Patrick Field asked if there were any “back stories” concerning this resolution. Warren Daniel mentioned the history of the library moving to Mill Plaza. Crawford Mills mentioned the difficulty many developers had with building projects in Durham. Chuck Cressy noted that his current expansion of his store went well, with approvals allowing him to open on schedule. Warren Daniel said that in the past people who are in favor of economic development have been “left out of the system”—leading to one of the highest tax rates in the state.

Next Dave Howland explained the genesis of the committee’s Vision Statement: the initial brainstorming in the committee followed by public comment, and then further deliberations by the committee. He noted that the Vision Statement cites other relevant documents such as the Durham Master Plan and the policy statements of the AIA.

Patricia Sherman described the AIA 150 project, emphasizing the importance of building a win-win consensus among all stakeholders. AIA 150 is committing \$100,000 to the project. The hope is that this project could serve as a model for other communities to follow. She was asked about how the inclusions of national chains in a new Plaza might affect development. She responded that in Freeport, Maine, McDonalds dropped it arches. It is in the interest of national chains to accommodate the community; this leads to quicker approvals.

Chuck Cressy stressed the importance of paying attention to other commercial development around Durham, such as the new Hannaford supermarket on Rt. 108 outside of Dover. Patricia Sherman responded that there would be a careful site analysis, and planners will consult documents like the UNH Master Plan. This pro-

active approach can mean the ability to pick stores for the new Plaza—and develop a project that makes money as well.

Patrick Field asked her to say something about resources that AIA 150 might tap. Patricia Sherman noted that they would call upon building architects, landscape architects, traffic engineers, and others. Together they will gather information on Durham and come up with two or three approaches so that the committee and community will know what can be done.

Warren Daniel asked about the role of local architects who have been working on the Plaza project. Patricia Sherman answered that the details of coordinating with this group have not been worked out, but AIA 150 wants to work with all those involved in the project.

Patrick Field noted that AIA 150 will be working with a large pool of professionals around the state and will come up with a work plan. Patricia Sherman added that this plan will begin to set some specific dates. Bill Schoonmaker said that the small group of local architects has been meeting and is about 1-2 meetings away from coming up with something useful. Dave Howland concluded that work needs to be done to mesh the teams working on the project.

Maura Adams next passed out a handout specifying the LEED for Neighborhood Development standards and briefly explained the certification process. Crawford Mills asked what benefit the community gains from this certification. Patricia Sherman explained that certification responds to community concerns about sustainability; it is advantageous for the developer; and it can save money.

Doug Bencks explained the efforts at the University of New Hampshire to achieve sustainability in building projects such as James Hall, where UNH is considering LEED certification. He expressed the university's willingness to work toward LEED standards.

Chuck Cressy asked whether the cost of going for LEED certification was higher. Doug Bencks said that it depended on the starting point of the project. For some projects there is a fairly quick payoff. He mentioned the up front work on the renovation of DeMerritt Hall. Patricia Sherman described one of her last development projects at the Merrimack County Nursing Home where geo-thermal energy was used. It was possible to borrow money for the installation and pay back the loan through savings.

Greg Gribsby asked about the feasibility of requiring LEEDS certification. Maura Adams said that there are up front costs that can be paid back in the long run and that some communities are mandating energy efficiency (it was mentioned that Epping, NH has mandated LEED certification). John Carroll mentioned he is involved in the LEED certification for the James Hall renovation and there are points for having a bus stop.

8. Scheduling of Future Meetings

Dave Howland noted that the committee needed to set up a regular meeting time. He suggested the first and third Wednesday of the month from 4:30-6:30. Patrick Field suggested that we might have another public meeting after the work plan is formulated. This schedule was moved by Crawford Mills, seconded by Julian Smith and passed unanimously.

Patrick Field raised the question of expectations for future progress. Warren Daniel noted that the expectations have changed to a longer time line. He warned that the town likes to drag things out. Chuck Cressy said that there was the expectation that there would be a report and that it would be important for John Pinto to know about the longer time frame we were contemplating. Edgar Ramos assured the committee that John Pinto is comfortable with the work schedule.

Warren Daniel asked how the AIA felt about the time line. Mike Castagna said that AIA's expectations have changed —originally it was 18 months, but there has been considerable up front work. Now the expectation is for one year. The time line will be set in the next six weeks. Warren Daniel said he didn't want to rush things, but reiterated that things drag out in Durham. Doug Bencks asked, "Twelve months to what?" Patricia Sherman said that their expectation was that in 8-12 months there would be a plan, with the owner, a developer, and the community "on board."

Bill Schoonmaker said that perhaps at some point, after the plan is developed, the Mill Plaza Study Committee might back out of the picture. Crawford Mills said that he didn't think the committee should be out of the process.

9. Other Business

None.

7. Final Round of Public Comments.

John Carroll: Advocated mix in residential housing, including elderly and workforce housing to create a good downtown living situation. Crawford Mills said that he couldn't find a lot of examples of mixed housing and Patricia Sherman admitted that was the case. Doug Bencks said that college towns were doing some interesting mixed residency developments.

Bill Schoonmaker: Stressed the importance of wide participation. This is a unique opportunity with tremendous potential. Public input is important. There are lots of areas where there will need to be compromise, where everyone will have to give a bit.

Lorraine Murphy: Asked about expectations for reporting back to the Town Council. Dave Howland answered that it will take time to mesh efforts with the AIA and come back with a work plan. The depth of the planning has changed and we will need more time.

Patricia Sherman: The AIA has contracted a public relations firm to get the word out about this project.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Submitted by Tom Newkirk

D-R-A-F-T

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes Wednesday, June 6, 2007 Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers 4:30 PM

Members Present: Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Chuck Cressy, Ed Valena (Secretary), Lorne Parnell, Warren Daniel, Perry Bryant

Members Absent: Michael Davis, Edgar Ramos, Thomas Newkirk,

Also Present: Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, George Pellettieri, John Merkle, Walter Staples (Representatives of AIA); Members of the public: Ed Garcia, Robin Mower, Bill Schoonmaker

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM.

II. Welcome from the Chair

Chair Howland reported that the meeting would be videotaped for DCAT for the first time. He noted that this would be the first working meeting with representatives of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and introduced Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, and George Pellettieri, all of whom were seated at the table. A fourth representative of AIA, John Merkle, was seated in the audience. Chair Howland spoke to the meeting's agenda which would include 1) a discussion of the new work plan with AIA participation, and 2) a discussion of gathering hard data on which decisions down the road would be based. He also spoke to the written guidelines concerning the collaborative process with AIA.

Chair Howland recognized Ed Valena, representative of the Durham Public Library, who wished to make a special announcement. Mr. Valena reported that Margery Milne, a revered resident of the town (and also a noted conservationist and author) had passed away and bequeathed to the Library \$475,000, which the Board of Trustees has placed in their building fund.

III. Approval of the Agenda

Julian Smith moved that the agenda should be approved as presented which was seconded by Warren Daniel. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Warren Daniel made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 23 meeting as presented and was seconded by Julian Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public at this time.

VI. Presentation, Discussion, and Approval of Committee/AIA 150 Work Plan and Collaborative Principles

Chair Howland spoke to the tentative Work Plan and the inclusion of five Public Forums. These were comprised of:

- Public Forum 1: presentation of data report;
- Public Forum 2: design teams present draft work for public feedback;
- Public Forum 3: design teams present revised designs and begin conversation with the public concerning merging best elements of the different designs with an eye towards creating a hybrid scheme;
- Public Forum 4: hybrid design scheme is presented for public feedback; and
- Public Forum 5: final consideration of the plan for the committee's formal approval for future presentation to the Town Council.

Patricia Sherman spoke to the data-gathering aspect of the project. She noted that the Vision Statement had already been completed by the Committee. She talked about the importance of site analysis and elements which included opportunities (e.g., the brook) and constraints (e.g., property lines). She said major topics included the topography of the site, historical criteria (specifically, the Grange), zoning, and the architectural setting of the surrounding neighborhoods (residential, Main Street, University). She spoke of an infrastructure analysis which would include utilities (power, water, sewer), parking, and traffic (a "huge nut").

Ms. Sherman spoke further on traffic and parking. She noted the potential for creating a traffic model (a possible collaboration between the Town and the University) and said she believed this would be very helpful. She also commented on parking and the unique downtown setting. She wondered how people traveled to the Plaza (drive, bike, walk) and noted the importance of a bus stop on the redeveloped property. She also wondered if parking on the site would be specifically for users of the Plaza or would also accommodate others.

Chuck Cressy said that he owes the committee facts as well as opinions. He mentioned that it might be possible to provide customer source data based on sales in his store as analyzed by a wholesale provider. Warren Daniel remarked that he might be able to provide a similar service.

Patrick Field requested that this be discussed later in the meeting.

Patricia Sherman reported that she would be working with Craig Seymour of RKG Associates in order to create a pro forma for a hypothetical build-out of the property. She said data would include rent rates and area of tenant space. She noted that this scenario would be based on some major assumptions but was meant to only judge the economic viability of the project.

Ms. Sherman spoke of the plan for three design teams to create different visions for the redevelopment and take the best aspects of the three schemes and blend them. She mentioned the importance of the public knowing the basis of the various plans.

Patrick Field asked if there were any questions.

Chuck Cressy noted that rents were confidential and would have to gotten from John Pinto, the property owner. Ms. Sherman responded that would be likely that Mr. Seymour could sign a confidentiality statement regarding this information. Perry Bryant added that the actual rent rates was important data to have. Ms. Sherman said it was very important for the property owner to be squarely behind the process.

Crawford Mills noted that no regular meetings were scheduled for August. He thought it might be helpful to do so for vacation planning. Patrick Field said there would be a lot of design work done during this time. Chair Howland though first and third Wednesdays should be bookmarked.

There was general discussion concerning the role of the steering committee, renamed the coordinating committee, and the way it would work with the committee and AIA. It was agreed that the entire Mill Plaza Committee is the group that will formally make recommendations to the Council.

Crawford Mills thought some of the items under economic data gathering (specifically TIF districts) represented decision making rather than simple data gathering. Patricia Sherman answered that general discussion would be made on such topics only and hypothetical scenarios would be constructed.

Lorne Parnell wondered about estimated costs of town buildings that might be incorporated in the redevelopment. Ms. Sherman responded that generic costs based on estimated space needs would be utilized.

Crawford Mills noted that the local architect group is tentatively scheduled to all work on the same team. He wondered if it might be better to spread them out so that they might be able to share their knowledge about the town. There was a general discussion. Bill Schoonmaker remarked that each team would be working with the same essential information about the site. He said the local architects work well as a group and didn't think it made a difference if each team had a local representative or not. Ms. Sherman also noted that the AIA group were volunteers and she was trying to team people with some eye to convenience and efficiency.

Chair Howland noted a number of amended meeting dates that had been proposed and agreed to over the course of the meeting. The group agreed to switch:
1) July 6 to July 11, 2) September 22 to September 29, 3) October 7 to October 3, 4) October 21 to October 17, and 5) October 27 to November 3. It was also noted that

meetings for September 8 and December 8, originally planned for the morning, would be put off to the afternoon in respect to traditional town events that would occur on those days.

Chair Howland spoke to the collaboration guidelines for the Mill Plaza Study Committee and the AIA 150 group. He added that AIA planned to hire a public relations firm to distribute newsworthy press releases, when necessary, and that the committee and AIA 150 would work together to review those materials.

Ed Valena wanted clarification on the use of the term "RFP" in the verbage under *Final Report*. He believed this terminology was typically used for municipal projects and wondered if it was appropriate when applied to this project. Patricia Sherman thought this represented only one option. There was general discussion and Patrick Field recommended more generic terminology and which was agreed to by the group.

Crawford Mills moved that the calendar, work plan, and guidelines be approved as presented and amended, which was seconded by Julian Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Discussion about Data Report and Challenging Issues

Patrick Field returned the conversation to a customer study. Chuck Cressy thought it would possible to do only one study, either in the summer or in the fall following the return of the students. Doug Bencks thought it was far better to include as much of the population as possible, even if the data would be less timely to the committee. He believed it could always be incorporated at a later date. Mr. Cressy believed the last week of September might be the ideal time to conduct such a study. Patricia Sherman wondered if Mr. Cressy could share the methodology for a study with other Plaza retailers. He responded that he would work on a questionnaire.

Ed Garcia, a financial officer with the credit union located in the Plaza, noted that he could conduct a survey manually which he was willing to do. He reported that approximately 40% of his business was conducted with university students and staff. He also noted that over half of his business is conducted over the Internet.

Ed Valena wondered about traffic issues and how this would be studied. Doug Bencks reported that traffic counts in and out of the Plaza (as well as elsewhere in town) were conducted in late April. He said there was some good basic data and spoke to the added impact of a redeveloped Plaza. George Pellettieri noted that college communities are unique and more passengers might occupy vehicles than typical. Deborah Hirsch Mayer spoke to the effect of the seasons and weather on traffic.

There was general discussion on traffic studies and models. It was noted that the Town Council rejected a \$50,000 traffic study item in the most recent budget cycle.

There was talk concerning a collaboration between the Town and the University on some form of traffic study or model. Patrick Field wondered what some of the pro bono experts from AIA might be able to provide. Chuck Cressy wondered if the Plaza property owner might be willing to participate in a study local to the Plaza's vicinity as this information might benefit him even if the current process never came to fruition. Doug Bencks reported that the Town/UNH study was going to encompass traffic along the state highways out to and including Route 4.

The conversation returned to the customer survey. Crawford Mills wondered if a UNH marketing class might be able to play a role. He said that he could make a contact with the department and see what he could do. Patrick Field suggested that Mr. Mills, Mr. Cressy and Warren Daniel form a committee and develop a draft plan for a survey. Patricia Sherman stated she was also excited by the prospect of a survey conducted by one of Mr. Cressy's wholesale providers. Mr. Cressy responded that he would discover how confidential such data would be and report back.

Ms. Sherman brought up environmental and historic concerns for the project and wondered who the contact people for these topics might be. It was generally agreed that Robin Mower (present at the meeting) would be best to discuss environmental concerns given her interest and proximity. Crawford Mills responded that he was the representative of the Historic District Commission.

Ed Valena wondered about the status of some abutting properties and how they might play in a redevelopment of the Plaza. It had been rumored that the town had made overtures to an abutting property owner with the interest of purchasing a vacant parcel to the rear of the Plaza. Julian Smith remarked that a number of people have expressed interest in some of these properties as it has become known that some of them might be available for purchase. Chair Howland suggested that abutters be contacted again concerning the activity of the committee.

The conversation turned to the topic of the neighborhood. Deborah Hirsch Mayer thought a distinction should be made between abutters and the general neighborhood and that this general neighborhood should be drawn into the process. Patrick Field agreed and thought it would be a good idea to sit down in small groups with various interest groups, especially the neighborhood groups. Doug Bencks thought it would be beneficial to arrange for these meetings when the AIA people were in town for regular meetings. Mr. Field thought it would be a good idea to come up with a general stakeholders' list with individuals' names attached.

It was agreed, given the hour, that time would be made for public comments. The *Other Business* agenda item was passed over.

IX. Public Comment

Robin Mower commented on her family's history with the original planning of the Plaza. She mentioned the poor aesthetics of the property, but, on the plus side,

noted that it has a low profile. She reported that existing crosswalks don't reflect pedestrian patterns and wondered how increased development would impact traffic along Faculty Road. She thought that to delineate the land that would comprise the redevelopment area was an important consideration. She wondered if "best practices" would apply to a redevelopment project or if older environmental regulations would be grandfathered.

There were no other public comments.

Chair Howland brought up the last area of the previous agenda item which was "potentially challenging issues". However, it was generally agreed that the hour was too late to begin such a demanding topic. Patrick Field suggested that the list of stakeholders (previously mentioned) be quickly drawn up. The list included: the property owner, conservationists, leaseholders, the greater business community (DBA), direct abutters, the library, customers, town government (Town Council, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, Housing Task Force), the community, the University (students, the institution, faculty & staff, the transportation system), potential developers, landlord association, schools & children, and seniors.

There was general talk about housing. Doug Bencks noted that UNH has a goal to house 60% of the student body, up from 50% four years ago. Patricia Sherman wondered how more information on housing patterns in the town could be uncovered.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

D-R-A-F-T

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes Wednesday, June 20, 2007 Durham Town Hall – Council Chambers 4:30 PM

Members Present: Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Dave Howland (Chair), Chuck Cressy, Ed Valena (Secretary), Lorne Parnell, Warren Daniel, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk

Members Absent: Mark Henderson, Edgar Ramos

Also Present: Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, Michael Castagna, John Merkle, Maura Adams (Representatives of NHAIA); Members of the public: Robin Mower, Bill Schoonmaker, Diane Woods, Janice Aviza

I. Call to Order

Chair Howland called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

II. Welcome from the Chair

Chair Howland reported that the meeting would be live on DCAT for the first time and gave an overview of the upcoming meeting. He noted that this would be a “roll up the sleeves” meeting and that the group would get “down to the nitty gritty”. He observed three important upcoming agenda items which included 1) identifying stakeholder groups and contact people on the committee who could get in touch with these stakeholders, 2) setting parameters for the design teams including the boundaries of the site, and 3) addressing the draft statement on fairness and transparency. Chair Howland asked Patrick Field if he had any opening comments. Mr. Field did not.

III. Approval of the Agenda

Julian Smith moved that the agenda be approved as presented and was seconded by Crawford Mills. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Julian Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 6 meeting as presented and was seconded by Perry Bryant. Patricia Sherman noted that in the future “AIA” should be referred to as “NHAIA”. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public at this time.

VI. Discussion of Stakeholder Outreach Efforts

Chair Howland distributed a list of stakeholder groups (including “sub”groups and members) to the committee for review. He explained the process of contacting these groups individually for private conversations about their hopes and fears of a Plaza redevelopment. The groups include (in no order of importance): 1) Town staff, 2) NHAIA150, 3) Durham local architects, 4) Mill Plaza Study Committee, 5) Planning Board, 6) Town Council 7) Property owners, 8) Leaseholders, 9) Durham Public Library, 10) Ecology/Conservation interests, 11) Business/Local economy, 12) Abutters, 13) Faculty neighborhood, 14) Civic groups, 15) Housing interests, 16) Historic/Heritage interests, 17) Cycling interests, 18) UNH, and 19) Schools and youth groups.

Ed Valena asked if the purpose of the process was to widen the range of the list or to make it more manageable. Patrick Field responded that he wanted to make sure the list was complete, and then possibly compress it for the private conversations.

Patricia Sherman wondered if the Zoning Board of Adjustment should be included. Ed Valena thought that given the quasi-judicial nature of that board, it would be inappropriate to include them as stakeholders. Patrick Field thought they could be “astericked” for possible future involvement.

Deborah Hirsh Mayer believed it would be a good idea to involve the Friends of the Library, possibly the chairs.

Crawford Mills thought it would be wise to widen the “Housing” group to include the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Seacoast and the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority.

It was thought that senior groups should be included. The Silver Squares and the Active Retirement Association were mentioned.

Patricia Sherman wondered if the town had a Rotary and a recreation committee, and if so, they should be informed of the project.

Patrick Field reiterated the desire to reach out to these groups in small conversational meetings to find out what they might hope for in a Plaza redevelopment. During the course of the following conversation, committee members were assigned groups to contact to schedule these private meetings to be held with Mr. Field and committee members.

There was discussion of how various groups could be tied together. It was determined that the Durham Business Association and the Durham, It’s Where U Live group would be a likely combination. The Economic Development Committee would be met with separately.

There was discussion on meetings with the general residential neighborhood (specifically, the “Faculty” neighborhood). Deborah Hirsch Mayer wondered if abutters might have concerns greater than the wider neighborhood.

Patricia Sherman spoke to housing. She believed it was important to understand the housing program in a possible redevelopment and to widen the view.

There was discussion on transportation. It was decided that “Cycling” might be incorporated under a larger transportation topic which would include busses. Bill Schoonmaker thought “transportation” might not be a “group” at all, but rather a “topic”. Patrick Field responded to see how this issue is being dealt with “down the road”, and, if need be, the “topic” might need to be reconvened as a “group”.

There was more discussion on housing, specifically on the Church Hill apartments and how residents of these buildings are pedestrian visitors to the Plaza.

Ed Valena believed that the Durham Historic Association should be included in the Historic/Heritage interest group given members attachment to buildings in the District, and particularly to the Grange.

Patricia Sherman spoke again to the importance of getting people involved early in the process. She particularly spoke of the Planning Board and how it is typical for this board to respond to projects following their formal applications. Patrick Field wondered how to meet with members of the Planning Board without it being construed as a public meeting. Lorne Parnell thought it would be best to get on the agenda for an upcoming meeting, possibly at a work session scheduled for the following week.

Julian Smith pointed out that there is a weekly staff meeting for department heads and this might be the best time to update the town staff.

Chuck Cressy wondered when these stakeholder meetings would be held. Patrick Field responded that he was open and that the meetings could occur during the day or in the evenings. He said the meetings would be conducted in a style appropriate to the size of the group and hoped to have a central location available to hold them.

VII. Discussion of Draft Design Team Parameters

Patricia Sherman presented the *Draft Parameters for the Design Team*. She stated up front that the goal is to “create an actual development through an open collaborative process” of all the stakeholders and defined the success of the process as a “permitted project backed by the owner and a developer that meet the community’s goals and is slated for construction by 2009”. She noted the criteria were separated into three categories: qualitative, quantitative, and economic and spoke to these individual categories. She noted that the qualitative criteria directly spoke to the *Vision Statement* (adopted in May) and to AIA’s principles (including a Carbon Challenge). Quantitative criteria included addressing opportunities and

limitations of the site (natural features, utilities, transportation, parking, neighborhood context, and zoning). She spoke to the type of spaces that might be constructed (retail, office, residential, municipal). She offered how the size of the multi-family residential space and the form of ownership (rental income vs. condominium) were independent issues. Economic criteria would be analyzed by RKG Associates on a confidential basis and pro formas would be run for various design scenarios. She emphasized that John Pinto's (the property owner) financial stake would be kept private and that "rules for engagement" with him would be set in a future meeting. She further noted that pro formas on the Town's costs and future revenues would also be run for different design schemes.

Ed Valena mentioned the existence of a \$475,000 UDAG fund and how it might come into play with the project.

Patricia Sherman then spoke to the boundaries of the redevelopment site. She related a map which highlighted the neighborhood with two lines:

1. The Blue Line. This area includes the Plaza property, the wooded backland piece owned by Perry Bryant (on the south side of College Brook), the Kyreages properties (including the Red Tower), and all of the properties on the south side of Main Street to and including Mill Road to the current entrance. Ms. Sherman spoke to how these properties would be the most impacted by a possible redevelopment and how they might play a part in such a project.
2. The Black Line. This area denoted the context analysis of the project – an area that would be impacted to a lesser extent - and included some of the faculty area, the churches, the post office, and most of the downtown shopping area.

Julian Smith noted how the Plaza really was the heart of the downtown.

Ed Valena wished that it be made plain that the Blue Line didn't demarcate an urban renewal scheme where buildings are razed; rather, it represented an opportunity for settings of valued historic buildings to be improved.

Patricia Sherman noted that the site analysis would be complete by July 18. She reiterated the importance of agreeing on information going into the process to create the best consensus later on.

Chair Howland noted how the regular July 4 meeting would be delayed to July 11 and, given the absence of himself and Patrick Field, the meeting would be co-chaired by Julian Smith and Patricia Sherman. He also spoke to the July 18 evening public hearing at 7PM and how it might be best for the committee to meet from 4:30 to 6:00 beforehand to organize the presentation. This was generally agreed to.

VIII. Discussion of the Fairness and Transparency Statement

Chair Howland spoke to the notion that by definition, as stakeholders, committee members may have conflicts of interests. But he added that members – whose collective interests give the committee its strength and depth – should not have to recuse themselves from votes. This is especially true, he said, because the entire committee is advisory to the Town Council. He reported that Town Administrator Todd Selig agreed with this point of view. To clarify this issue for the committee and the public, Chair Howland presented a “Statement on Fairness and Transparency”, which was prepared by Patrick Field, and edited by Mr. Selig, Chair Howland, and Julian Smith. Chair Howland noted that the most important section of this document was the “no surprises” clause which would keep everyone on the committee on the up and up.

The document read as follows:

This three-part statement is intended to provide a measure of clarity for committee members and the public on the confluence of members’ personal interests in the future of the site and their responsibility to participate fairly and openly on the study committee.

1. The members of the Mill Plaza Study Committee have been selected because they represent the range of affected interests regarding the current and potential future uses of this site. Thus, committee members are expected to have personal, professional, and financial stakes in the issues at hand.
2. In order to ensure a fair and transparent process, Mill Plaza Committee members are encouraged to share their interests, concerns, and ideas as openly as possible.
3. To the greatest extent possible, Committee members are encouraged to let other members know of pending events or actions that may directly affect the Mill Plaza Committee planning effort and to avoid any surprises that may adversely affect both the relationships among members as well as the substantive planning underway.

Ed Valena moved that the document should be approved as presented and was seconded by Perry Bryant. Crawford Mills wished to amend the language of the document and exchange the word “encouraged” to “asked”. This amendment was seconded by Julian Smith and it passed unanimously. The amended motion then passed unanimously.

IX. Discussion of New Secretary Hire

It was acknowledged by the committee that the secretary had performed a superhuman job of taking notes on conversation of a truly ragtag group. However,

increased kryptonite in the atmosphere would not allow him to continue at this task. Chair Howland and Patrick Field both offered to remedy this situation with some fresh blood by the next regular meeting.

X. Other Business

Lorne Parnell reiterated his intention to get the Plaza Committee on the agenda for the Planning Board's work session to be held on Wednesday, June 27 at 6PM. NHAIA representatives stated that they would be able to attend a meeting on that date.

XI. Public Comment

Robin Mower commented on the quantitative criteria and how the wetlands conversation should include reference to buffer areas. She noted that some abutters were absent from the area (specifically one on sabbatical) and wondered if they could be contacted about events via email. She further noted that while some neighbors were in close proximity and in clear view of the Plaza, they were not included on the abutter's list. Concerning feedback to the committee, she said she knew of people with strong opinions on the topic and wondered if they could email comments in. Chair Howland responded that such comments were welcome and spoke to how conversations with the public would be held in a public forum. Ms. Mower spoke again to buffers and wondered if they were grandfathered. Patricia Sherman referred to site-specific permitting from the DES and the demanding nature of that process.

There were no other public comments.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 PM.

Ed Valena, Secretary

D-R-A-F-T
Mill plaza study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, July 11, 2007
Durham Town hall – Council Chambers
4:30PM

Members Present: Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Ed Valena, Warren Daniel, Thomas Newkirk

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Dave Howland, Lorne Parnell, Perry Bryant, Deborah Hirsch Mayer

Also Present: Reps. of AIA: Patricia Sherman at table, John Merkle, Mike Castagna in audience; Members of the Public: Ed Garcia, Robin Mower, Bill Schoonmaker, Jen Murray of UNH, Henry Smith, Town Administrator Todd Selig, Tom House, Art Guadano

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Julian Smith called the meeting to order at 4:36PM, and he introduced the new minute taker, Adam Knowlton-Young, working for CBI with Patrick Field.

II. Welcome and Update from Vice Chair and AIA NH Co-Chair

Patricia Sherman outlined that the meeting would be dealing with the information that is to be presented to the public on July 18th. She also briefly recapped the productive meeting with town department heads held last week.

III. Approval of Agenda

Warren Daniel motioned to accept the minutes, Crawford Mills seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes from June 20th Meeting

Doug Bencks motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Tom Newkirk and they were unanimously approved.

V. Public Comment

Henry Smith brought up the possibility of using House Bill 657, which details various forms of tax relief for community-oriented development projects.

Don Brautigam let the committee know that he was in attendance representing the Durham Energy Committee.

VI. Discussion of Site Information gathered to date that will be covered at the July 18th public workshop

Julian Smith introduced this section stating that the July 18th meeting is to be held at UNH MUB Theater from 7PM on.

Patricia Sherman summarized the material to be presented at the meeting: qualitative criteria, quantitative or specific data, economic data, and other graphic presentations. The presentation will be Power Point, not very long, and also likely on boards. Patricia then went through a draft agenda for the July 18th public meeting:

1. First, there would be a presentation on the collaborative process as designed by this committee, detailing some of its key elements, such as it being a public process, etc.
2. Patricia Sherman gave the committee a handout defining what success will mean for the project and asked the committee if this handout could be formally approved. The definition of success read: "Success for the re-envisioning of the Mill Plaza would be ... A permitted project for the Plaza site backed by the owner and developer that meets the community's goals and is slated for phase 1 construction by 2009." Crawford Mills' motion to accept the handout as part of the presentation for July 18th was seconded by Tom Newkirk and unanimously approved. Patricia Sherman continued with her presentation.
3. The handout on Qualitative Criteria was distributed and discussed. Patricia Sherman noted these will be the evaluating criteria for the project.

Warren Daniel commented that the concept is good, but that he had not had sufficient chance to really read this over. Patricia Sherman continued and explained that the goal of this section is to emphasize to the community that their principals are in line with AIA and LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, principals of design. There was discussion if this material would be in the website, and it was agreed that yes it would be, but likely not before the July 18th meeting. Patricia Sherman continued, noting that more stakeholder meetings; involving people from the neighborhoods, the library etc., are planned and this information will be brought to the town.

4. "Quantitative data" would be presented to help folks understand why this property is slated for redevelopment, seeking to convey that currently there is a very low commercial density, that Libby's before and after the fire could be used as an example of redevelopment with greater commercial density that has been accepted by community, and to convey the overall potential of the Plaza site.
5. Aerial photos detailing the Pinto site plus additional properties around it would be useful. This would show folks exactly what area is being talked about.
6. Next, Doug Bencks would produce cross sections of the topography of the Plaza. These "site sections" would detail cross sections both ways showing elevation changes and highlighting the opportunity for changing the grade. There was

discussion of the availability of this material to the public and it was agreed that it would be available on the Town's website.

At this point Warren Daniel asked if there would be any discussion of the grant process; how the AIA got involved and describe how we got where we are today? Patricia Sherman answered that yes there would be discussion of that in the introduction.

7. "Site context" will be provided next by architect Bill Flynn of Saucier and Flynn. Patricia Sherman noted that this would help tie things together, and would demonstrate through graphics how Mill Plaza links to downtown, to UNH, and to the surrounding neighborhoods. They will speak to scales, solar orientation, and all those things that make good design.
8. Next a civil engineer would talk about the current development, which would emphasize the development wouldn't be permitted today, as it is not acceptable by today's standards. It has been grandfathered along. This is to emphasize that past design and development choices would not be possible to repeat. Patricia Sherman also mentioned that the engineer will speak about utilities and when upgrades may need to happen.
9. Discussion of "transportation and parking", would discuss the current understanding of issues, concerns and ideas. She emphasized that no solutions would be presented yet.
10. "What could be put on the site" would mention some specific ideas already posited such as, the Town Hall, library, and various types of housing. In particular they are interested in discussing and getting feedback from the public on the types of housing discussed so far.
11. "Economic data" was presented and this part would be an introduction to how real estate economics works. There was some question and discussion over specifics of what would be detailed on the slides. Patricia Sherman continued, emphasizing that the owner has right to return on investment, and reminded everyone that they need to keep things simple for this presentation to which there was a general agreement. Doug Bencks wanted to know how long all of these presentations would take. Patricia Sherman answered that collectively they would take about 20-30 minutes. Julian Smith suggested they could discuss this later.
12. Patricia Sherman continued and asked Doug Bencks if he could get a hard copy of the recently completed UNH Master Plan, especially as it details the other side of Mill Road, which they could present at the July 18th meeting. Doug Bencks said he could.
13. Patricia Sherman said that a series of photos, completed that day, would be presented to show the public what they are currently looking at, and she would

like to present graphics of similar projects, so the public could see what the possibilities are.

At this point there was general discussion about taxes and the possibility of using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for infrastructure improvements at the Plaza site.

Julian Smith segued to the next item on the agenda.

VII. Updates on the status of:

a. the design teams

Patricia Sherman said that they are currently working on it.

b. the stakeholder and focus group interviews

Julian Smith read an e-mail that Patrick Field listing interviews scheduled with the library, with UNH, conservation and ecology stakeholders, historic preservation, housing advocates, abutters, and the Durham Business Association. Warren Daniel asked if there were any groups missing that they knew of. Chuck Cressy answered that the leaseholders are missing, but this is being worked on.

Patricia Sherman mentioned that they, the Chair of the Committee, Patrick Field, herself and Doug Bencks among others, will also be meeting with Mr. Pinto on the morning of July 18th.

c. review of public workshop agenda

Julian Smith distributed and read a draft of the Agenda for Re-Envisioning the Mill Plaza, the meeting title for the July 18th public forum. Patricia Sherman mentioned that the group discussion should generate lots of interest and comments, and that the AIA is looking for validation and consensus to go ahead with the design phase. Julian Smith commented that each team leader (group elected) will report back questions and answers to the large group, with 25 minutes allotted for this.

There was discussion of how the meeting would be advertised.

At this point there was a general discussion about the length of the meeting being planned for July 18th. And a general consensus of the Committee was that the small groups were not necessary and that a more general Q and A would be more efficient. Patricia Sherman noted that the goal is to have an engaging process to get and keep people involved, so this feedback was welcome. She offered that she and Adam Knowlton-Young would be in touch with Patrick about the above discussion of changes to the Agenda.

VIII. Other Business

No other business.

IX. Public Comment

Robin Mower of Faculty Road spoke to the “comparing principals” sheet, and that it might be helpful to explain what LEED is as this is associated with Green building, which is of concern to the community. On the topic of “site sectioning,” she wanted to know if this extends to across College Brook, as this would be important.

She suggested that the Committee consider including TIF and the House Bill 657 information at the July 18th meeting, as an alternate source of funding would be interesting to know more about. She also suggested that the D-CAT announcement note that the meeting on July 18th will be taped, and that it will be aired at a specific time—that it not be just a meeting announcement. Her final comment was a plug for more responsible snowplowing even before redevelopment happens.

Art Guadano of Pine Crest Lane and AIA NH suggested that discussion of a possible TIF include improvements to the social environment of the area.

Robin Mower asked if AIA NH is familiar with a town similar in size to Durham with a similar example of core downtown areas being developed. Bill Schoonmaker answered that possibly in Exeter, as they have a project, but that may not be TIF. Patricia Sherman offered that TIF has an economic rationale behind it, with lots of guidelines, and that the size of the town only impacts the size of the project, not the guidelines for development, so that Concord is still a good example. Julian Smith offered that there was one project in Raymond, but not downtown. Ed Valena, Julian Smith and Patricia Sherman clarified differences between House Bill 657 and TIF, that these are really quite different.

X. Adjournment

Warren Daniel made motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Tom Newkirk, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM by unanimous vote.

Public Forum Stakeholders Meeting Notes – UNH MUB Theater II July 18, 2007

Mill Plaza Study Committee E-mail: plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us

The session began at approximately 7:05 pm

Introduction:

Dave Howland (Chair of the Mill Plaza Study Committee) and Neil Niman (Chair of the Durham Town Council) opened the session by introducing the process and how it began, what has happened so far with the project, and what the future process looks like as of now.

Patrick Field (from the Consensus Building Institute) then briefly went over the evening's agenda and introduced Patricia Sherman, the lead architect from the American Institute of Architects NH 150. Patricia Sherman introduced why the AIA is here, expanded further on the collaborative process looking at the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza site, and talked about the goals of the redevelopment plan, as well as emphasizing the critical role of the public in providing the design parameters for the project.

Initial Questions on the Project Process from the Public:

Will the community be able to submit questions, concerns and ideas to the project's website?

Yes, they can submit these anytime they wish to plazacommittee@ci.durham.nh.us and their comments will get anonymously integrated into a list that has been started based on interviews with several groups of like-minded stakeholders.

How wide spread is the attempt to notify the community at large of this avenue for comment?

Ideas suggested included using the schools to send home fliers, doing a public mailing to all town residents, and broadcasting this meeting and other Mill Plaza Study Committee meetings more frequently on the D-CAT network.

What is the owner's interest and involvement in this process, both now and down the road?

The property owner, John Pinto, has a representative at most of the meetings, and has personally met with various town and committee groups over the last 6 months, and will be closely involved in the upcoming design phase of the project. Mr. Pinto has

connections to the community and is financially stable; suggesting continued long-range involvement in the community and in this development.

What is the experience of the design teams in projects and processes like these and who are the teams?

All the design teams are familiar with current design processes that frequently include re-envisioning designs based on multiple sources of viewpoints, concerns and ideas. There are three design teams, composed of architects, landscape architects and others. The local team from Durham is headed by Bill Schoonmaker and will include Bobby Woodward, Nick Issac and Walter Rous among others. The other two teams are composed from design firms in NH. All the design teams will have access to similar sources of data from various consultants such as engineers and the like.

Current Site Conditions:

Patricia Sherman, with the impromptu aid of various experts and partners present, succinctly explained what the current site conditions are and some of the potential of the site. The slides can be found on the Town website:

http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/GOVERNMENT/boards/mill_plaza/mill_plaza_study_committee.htm

Questions from the Public:

Dave Howland introduced this segment of the session, encouraging people to ask questions, give feedback and comment on what was presented, noting that the process will be “all the richer for your contributions”. Questions were answered mostly by Patricia Sherman with some help from Patrick Field, Dave Howland and AIA150 partners.

What is the scope of the site? What properties does it include? What could be done with these properties? Is cooperation from abutters “all or nothing”?

The scope is limited to the plaza itself and essentially the paved parking area, but in terms of design and thinking about the site, several abutting properties are being included, ultimately dependent on the property owners’ interests.

The designers are looking at the bigger picture and in some cases there is already interest, but it is too early to say definitely what the exact scope of the site will be and which properties will be included in the final design. There is a lot of potential in some of the lots on Main Street that are underdeveloped or in marginal condition. The brook area offers great potential for natural areas and a buffer zone between the neighbors hoods and downtown. The design needs to tie into the area it is being developed near; so open areas offer more flexibility, including more access. The design can flexibly include whatever

properties are interested, but at some point a final decision will need to be made as to what properties will be included.

What could be done to study why people do not use the Plaza currently and why they do?

We are in the place of “if they build it they will come”, as right now there is limited office space, the site is not particularly welcoming, the environment is lacking, so enhancing environment may bring people in. One option to gather data would be to have a public survey, which would not be statistically valid if done informally, but could provide valuable input nonetheless. An economic analysis of viability of various options will be done.

What thinking is going into the energy efficiency of the site, including driving vs. walking? How would the buildings be better in general?

The buildings are currently 40 years old and not built to current specifications. New buildings would be more energy efficient, the site would have less run off, and essentially we are looking at totally different design from a strip mall, more user friendly and built to modern standards. Consideration is being given to the nature of the development, including thinking of the site as a “destination” to both attract folks from the area and make a more centralized center for amenities and services. One example of this concept we are looking at is Hanover.

How many buildings and what uses are envisioned for the site?

This depends on economics somewhat; there could be attached buildings, the buildings could be condominiumized, the site could include a town hall and library, housing and retail. What typically works best is to plan the whole site based on what people are interested in and then figure out ownership and the boundary lines later...figure out what you want and then make it work, do it as a whole and work out property ownership/compensation later.

What is the current thinking about parking? How can we reduce the amount of asphalt and create greens spaces, and still have enough parking, especially as you are talking about increasing the commercial and residential density of the area?

One idea that is being discussed is structured parking. The differences in grading around the site would allow for parking garage structures that could be faced with other buildings so it would not look like a garage; it could be embedded in other structures.

What are the current plans for entries and exits, and what thought is being given to wider town traffic patterns, including pedestrian and bicycle traffic?

Likely designers will try to include more than one access point. The goal is to make access for all pedestrians, cars, and delivery vehicles work, and indeed broader traffic patterns will be given much thought.

Bicycles and pedestrians are a big part of this. Bike parking will be included. UNH is interested in having a bus stop and maybe a bus shelter. Walking paths and bike paths have been discussed and so forth. This is a transportation-oriented development including everything from foot traffic to cars and buses, with an eye to making the site as

user friendly as possible. Even trains will likely be a piece of the puzzle and how it impacts downtown and the surrounding area.

Has there been any thinking about how to tie in the downtown area to this project?

The concept of connecting the rest of downtown, especially Main St. with the Mill Plaza development is crucial to this whole process and the project. At the heart of this project is the chance to re-imagine the town center.

What types of housing are being considered for this site, and is it feasible to include work force housing and/or low-income housing?

Various combinations of housing, including work force housing, low income housing, senior housing, and student housing of various sorts, undergrad and graduate, have been discussed already. The mix of residential could be income-based. It could include a certain percentage of units of certain types, housing could come with subsidies...there are many options.

What is the time frame for this project? Will it be phased building or done all at once?

The building will likely be phased, as we can't put the current businesses out while this project unfolds, while commercial and housing demands can be staged as units are built. The plan is to break ground in 2009, and 2 years would be a reasonable time frame for initial phases of construction.

What about the degradation of College Brook on UNH and Plaza property, the erosion of the natural vegetative buffer around the neighborhood and potential for flooding from further development? What is being planned for the future?

Current regulations are very different from when the Plaza was first built in the 1960's. For one thing you must deal with runoff water on your own property now, and there are regulations about setbacks and development in the flood plain. The brook is our prime natural feature of the site and preserving natural quality of brook as much as possible and adding green space would be a high priority.

Concluding Remarks:

Dave Howland thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged continued interest and involvement.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

**Mill plaza study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, August 1, 2007
Durham Town hall – Council Chambers
4:30PM**

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Ed Valena, Warren Daniel, Thomas Newkirk, Perry Bryant, Lorne Parnell, Deborah Hirsh Mayer (arrived at 4:46pm)

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Mark Henderson

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative) at table, Members of the Public: John Merkle, Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Leslie Schwartz, Amy Mower, Ellen Dudley, Ed Garcia, Nat Balch, Maura Adams, and Representatives of the Three Design Teams: Chris Drobat, Kevin Burke and Chris Urner from the Manchester Valley Team, Bruce Dicker, Rob Westhelle, and Fabiana Orlando from JSA Portsmouth, and Robbi Woodburn, and Bill Schoonmaker from the Durham Team.

I. Call to Order

Dave Howland called the meeting to order at 4:35pm, welcoming all those present, and mentioning that Patrick Field of CBI would not be present tonight but will be present at the next regular Mill Plaza Committee meeting on August 22nd. Representatives from the three design teams were welcomed, and the primary goal of the meeting was laid out; to provide the teams with a first draft of design parameters to begin their work, as described by the materials provided.

Julian Smith requested that the design team representatives introduce themselves at the podium and they did so.

II. Approval of Agenda

Ed Valena moved to accept the meeting Agenda, Julian Smith seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

III. Approval of Minutes from July 11th Meeting

A vote on accepting the minutes from the July 11th, 2007 meeting was delayed till the next regular meeting.

IV. Public Comment

Robin Mower reiterated a suggestion made by someone else that a kiosk be placed at the Plaza to update the public on progress of the redevelopment plan, and also when redevelopment is completed to be an information center, would be a good idea. She also emphasized that specific information for the public about when Mill Plaza business will be aired on DCAT would be useful.

Another point made was to emphasize the need for a maintenance plan for the Mill Plaza when it is redeveloped, paying attention to the history of this issue at the site, and that more attention could be paid to the current landscaping as there are many dead or dying trees currently.

Henry Smith, referring to the list of “Ideas, Issues and Concerns” that grew out of the stakeholder interviews and public forum, shared concerns about mixed residential that included student housing, reiterating that his preference was to not have student housing but rather elderly or work force housing, or the like.

V. Debrief as needed on July 18th Workshop

There was brief discussion on this topic, which involved thanking folks for their hard work and general comments that the workshop seemed to have been positively received overall.

VI. Walkthrough, Discussion and Approval of design team parameter materials

Dave Howland suggested that the Committee focus on the table of contents for this meeting, and that Patricia Sherman could speak to some specifics, along with anyone else who could add anything. And, in-depth editing, if necessary, could be done by fewer people outside of the Committee meeting.

Patricia Sherman read through the “Table of Contents” reading the headings and briefly described what information each section will encompass. [After](#) going through the “Table of Contents” Dave Howland said he hoped [before the Aug. 22 meeting to have a PDF copy](#) of all this material online for public access and for design team access, have a hard copy at Town Hall for the public, and provide a copy for each design team. He emphasized it was important to have the same baseline materials for all the design teams, and for the public to see, so everyone could be comparing the same information.

At this point general discussion on this Agenda item was opened.

[It was noted that the report was incomplete and that committee members had not had time to review the document in advance. After some discussion, it was agreed that the committee would focus its discussion on the report’s table of contents and introduction and could agree to forward this, and the materials listed in the table of contents, to design teams to begin their work, understanding that the entire report](#)

had yet to be reviewed and approved by the committee – a potential agenda item for the next meeting on Aug 22..

There was also briefly discussed if there was a need for securing clerical help in organizing all the information being collected INTO A COMPLETE REPORT.

Ed Valena raised three issues that he thought the Committee should provide specific input on for the design teams: the issue of Chesley Drive, issues relating to College Brook, and the issue of a parking garage on the site.

Lorne Parnell wanted to know how the project cost projections would be arrived at, which Patricia Sherman related would be done by looking at a variety of hard and soft costs.

Warren Daniel, referring to the Table of Contents, noted that there was no mention of a UNH partnership, which has not been ruled out. He also mentioned he would like to see more specifics about tax relief for business owners, not just for the Town, and he would suggest softening language around what specific buildings and structures should be included as information that could change things may still be forthcoming.

Chuck Cressy mentioned a customer source survey will be carried out by his cashiers, and Patricia Sherman commented she would like to see what info this can bring out, which could then help develop a general survey for Mill Plaza.

Doug Bencks suggested that a copy of the DVD of the July 18th Public Workshop might be useful for the design teams.

Following was a more general discussion where Committee members shared their points of view about what are the most significant issues for the development, including mixed housing, the carbon foot print of the project, and the issue of access points to the site.

On the issue of access, neighborhood representatives Newkirk, Hirsch Mayer and Howland reminded the committee about the long history of defeated proposals to access the plaza via Chesley Drive and the continued sensitivity and protectiveness of the neighborhood of this pedestrian corridor and green buffer that protects the neighborhood from the downtown core. Valena, Newkirk and Howland cautioned that reopening this issue – settled in the town's master plan after much debate – would invite needless negative attention and could jeopardize the plaza project. Rather than completely striking vehicular access via Chesley Drive as an option, Patricia Sherman proposed that it be "out of the pot" for now and revisited later only if it could be demonstrated that no other options worked.

There was also brief discussion concerning the developments impact on historical buildings, about which there was general agreement that the Historic District

Commission will have some input for the designs that come back, but is not going to be obstructionist.

It also came out that the project will necessarily be phased given the nature of the current site and the need to accommodate existing businesses, and that the major businesses there will need to be asked for their input about what square footage they envision they will want.

In wrapping up this discussion Dave Howland proposed that for August 22nd meeting copies of all the materials should be provided, and until the informed input of the Committee is received these materials will be considered in draft form, but that the process should continue forward.

Perry Bryant made a motion to approve this course of action, Crawford Mills seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

VII. Check in on Work Plan schedule meeting dates and goals

Dave Howland noted that the next regular meeting of the Mill Plaza Study Committee is scheduled for August 22nd, 4:30pm to 6:30pm.

Dave sought approval that the September 8th meeting be planned for 3pm.

Perry Bryant made a motion to set the September 8th meeting at 3pm, Ed Valena seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

IX. Public Comment

Robin Mower asked if a hard copy of the July 18th Public Workshop materials could be made available at library. Patricia Sherman answered that this could be done. It was further suggested that the issue of Chesley Drive should be approached from a larger prospective, including encompassing the history of traffic flow in the area. A final comment was that in looking over the Compilation from the stakeholder interviews and the Public Workshop it appeared that the abutters on Faculty Road and beyond did not receive sufficient mention, including on the issue of the Mill Plaza being a buffer zone, which was in doubt as stories were mentioned that conversations from the Mill Plaza could be heard by abutters. [Mower asked that trees in the Plaza parking area be better maintained and dead trees removed.](#)

X. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Perry Bryant, seconded by Tom Newkirk, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:18pm.

Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, August 22, 2007

D-R-A-F-T
Mill Plaza Study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, August 22, 2007
Durham Town Hall—Council Chambers
4:30 PM

Members Present: David Howland (chair) Julian Smith (vice chair), Doug Bencks (arrived 5:06), Tom Newkirk, Perry Bryant, Deborah Hirsch Mayer (arrived 4:43), Crawford Mills, Chuck Cressy, Mark Henderson.

Members Absent: Lorne Parnell, Warren Daniel, Edgar Ramos

Also Present: At Table: Patricia Sherman (AIA); Patrick Field, Facilitator; Robin Mower, Wes Tator (Grubb-Ellis/ Coldstream RE) Mike Castagna [AIA}, Ina Castagna (Plan New Hampshire member), Greg Grigsby (AIA 150 task force), Jeff Donohue (Donohue Associates) , Carolyn Isaac (AIA task force), Nick Isaac (AIA) , Elaine Fink, Chris Uner (Manchester Valley Team) , Bruce Dicker (JSA Portsmouth), Robbi Woodburn (Durham design team) , and Henry Smith (Town Council).

I. Call to Order.

David Howland called the meeting to order at 4:39.

II. Welcome and Overview.

David Howland introduced Mark Henderson who replaces Mike Davis on the committee as the DLA representative. He noted that representatives from the three design teams will attend future meetings. He noted that the committee can discuss what more can go into the “Criteria and Parameters” document, acknowledging that it was not complete and a “work in progress.”

III. Approval of Agenda

Julian Smith moved that the approval of minutes be placed between items 8 and 9 of the agenda. Perry Bryant seconded. Passed.

IV. Public Comment

All present at the meeting introduced themselves. Robin Mower noted that trash clean-up in the southern edge of the plaza seems to have lapsed. She also expressed concern about

the perception abutters had a minimal stake in the redevelopment of the Plaza. There was no other comment.

V. Discussion with Design Teams/ Approval of Report: “Criteria for Design Teams of the Durham/AIA 150 Community Partnership

Patricia Sherman stressed the teams were learning what’s feasible and that on September 8 each team—without discussing their proposals with other teams—will present “very, very, conceptual ideas.” There will, however, be consistencies (on matters of the scale of drawings) among the teams. They want to present images and ideas that have the common support of the owner/town/and citizens.

She also mentioned that a new economics team is being formed to explore such issues as the necessary density to make any proposal feasible.

Each design team will make a 20 minute presentation on the September 8, and each will then set up a table where those attending can provide feedback and comment.

The committee then heard comment from a member of each design team. Bruce Dicker stressed the importance of managing expectations. The process will be iterative—there is no need to “pick a scheme right away—the teams can react to ideas and comments. Chris Urner said he viewed the September 8 meeting as a chance to “get the ball rolling”—to generate ideas and get feedback. Robbi Woodburn said that her team generally had what it needed. She mentioned that there will be some question about limits; i.e. can the plans extend beyond the strict Mill Plaza site?

Chuck Cressy raised the question about the size of the various stores in the plaza, noting Rite Aid has a long-term lease. Do they want to be part of a large building, a free-standing building? How large?

Patricia Sherman asked if John Pinto or Edgar Ramos had been in touch with leaseholders.

Chuck Cressy stressed that every existing business should give an estimate of what space they want. Patricia Sherman said that planners were factoring in an increase of 8% for each business. Robbi Woodburn responded that at this very conceptual stage they could go with what information they have and modify it later.

Patrick Field noted that the outreach efforts did not include tenants. Chuck Cressy said o that could be done through Edgar Ramos. Bruce Dicker said that in a “perfect world” planners would know this information ahead of time, but they could react and adjust their plans. Patrick Field said that we may need to have a meeting with tenants after the September 8 meeting. Perry Bryant stressed that leaseholders were big stakeholders, and that breaking leases was very expensive.

David Howland said we have to agree how to communicate with tenants, and Patricia Sherman noted that John Pinto would like to control information to tenants. David Howland agreed saying, we need to respect Pinto's view on this. He noted also that tenants who want to inform themselves about the committee's work are free – as is any member of the public – to attend committee meetings and view related documents on the committee's website. Bruce Dicker suggested that we show the schemes to tenants earlier but no decision was made on this suggestion.

Patricia Sherman mentioned that the economic team will meet and issues of size and density will be discussed.

Next Jeff Donohue, a member of the newly-formed economics team, introduced himself and compared the Mill Plaza project to the shopping mall in Peterborough that the town is trying to redevelop. He stressed that the key is the financial return to the owner, and that the present situation may be very profitable to the owner. He then made some estimates of the density needed to make the project attractive—and a much higher density will necessitate structured parking that may cost \$20,000/space. Doug Bencks asked him what he thought the life expectancy was for strip mall buildings like this. Jeff Donohue said he didn't know but they are often given new fronts and upgrades.

Patricia Sherman said that much of this is true, but perhaps unlike Peterborough there is a consensus between community and owner to make a more valuable site. Perry Bryant stressed that John Pinto really isn't "at the table." Patrick Field noted that they need to merge design and economics, something Patricia Sherman added was "what we do every day."

The conversation returned to structured parking, which Donohue claimed was the "key" to the project. Julian Smith noted that the town has a need for additional parking that a parking garage might solve. David Howland reiterated that assessing these economic issues is part of the development process, and that the economic team will be an important "reality check." Patrick Field asked Jeff Donohue if he would be doing a market analysis to determine the market for housing and office space. Patricia Sherman said she would be spending time with the economic team to discuss the work they would do.

The conversation shifted to the role of John Pinto. Mark Henderson, referring to Patricia Sherman's overlapping drawing of major stakeholders, argued that the "biggest circle was the owner." Chuck Cressy said that John Pinto wants to invest in Durham, and that if the best plan doesn't work –we can modify it. Patrick Field noted that it is not necessarily in John Pinto's interest to be at the table now, and that at this stage it makes sense for him to watch the process and engage further as it evolves. Patricia Sherman concurred, that there is just not enough information yet for him to be directly involved. David Howland also concurred, saying that John Pinto recognizes the need for the somewhat unwieldy creative process underway with the community. Mike Castagna echoed a point made earlier by Patricia Sherman, that we are engaging in a process that goes on all the time in the development of a complex project. David Howland argued that

it is best to allow for creativity and brainstorming early in the process, and then explore the economics of the designs.

Chris Urner again made the point that it was important not to oversell the designs that would be presented.

The discussion shifted to the criteria document that has been provided to the design teams. David Howland said that he would work with Patrick Field to post these criteria on the Mill Plaza website. Patrick Field acknowledged that they knew what was missing in the document. Perry Bryant said there were a lot of blank pages and missing information in the criteria document. He asked if the design teams were comfortable with what they have. Patricia Sherman answered that at this stage, the teams had enough to go forward.

6. Discussion with Design Teams about Emerging Concepts

There was no discussion on this topic.

7. Discuss Upcoming Meeting on September 8

David Howland informed the committee that the September 8 meeting will take place at 3:00 in the Multi-purpose Room of the high school. Design teams will meet earlier with John Pinto. Perry Bryant asked if committee members could be there. ;k cautioned that if a quorum of the full committee met, it would have to be an open meeting, which is not what had been planned—but maybe a few members could be there. Perry Bryant asked if there would be any benefit in having a meeting with the designers, John Pinto, and the committee. Patricia Sherman responded that there is a benefit to having this information come out at one public meeting so everyone gets it at once. Both Perry Bryant and Chuck Cressy indicated that they would like to attend the meeting with John Pinto.

Chuck Cressy asked how information on the public meeting would get out. It was decided that David Howland would create fliers similar to those announcing the first public meeting. Elaine Fink made the point that it will be important that these designs not be perceived as finished products.

The discussion shifted to what meetings will follow the September 8 meeting. It was decided that that the committee will meet on September 19th at 4:30 to discuss revisions in the initial plans from the design teams. There will be a public meeting on October 14 at 1:00 in the high school, at which revised drawings will be presented.

8. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July 11 minutes was moved by Tom Newkirk and seconded by Chuck Cressy; the motion passes unanimously. David Howland, Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Robin Mower, and Tom Newkirk suggested changes to the August 1 minutes. Julian Smith

moved to approve the minutes as amended. Crawford Mills seconded. The committee approved the minutes, as amended, which will be posted on the website.

David Howland announced that Ed Valena had resigned from the library board of trustees and thus would no longer be on the Mill Plaza Study Committee. He thanked Valena, on behalf of the committee, for his hard work. The trustees will appoint a replacement.

9. Public Comment

Robin Mower made several points. She suggested that DVDs of the committee be provided to the design teams. She expressed concern that we don't underestimate John Pinto's interest in the project. She stressed that Durham can come together to handle difficult tasks — just as the town organized against Aristotle Onassis' plan to put the largest oil refinery near Durham, Durham can also organize to support a thoughtful downtown redevelopment. And she asked that in the criteria document, there be a sentence added that mentions the visibility of the Mill Plaza from Faculty Road.

David Howland responded that the DVDs of meetings could be available to design teams if they wish to consult them.

10. Adjournment

At 6:25 Julian Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Tom Newkirk seconded, and the motion passes unanimously.

Public Meeting Notes

Re-Envisioning the Mill Plaza Workshop of the Durham / AIA 150 Community Partnership

September 8, 2007 3:00pm – 6:00pm, Oyster River High School

Members of the MPSC and AIA 150 Present: Dave Howland, Julian Smith, Doug Bencks, Mike Castanga, Debora Hirsch-Mayer, Ed Valencia, Crawford Mills Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, Carolyn Isaak, Michelle White, Walt Staples.

3:06 Welcome, Introductions, and layout the Agenda
-Patrick Field

3:09 Process Reminder: where we have been, where we are today, where we are heading
-Dave Howland, MPSC Chair

3:18 JSA, Inc., Portsmouth, NH, 20 minute presentation by the design team, followed by five minutes of questions and comments from the public
Design team members present: Tom Ingebritson, Fabiannna Orlando, Elizabeth Dudley, and additional members not here today: Rob Westhelle, Bruce Dicker

Tom Ingebritson presenting

[A few details trying to capture some of the significant aspects of the scheme]

Scheme One – Main Street Extension –Addressing main concern of connecting Main Street with the mill plaza,

- Parking structures above the grocery and drug store
- City Hall and Library on the Mill Plaza site
- Same access to the site but changing the course of the drive
- Outdoor gathering center
- Multi story retail and residential
- Tower points trying to draw pedestrians into the complex
- River walk connecting to residential areas
- Retention pond
- Pedestrian access thru where the Grange used to be
- Overall numbers: Retail, 50,000 sq/ft, Civic 30,000, office 30,000 sq/ft, grocery 40,000, residential, 60,000, parking 300+ spaces

Scheme 2 – Urban Plaza –

- Mill Road side of the site is underdeveloped,
 - would like to capture university students as much as possible by adding more retail spaces along Mill Rd.,
- Town hall and library on site
- Centralized design approach, with a plaza in front of the Town Hall
- A central boulevard
- Housing above retail units, possibly work force housing, could be developed singly at a time
- Underground parking structures for residential

Comments and Questions: (The comments and questions from the public are in italics, and the responses from the design teams and AIA 150 team are in normal text)

What are the numbers on the second scheme?

-Retail 35,000 sq/ft, Civic 32,000, Office 60,000, grocery store 30,000, drug store 9,000, residential 85,000, parking 300+ spaces

For the units facing the green area, where are the entries into the units?

-[Access points pointed out on the display]

How do the numbers for retail and parking of the Schemes compare to what is there now?

-There is increased parking to account for new square footage.

What is the square footage today?

-Approximately 55,000 sq/ft. The new development schemes would almost or more than double retail space.

With regard to Scheme one, how far below grade are the parking structures?

-About 20 ft below Main Street grade

Have the designers or the MPSC considered the high cost of parking structures underground, as well as above ground, as this would seem to be a serious issue?

-The majority of economic analyses have not been done yet, and these concerns have not been factored into the designs. This round of design is meant to explore ideas and concepts.

Is there a plaza in both schemes?

-Yes there is a plaza in both schemes [pointed out on the displays]

Describe the view from Main Street? Would you see rooftops or what?

-As one walks down Main Street one would see building fronts and entryways, probably not roof tops of the Mill Plaza site buildings.

In Scheme one where is the drug store?

-Pointed out and confirmed presence

What is the access to the brook in Scheme Two? How much of a public space next to the brook is there?

-Access to the brook is open, and there is a public space along the brook.

Views of the brook may be more cut off due to buildings, which is a concern of building near or along the brook.

3:46 Schoonmaker and Team, Durham, NH, 20 minute presentation by the design team, followed by five minutes of questions and comments from the public

Team composed of Bill Schoonmaker, Robbi Woodburn, Walter Rous, Nick Isaak

Bill Schoonmaker Presenting

[A few details trying to capture some of the significant aspects of the scheme]

This design was presented in one scheme, shown in layers by elevation, and emphasizing the flow of the site.

Base Level 38 – From the point of view of standing looking at The Bagelry, for example. A new street from the Red Tower corner that follows the brook is imagined, with on street parking, and retail along this road. A 2nd main street of sorts.

-Parking structure, on street parking, and smaller parking areas

-Buffer around the brook

-Durham Market Place moved

-Retail masking the parking structure

-Town offices and library on site

-Outdoor cafe spaces

Level 48 – plaza opposite memorial park, town offices have forecourt

-Pedestrian connection to garage and to various levels

-Residential on second floor

Level 58 -

-Connections to plaza, space for retail

-Second story of residential

-Commercial on top of the grocery store

Level 68, 78 – residential and appropriate mix of commercial and retail.

Numbers: Retail/Commercial 230,000 sq./ft including the market and drug store, 700 parking spaces, 94 student units, 48 non-student housing units, roughly 1,000 sq./ft per unit...142,000 sq./ft residential.

Comments and Questions: (The comments and questions from the public are in italics, and the responses from the design teams and AIA 150 team are in normal text)

On 38 level – the most important criteria is what will the experience be for a pedestrian walking through the development, and some of this stuff doesn't work so well. Parking lots are dead spaces, and ways should be sought to break things up.

Parking on street in urban setting must be parallel or slanted. Here it is perpendicular, which means a parking lot...a no-no.

It is good what you have done in alternating with setbacks for the plaza and along the street, giving a sense of undulation. Some of the design seems hyperactive with niches and nooks. Simplifying frontages would be desirable.

Lines in urban settings should be straight with out curves, using angled sections, making 5 different straight sections, which leads the eye along.

Curves on this scale may work here though.

How much density is useful needs to be considered carefully in conjunction with who the project is catering to. Drivers are the main clientele, so this much density makes it harder for people driving in.

Diversity in residential units is desirable, and preferably work force housing and age restricted without students?

-Housing is definitely appropriate there, but what kind is an important question.

-Discussions ran the full gambit of mixes of housing, from all student housing, to no student housing and everything in between. This is something that will need further discussion.

I liked that the parking was tucked behind buildings, and that odd spaces and angles make things interesting and exciting. Density should be encouraged, as dead spaces are often the most interesting, allowing people to gather and mill around.

What I like most about the scheme is the feeling of a town center with access to pockets of green. The design is good except for the parking.

4:17 Break

4:32 Lavalle Brensinger, Manchester, NH 20 minute presentation by the design team, followed by five minutes of questions and comments from the public

Design team composed of Chris Drobat and Chris Urner
Both Presenting

[A few details trying to capture some of the significant aspects of the scheme]

The design emphasized a few key concepts and ideas, including a College Brook buffer, site access, views and connections to Main Street, and phased construction.

-50 to 100ft buffer with brook

-Housing removed from highest density of retail and commercial, next to existing residential, with 2-3 story units, mixed use, town house style architecture

-Town civic center envisioned including a town hall, library, and public spaces

-Flexibility of stacking residential and commercial in various combinations

-Two access points – one through red tower corner, and then the original entry way as well

-3 story parking structure of different sizes on levels

-Shops where folks can mill around, places to sit and meet people, performances...

-Grange – renovated for public use

-Numbers: civic 48,000 sq./ft, housing 90,000 or 70 to 80 units, retail 55,000, office 32,000, parking 450-500, 260,000 total minus the garage

Comments and Questions: (The comments and questions from the public are in italics, and the responses from the design teams and AIA 150 team are in normal text)

In the town house style residential where is the parking?

-In garage units under the units

Could you clarify about the structure of the parking garage?

-It is ground level to 3 stories, and the topmost story is landscaped with large planters.

Do the Main Street level buildings tie into the plaza?

-There is interesting space between the Plaza buildings and the Main Street buildings that could be put to use and could tie in Main Street very well.

5:00 Panel of Designers and Q&A

Considering the cost of the parking garage is there a conceivable alternative use if it doesn't financially pan out as a garage? This would restrict the use of space for the garage.

-Possibly yes there are alternative uses, but it would need forethought before the structure is built.

-If the levels of the garage are coincident with Main Street there could be more uses.

-There is also the possibility of a phased approach to building the garage in modular format, so to avoid building more than is needed or than can be afforded.

Has there been any thought about the cost of parking in the garage? This has to do with concerns about recouping the cost of the project.

-This is not the designers concern right now.

-The economics down the road have not been taken into consideration, but before the project begins planners should look 10, 20, 30 years down the road.

Parking for Main Street is very important. Is the garage intended for the plaza or the town?

-It is indeed important to serve town parking needs as well.

-We also do not want to jeopardize what is already there as well.

Given the potential cost of a parking structure there are potential issues down the road with building the structure. Is the project viable without a parking structure?

-Yes. The designs could be altered to reduce the number of parking spaces needed, including not putting in the Town hall, reducing the #s of residential units etc.

-Parking needs depend on the scale of density desired.

-The parking depends on the scale of the project and the economics behind things.

An issue that will need to be considered is the lost tax revenue if a parking structure is built.

What is Mr. Pinto's interest in the project?

It would have made sense to start with market analyses, as the concern with the cost of the project and its overall feasibility given certain larger town scale logistics, is of great importance.

What is the structural soundness of the Grange?

-The Town says it is not structurally sound currently.

Have the teams looked at a broader area than the immediate plaza boundaries as of today, considering issues such as the one-way traffic pattern downtown?

-JSA looked at just the current site, while Lavalley expanded a little bit more, and Bill Schoonmaker's team took an approach of looking at using more land.

-None of the teams looked at changing the bigger picture of downtown yet in terms of traffic patterns and such.

The traffic pattern downtown may be major issue in revitalizing downtown along with the plaza re-development.

-Traffic patterns are not part of this stage of design and are largely beyond the expertise of design teams right now.

If this redevelopment goes thru it would be a great time to correct the traffic pattern downtown.

-In this public design process we are encouraging folks to think about what they want downtown to look like.

Do not use the old plan for traffic in downtown Durham; there is too much traffic already for two-way traffic

It would be useful to hear what each of the design teams thinks about the other designs. Could we have each team tell us what they like best about the other team's plans?

The parking in the middle of the site is great, as it filters people into the parking area. Also, screening the parking structure with other buildings is great idea. The way the JSA team addressed Mill Street is also a good idea.

-The Lavalley Scheme's idea to create an artificial ground plan level with Main Street is interesting, and the way they differentiate the denser urban side and fade towards residential near the brook is interesting as well.

-It is very interesting that all three teams felt that Town Hall and the library was best sited on the plaza and combined into one structure.

-The concept of a village street parallel to Main Street is interesting.

-The Durham team Scheme also creates some beautiful spaces.

-In the Lavalley Scheme the edge of the plaza is well designed

-In the JSA #1 Scheme the change in paving patterns creates space for different things to occur, which is an exciting detail.

-In the JSA #2 Scheme the set up of the library is great; the placement is nice.

-The Lavalley Scheme's access route into middle of the plaza is a nice element.

Two plans put the grocery store far away from campus, which could put additional pressure on Chesley Drive.

-This was done to get folks to walk by other retail shops, with the idea that it is a central draw.

-Chuck Cressy thinks this location is a good idea, and its location makes it a destination.

-It can also be seen as creating a plug for Chesley Drive as well, blocking any potential access for traffic.

In the Lavalle plan they placed housing near [Chesley Drive](#), and new units are added it would put pressure on the residents there.

The presence of student housing south of Main Street is of concern, and mixed housing without students, or far fewer students, should be considered in this area.

Mixed-use housing creates activity and vitality, and thumbs up to not separating out housing from everything else.

Locating the Town Hall and library on the Plaza and in the same structure is a good idea.

The library and Town Hall locations in all the plans are great.

As much green space as possible, and places to gather, should be encouraged. As much as was shown in the design or even more.

There may be issues in establishing how much square footage the library may need or should get.

The noise from service vehicles is of concern, and it is important to make sure that the services access is on the north side of the plaza and that sound buffering is included.

5:30 Share Next Steps, Break and Talk to Design Teams one-on-one
MPSC meeting September 19th

6:00 Meeting was adjourned.

D-R-A-F-T
Mill plaza study Committee Minutes
Wednesday, September 19, 2007
Durham Town hall – Council Chambers
4:30PM

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Thomas Newkirk, Perry Bryant, Lorne Parnell, Deborah Hirsch Mayer

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Mark Henderson, Warren Daniel

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative) and Patrick Field at table, Members of the Public: Robin Mower, Ed Garcia, and Representatives of the Three Design Teams: from LaValle Brensinger Chris Urner, from JSA Tom Ingebritson and Fabiana Orlando, and from Team Durham/Midnight Oil Bill Schoonmaker was present from approximately 4:30 to 5:30pm.

1. Call to order by Dave Howland at 4:33pm.
2. Welcome and overview of Agenda by Dave Howland.
3. Approval of the Agenda
Julian Smith moved to approve the Agenda and the motion was seconded by Crawford Mills. The motion was unanimously approved by the Committee.
4. Approval of the Minutes from August 22nd.
Julian Smith made a motion to accept the Minutes with the following changes:
In the list of those present for the meeting every one after Patrick Field and Patricia Sherman were in the audience.
Under item 7 – “Dave Howland” should be inserted rather than the typo “;k”
Under item 9 –Substitute “on Durham Point” for “near Durham Point”.
This motion to accept the Minutes so amended was second by Crawford Mills and unanimously approved.
5. Public Comment
Robin Mower thanked the Mill Plaza management for having some dead trees and dead limbs at the Mill Plaza cleaned up. She also wanted to raise the issue of safety in any proposed parking structure, both in terms of it inviting graffiti and vandalism, as well as concerns of assault particularly for young women at night.
6. Update on Latest Developments
Patricia Sherman spoke about the interest of RKG Associates (Richard K. Gsottschneider) in doing economic studies of the Plaza redevelopment site. The study

would focus on looking at a balance between scale and value, whether this site warrants higher value and possibly lower density or highest density but lower value. The contract being proposed would involve putting together a matrix looking at square footage versus different kind of uses and looking at what might produce the highest value. Dave Howland noted that the ranges of square footages were taken from the three designs. Chuck Cressy wanted to clarify that these numbers do not include the parking garage, and Patricia Sherman clarified that they do not. Patricia continued that the highest value building would actually be a hotel, as it has a relatively small footprint and the same value per sq. foot for each floor, unlike other combinations of retail, commercial and residential. This kind of information from RKG would lend itself to providing more specific guidelines for the design teams.

Crawford Mills inquired if the matrix would include public buildings, and Patricia Sherman responded that it would.

Patricia Sherman - The second part of the contract with RKG would look at financing options, including TIF.

There followed discussion about TIFs and other possible financing structures.

Patricia Sherman – The information from this analysis by RKG would provide concrete information to keep the process moving forward for the design teams and the Town. RKG is also open to changing the contract if needed.

Patrick Field – This economic study is good value for the cost, and as a local resident RKG has an incentive to do this project. The cost would also be split three ways.

Julian Smith – Clarified that RKG stands for Richard K. Gsottschneider, and he is a local resident.

Dave Howland – The contract with RKG would cost \$15,000, and be split three ways by AIA, Mr. Pinto, and the town of Durham, with the Durham money to come from the UDEG grant.

Chuck Cressy – Raised an issue of competition between retail zones in the Town, and wondered if RKG will take that into consideration, specifically if the town hall is relocated to the Plaza, and the current town hall site is turned into retail.

As this line of discussion was related to the next topic discussion moved onto item 7.

7. Discussion and Endorsement of Proposed Agreement with RKG for Preliminary Economic Analysis

Following was an in-depth discussion about the proposed agreement with RKG. Concerns about the scope of the analysis were raised, and questions about the flexibility

of what can be included in the contract with RKG. It was discussed that there was some flexibility but that any changes would need to be run by RKG. The issue of timing was also raised, wondering if it would make sense to do other studies prior to this analysis.

Further discussion centered on the idea that the RKG analysis would be a way to get things moving and fits well with the design team schedule established so far. Concerns about Mr. Pinto's willingness to help pay for this and other studies down the road were raised. It was noted that Mr. Pinto would definitely need to be consulted about this proposal.

There was also discussion about possible funding for conservation efforts for College Brook through the Conservation Committee, as it was thought they might have access to monies that might be used for these kinds of purposes.

Crawford Mills suggested getting RKG's resume or CV up on the website to let folks know who he is. There was general assent to this suggestion.

Patricia Sherman asserted that the planning needed to shoot high and that the RKG analysis would be a good choice to do this and the information from this analysis would keep the design process moving along.

Patrick Field observed that instincts are conservative in looking for economic reality and that there is risk associated with this step and the process. He also recognized that there is a desire to aim high in developing this project.

Dave Howland iterated that the Committee's endorsement of this proposal would be a signal to the town manager and Mr. Pinto that the proposal is ready to go forward.

Julian Smith and Patrick Field clarified that if the Committee endorsed the proposal with RKG that Todd Selig would be able to allocate the Town's proposed share of the contract costs without going to the Town Council.

Tom Newkirk moved to approve the proposed agreement with RKG. Crawford Mills seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

8. Discuss and Provide Feedback to Design Teams

Patrick Field - Introduced the Agenda item, letting everyone know that the design teams were donating more time, and that generic, broader advice would be useful to move things forward, and that the design teams would also be able to ask some questions. Patrick Field also made note on a flipchart of many of the following comments. A summary of the notes will follow at the end of this Agenda item.

Hard copies of the design schemes presented at the public workshop on Saturday, September 7th at the Oyster river High School, were distributed to the Committee members and audience.

Patricia Sherman suggested going straight to questions if everyone had seen these before.

Patrick Field asked that the design teams' members present reintroduce themselves. The design team members present presented themselves.

Dave Howland and Patricia Sherman briefly recapped the major similarities and differences of the schemes. Following was a discussion in which questions about the overall density of the designs were raised, with some people appreciating the level density shown and others being a little taken aback by the proposed density. Particularly the density of housing was of concern, as in some of the designs the maximum number of housing units could double the Faculty Rd. population. It was noted that this would also provide vibrancy and life to the downtown area.

Concerns about parking and traffic given the proposed increase in density were also raised and explored, both in terms of the available storefront level parking spaces, as well as the overall flow of traffic through the development and downtown area and how this would impact consumer patterns. There were concerns that proposed changes would not fit current business practices. There was also discussion about how proposed changes could advantageously change how business is done rather than be a detriment, including pedestrian access and shopping, and making the stores and the Plaza itself a destination.

Perry Bryant suggested that a design based on everything, retail, commercial, residential, etc., being included in one large structure would save on the amount of space needed. An associated parking structure would provide access to each level of the building, there would be more open space and plenty of room for a large buffer zone around College Brook. This design would also simplify traffic patterns. A green space could even be created on top of the structure.

Patrick Sherman asked the design teams to explain why they took the approach that they did. Comments from the design team members suggested that their designs sought to reduce the perceived scale of the project and to promote a more neighborhood kind of feeling.

Crawford Mills offered comments to the teams and left the meeting at 6:12 pm.

Doug Bencks offered that the Library does not need one of the specific locations given in the designs but wanted a place of prominence as a key part of the Plaza. It was clarified that the Library does not necessarily need to be surrounded by green space, but needs easy access to it.

Dave Howland thanked the design teams for their hard work, summed up many of the comments made and urged Committee members to send feedback and thoughts via e-mail if there was not time tonight.

Summary of points written on the flip board:

1. concern about density and resulting traffic
2. concern about total of housing units and impact on area
3. concern about parking for the grocery store, specifically parking at the store level, would like 90 dedicated spaces
4. concern that parking control would be an issue if parking was more limited
5. suggestion to increase pedestrian traffic to offset the above concerns
6. suggestion to have a pick up place for groceries in front of store, so people could park farther away
7. suggested creating a gathering space for winter months
8. question if grocery delivery was possible, as a suggestion to alleviate parking needs
9. suggestion to have one big building with everything inside with green roof
10. suggestion to have residential units face the brook, retail face inward to ease view concerns from Mill Pond Rd. and to maximize the quality of housing there
11. concern about student housing, does not like the idea, suggest family housing
12. likes how the designs pull Main St. down, integrating them is good
13. library should have prominent place if not on the most valuable corner
14. traffic flow is important
15. need to balance carefully the mass, density, scale and value
16. concern about housing by Chesley Drive corner, especially if student housing
17. concern that the proposed housing units would double the houses in the area from Main St. to Mill Pond, Oyster River

9. Dates – Setting Calendar

Dave Howland - The next regular meeting is Oct 17th, and RKG hopes to have their final report done by the first full week in Oct. It should be possible to discuss the report at the next meeting.

The next Public Workshop was moved from Oct. 29th to November 4th in order to accommodate design team and Committee schedules.

10. Other Business

No other business.

11. Public Comment

Ed Garcia suggested that it may make sense to provide access for fire trucks and other safety vehicles through Chesley Drive, possibly having a locked gate with keys for safety personnel.

Robin Mower –Liked Perry Bryant’s idea about green rooftops no matter the size of the garage or building. Cautioned about the scale of density, noted that something on the scale of Holloway Commons would be too large, and would change the nature of the site drastically. Voiced general concern about having housing units by Chesley Drive, noted that it was not popular especially if it was to be student housing. There was a general concern about student housing in general.

120 to 130 houses between Main Street and Mill Pond and Oyster River Road would be doubling those in the area.

Would the Committee like to ask Town Council or the Economic Committee to attend the presentation of the report from RKG.

Speaking to the philosophy of “build it and they will come” – Kaleidoscoop is an example of where this worked. There was a general concern about compromising vibrancy by having too much density.

12. Adjournment

Julian Smith moved to adjourn, Deborah Hirsch Mayer seconded the motion, and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:37.

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Town of Durham
MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE
Town Council Chambers, October 17, 2007
4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Mark Henderson, Thomas Newkirk, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch Mayer (came in at 4:53pm)

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Lorne Parnell

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative), Richard K. Gsottschneider (RKG Associates Representative), Members of the Public: Robin Mower, Marty McCammon, Micheal Castagna, Kyle Bruen, Dan Lazasovich, Art Guadano, and Representatives of the Three Design Teams: from LaValle Brensinger Chris Urner, from JSA Tom Ingebritson and RobWesthelle, and from Team Durham/Midnight Oil Bill Schoonmaker and Nick Isaak.

1. Call to order 4:32 by Dave Howland.

2. Welcome and overview of agenda by Dave Howland. He provided an overview of where the Redevelopment project is and highlighted that the next Public Workshop would be on Nov. 4th, 1-4pm at the Oyster River High School.

3. Approval of agenda
Julian Smith motioned to move item 4, Approval of minutes, to later in the meeting, which was seconded by Warren Daniel and unanimously approved.

5. Public comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)
Robin Mower – Faculty Road – Commented that people she had spoken with were annoyed that the Public Workshop of Saturday 9/7/07 was scheduled on the Town wide Yard Sale day, and requested meetings not be scheduled on the Church Bazaar day as well.

Robin mower raised a question regarding the grade of proposed parking lots and Patricia Sherman answered it was too early for specific information, but the grade will be in accordance with best practices when it is done.

6. Report from RKG Associates Inc. on its analysis of the economic potential for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property.

Richard Gsottschneider presented the findings of the report RKG Associates produced, noting that the plan will need to be reevaluated as changes are made to the designs for the Mill Plaza Redevelopment. The report did not include any kind of market study, or a feasibility study from the perspective of the developer. The report did look at the fiscal impact of the three designs and the potential of increased taxes to pay for infrastructure improvements, as well as some cost estimates for those improvements, specifically looking at if the increased taxes from the project could pay for a new town hall and library.

The overall result reached was that the net increase in taxes gained from the three designs as presented was far short of the funds necessary to build a new town hall and library. This was not meant as a negative comment on the quality of the designs but simply reflects the ratio of taxable to non-taxable pieces of the development.

Mark Henderson wanted clarification of what most of the non-taxable property was. Richard Gsottschneider clarified that parking was the largest percentage, including the proposed parking structure.

Warren Daniel asked if the Kyreages property was netted out. Richard Gsottschneider said that this was not done.

Richard Gsottschneider presented suggestions aimed at addressing the imbalance of taxable and non-taxable pieces of the redevelopment details of which can be found in the report. The suggestions included: reducing the overall scale of the

project, the retention and expansion of the existing grocery store/drug store building, the elimination of all onsite housing, adding more office space, adding an on-site hotel, and talking with UNH about possible participation in the project, specifically looking at moving the campus bookstore to the plaza.

Richard Gsottschneider continued that the owner needs to know how to finance each piece of the development and the above suggestions are each doable, while none of this would work if onsite housing were mixed in, especially student housing.

Chuck Cressy commented that there are doctors looking for space in town, that this is a good market, that there are people willing to invest right now knowing that there is a good chance of bigger and better facilities being available in a few years.

Doug Bencks asked about retail on the site and Richard Gsottschneider suggested that he was not optimistic about adding new retail to the plaza, and the above suggestions were a better way to go.

7. Q&A and discussion between RKG, MPSC and design team members about the RKG analysis and its implications for evolving design schemes.

At this point a discussion was begun that questioned how to reconcile the broad project vision statement with the funding gap and suggestions made by the RKG report. It was offered that the original vision may have been overambitious for the size of the site, and that the vision statement was understood by some to be flexible, being based on available information, so that as the information changed so could the vision.

The idea of a hotel raised interest for several Committee members and it was noted by Chuck Cressy that Mr. Pinto the owner of the Plaza was also interested in this idea. There was also further discussion of examples of hotels in the area.

The idea of a UNH bookstore on the plaza also raised interest, as Deborah Hirsch Mayer noted a positive example of this having been done with the Oberlin bookstore in Ohio. As part of thinking about what would invigorate downtown, the idea of adding office space, specifically medical facilities, also raised much interest, as people noted the current positive market in this type of facilities.

Chris Urner from LaValle Brensinger asked what specifically should be done with the town hall for the second draft of the designs. Richard Gsottschneider reiterated that as conceived all the civic buildings cannot be supported and his personal feeling was to keep the library onsite, as it is a great location for it, while the town hall doesn't need to be there. This idea was supported by Crawford Mills later in discussion if a decision had to be made to limit municipal structures on the site.

Patricia Sherman suggested that there are ways to finance structured parking and other municipal improvements. Bringing in a hotel and medical facilities could help fund a parking structure and that ways to get more return for structured parking should be sought out. This rescaled and changed vision would be creating mixed use development, and meeting criteria but in slightly different ways than originally conceived. The market can help determine what should go into spaces, as there would be need to pre-lease 50-75% of office and retail space to pay for things. Phasing and the market will provide time to feel things out.

There was some concern that the report did not analyze the designs from Mr. Pinto's perspective, and it was explained that a market analysis was not within the scope of the report presented today. Dave Howland noted that it is understood that further study would be needed. He noted that Mr. Pinto provided one third of

the funding for the current RKG study, underscoring Mr. Pinto's support for the work underway.

Discussion at this point addressed concerns about the recommendations and implications of the RKG report. There was concern and some distress about the exclusion of housing from the designs, as several of those present voiced concern that this would detrimentally affect the vibrancy of the area, and that housing was an integral part of the mixed use vision. It was also asserted that workforce housing is very much needed and was an essential part of the project. To support the idea that housing on the site would be cost effective it was also suggested that housing downtown could be created without parking, encouraging walking or even renting spaces in a garage.

It was also offered that the report's emphasis on office space may not be the best route, as confidence in office space markets may not be as high as confidence in student housing markets.

Questions were also raised concerning the emphasis on the revenue from increased taxes from the project site paying for municipal infrastructure improvements like the town hall and library. These costs should be borne by the town rather than the project, a case being made that the financial situation that lead to the RKG suggestions may be working on inappropriate assumptions of what the project is supposed to finance.

Patricia Sherman offered that the project was not looking for commercial taxes to subsidize the library, and that the project should start with essential elements for jump starting the downtown, and leave room for other things to come in.

Richard Gsottschneider affirmed that according to the report's economic analysis if no housing was built and the redevelopment included 40,000 sq. ft. of office and retail space, the parking garage could be paid for by the increase in taxes.

And in response to the above comments on housing he assented that the town needs affordable housing, but this is not the location to do it, as the property is too valuable, and that the data he has analyzed supports this assertion, as housing does not create the economic spin off effect that is being looked for. Patricia Sherman offered that in Concord old hotels in prime downtown locations were put into workforce housing and that future redevelopment would there be difficult.

The discussion at this point started to focus on developing concrete guidelines to send the design teams out with to create the second round of designs for the November 4th Public Forum. Through the discussion a general agreement emerged of using maximum constraints for the second round, to contrast with the open idealistic first round, while still leaving creative license with the design teams given some of the restraints discussed. Patricia Sherman suggested that the key was to provide the teams with the new constraints, feedback, etc., and encourage them to work with a minimalist mind set, looking at essentials for stimulating things with a minimum foot print, and emphasizing a phased approach to the development.

Some of the guide lines that emerged from the following discussion included maximum square footages based on the RKG report suggestions, to include only the immediate project property as well as the Grange property and surrounding buildings (limiting the inclusion of properties that may not end up being available for the project), the grocery/drug store will be left where it currently is and expanded to meet new design ideas, rather than being moved. All the feedback, e-mails, and comments from the previous Committee meeting minutes will be brought into consideration. A target office space sq. footage would be around 30,000 sq. ft.

Richard Gsottschneider confirmed that RKG will do another round of economic analysis based on the next round of designs. He also asked if it was possible to

look at zoning for more than 3 floors. Patricia Sherman commented that she thought they had that flexibility.

Julian Smith motioned to send the RKG report to the design teams with recommendations and guidelines from the previous discussion, using the minimum available land, but including the Varsity land for egress and exit. The motion was seconded by Deborah Hirsch Mayer.

Warren Daniel asked the design teams if they would like to add anything before the motion was voted on. Nothing substantive was added by the design teams and the motion was unanimously passed.

At this point lots of audience members and members of the design teams began leaving as the remaining points were largely Committee business.

8. Discussion about next steps, including the Round Two design workshop
The Committee decided to schedule the next regular Committee meetings Wednesday November 7th, and then November 28th, both at 4:30pm at the Town Hall.

The next Public Workshop is scheduled for November 4th, 1pm to 4pm at the Oyster River High School.

9. Other business

There was no other business.

10. Public comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Robin Mower posed a question for Chuck Cressy inquiring if it would be possible to move into secondary location facilities while waiting for a primary location facility to be built? Chuck Cressy answered that he had not considered it but that it would be very unlikely because it would pose an unrealistic logistical and financial burden. Mower continued, reminding those present that a TIF had been

approved for Stone Quarry Drive to include medical facilities, raising the question about what the town will support. She also asked if the town will support that many more hotel rooms. She concluded by reminding the Committee that the walkable community of the Mill Plaza site includes residents of faculty neighborhood and encouraged controlling student housing.

4. Approval of minutes from September 17th

Julian Smith and Deborah Hirsch Mayer both had corrections to be made to the minutes prior to accepting them. These included changing the Members absent, as Ed Valena had resigned already, and the correction of several spelling errors including Deborah Hirsch Mayer's name in two places.

Also Item 3 on public comment, Robin Mower thanked the plaza management and not simply those present at meeting.

11. Adjournment

At 6:44pm Warren Daniel moved to adjourn and Julian Smith seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Town of Durham
MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE
Town Council Chambers
November 7, 2007
4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Lorne Parnell (came in at 4:53pm)

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Mark Henderson

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative), Patrick Field (Facilitator),
Members of the Public: Robin Mower, Ed Garcia, Henry Smith, Roger Hayden, Kate Hartnett, Art Guadano, Annmarie Harris, Phyllis Heilbronner and Bill Schoonmaker.

1. Call to order 4:36 by Dave Howland.
2. Welcome and overview
Dave Howland spoke about the Committee's task to develop with the design teams a hybrid design following the last Public Workshop, and to produce a report for the town council with the Committee's recommendations and explanations by the end of January. He continued about the current meeting and discussed how the hand out "Evaluation Check List" had grown from earlier work and was drafted by himself, Patricia Sherman and Patrick Field following the Sunday, 11/4/07, Workshop.

Dave Howland mentioned that he had received an e-mail from Bruce Dicker of the JSA design team critiquing this guideline approach and arguing for looser guidelines that would not inhibit the flow of the designs as they develop. Dave Howland suggested that the Check List is seeking to be a more qualitative approach to test assumptions and thinking rather than dictate design terms.

Dave Howland emphasized the importance of seeking consensus by the Committee in order to confidently move forward with the report for the Town Council.

The Committee is working on setting dates for John Pinto to look over the designs. Also, the Committee should see a report from various landscape design and environmental folks on the College Brook by the November 28th meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda

Julian Smith moved to amend the Agenda by adding item 3a, Approval of minutes from the 10/17/2007 MPSC meeting. Deborah Hirsch Mayer seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Tom Newkirk moved to accept the Agenda as amended, Warren Daniel seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3a. Approval of minutes from the 10/17/2007 MPSC meeting

Tom Newkirk noted that clarification regarding comments by Dick Gsottschneider related in the minutes was needed. Deborah Hirsch Mayer noted several typos that would need to be addressed as well.

Julian Smith moved to table approval of the 10/17/07minutes to the next meeting. Warren Daniel seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Phyllis Heilbronner raised a concern about buffer zones surrounding the Plaza, questioning if the existing trees between Main Street and the Plaza would be removed, and hoped they would not be. She also urged that consideration be given to buffer zones surrounding the Plaza in general.

Robin Mower asked if it would be possible at the next public presentation of the designs to have rough 3D models to show the relative heights of things.

Henry Smith was happy to hear about the turnout on Sunday and how it all went. He also commended the Committee and the architects for their work. With regard to the idea of a hotel on the Plaza he was taken aback as given the presence of several other similar establishments in the area. He saw the hotel idea as intrusive, out of place for the Plaza, and the people it would bring in would be passing through and thus not giving a sense of community, only dollars. He voiced that replacing housing with a hotel would not be a good idea, and that if the aim of the project is to build finances and enhance the sense of community, a hotel would be an impediment, and he voiced his opposition to the hotel idea.

Anne Marie Harris commented that the second round of plans did not emphasize public space and integrating Main Street with the Plaza. She advocated for plans that would create beautiful spaces, especially for College Brook.

Dave Howland mentioned that he and Patricia Sherman made a presentation to UNH on the Plaza Redevelopment project and went on local AM stations to talk about the project.

5. Discuss briefly how Sunday's workshop went and steps

Patrick Field introduced this item and asked Committee members for specific feedback on what they liked and did not like about the new designs.

JSA Second Round Design

Tom Newkirk commented that the JSA plan did not have a continuous roadway, and one had to pass through the parking structure.

Warren Daniel commented that there were small spaces, that things seemed split up without a sense of openness, and the brick walkway down the center was noncontiguous. He did like the public area by the Town Hall.

Crawford Mills commented he did not like the concept of a hotel at all, that the property where it was placed was not part of the Plaza property. He suggested that a developer could build the hotel on their own if it was a good idea. He continued with several examples of hotels in the area that are in questionable financial condition, raising the question if a hotel on the Plaza would be viable. Moreover, even if it were economically viable he would not like a hotel there. He did like the idea of a center square, which he found very attractive.

Julian Smith commented that he also was not enthusiastic about the hotel, and he felt that the designs should emphasize retail and services that would benefit local citizens. He also commented that if the library and Town Hall are in separate buildings, it would be hard to share facilities. He also noted that the facilities do not need 15,000sq. ft. for the library or 20,000 for the Town Hall.

Lorne Parnell voiced agreement with the above comments on access to the Plaza and about the economic comments regarding a hotel, noting that a hotel would be unrealistic. He also noted that College Brook did not seem to be included in the plan, and that enhancement of green space there should be included.

Doug Bencks commented he liked the pedestrian connections to Main Street, which created major linkages, a key aspect of the redevelopment in his opinion. He also mentioned that the project could be done in a phased way, as much or little as desired, and the grocery store and pharmacy could be moved in the long term to solve accessibility issues.

Chuck Cressy liked the green space off Mill Road and Main Street, and noted that there was space for a small building there like the Bagelry or something to tie in Main Street even more. He also commented that the feasibility of moving the grocery store over years was questionable, no matter who owns it, as the cost would be prohibitive.

Warren Daniel commented that the retail was too fractionalized, and should be more compact around the grocery store and pharmacy as much as possible, the focus of where people shop. He also liked the idea of putting in retail on the

corner of Mill Road and Main Street to connect plaza with the rest of downtown. He emphasized that space and connectivity are key.

Midnight Oil Second Round Design

Tom Newkirk noted that in this design the drug store was shifted to the end of the mall, noting the store would likely be resistant to that, and wondered how realistic that would be. Dave Howland responded that Bill Schoonmaker [not in attendance at this meeting] had heard this before and answered that it is next to another entrance so it would still be a prime location.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer noted that for UNH students access to the pharmacy would be harder, and that access to both the grocery store and the pharmacy via a parking garage would not be appealing.

Julian Smith commented that he liked the Town Hall in the corner blocking Chesley Drive.

Chuck Cressy asked how would delivery trucks get in as logistics for loading would be an issue.

Dave Howland noted that trucks would come through the parking structure somehow.

Warren Daniel wondered why the design hid the parking structure that way. He also agreed that Rite Aid would be reluctant to agree to being moved and that having the shopping clustered would make it easier.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer liked how the parking was arranged (open non-structure spaces), and gave the space a more village feel with a nice flow. She also commented that the lot looked nicer than the last design, as the greenery around the whole thing appealed. She did however like how the last design was more out of sight.

Doug Bencks liked the retail along Mill Road, and noted it created a nice edge to this area. He commented that the parking structure was convenient to everything, but it was also in the middle of everything and unappealing visually.

Crawford Mills commented that a second story on the grocery store made economic sense, thought that the design did a good job of hiding the garage, and liked that some housing was kept in.

Julian Smith commented he liked the layout of the road connecting Main Street to Mill Road, which Dave Howland also commented that he liked as well.

Warren Daniel commented that the flow of shopping connected to a garage is not appealing.

Perry Bryant commented that he thought just the opposite; he liked what they did. He liked the outside spaces created, and the garage being so available was a bonus. He also liked to see housing still included, and did not like the idea of a hotel.

Lavalle Brensinger Second Round Design

Perry Bryant liked the change of the entrance at Madbury Road and the Post Office. He liked their parking ideas, did not like the idea of a UNH Bookstore, and thought that it was unfeasible, that it did not make sense to put it where it would compete with other retailers.

Chuck Cressy commented that everyone should not get caught up in what each building would be, but to look at the square footage and the market will decide what would actually go in there. He also noted that their road conception made sense.

Tom Newkirk liked that this design did more with College Brook than other designs. He also noted that the design was missing a central square that other designs had, space for concerts, farmers market, etc.

Warren Daniel liked that all three designs had exits onto Main Street, and the designers need to look at an egress further down Main Street (near the post office).

Crawford Mills commented that the property designated as a hotel could be built into anything else.

Dave Howland read from an e-mail from Mark Henderson (MPSC member not in attendance at this meeting) that commented if a hotel was not built then something different there, like commercial or retail would make sense.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer commented that if housing were to be built on the Plaza then the hotel corner would be a nice place for retail or services for the residents. She also commented that a book store café would be nice, but did not necessarily need to be the UNH book store; and emphasized retail that would draw in folks would be important.

6. Discuss evaluation checklist, and begin consensus building process, using the list, to guide remaining design rounds and recommendations – Patrick Field to facilitate.

Patrick Field projected the original designs for comparison. He asked if anyone liked the idea of a hotel.

Warren Daniel commented that more information was needed.

Chuck Cressy asked what the owner's idea on the hotel was.

Dave Howland commented that a hotel helped the numbers pan out, and Patricia Sherman (not in attendance at this meeting) had an idea that a hotel and office grouping could raise the tax value and would let the Town have some say about the tenants there.

Art Guadano spoke for Patricia Sherman (AIA Council Representative not present at this meeting) and commented that a hotel would bring activity to downtown and to the other businesses, maybe open the possibility of restaurants and bring later hours business, as well as bring a mix of people that would create a positive feature of activity in the area.

Robin Mower commented that the addition of more adults to the downtown could also help calm the behavior of college kids.

Art Guadano elaborated that the hotel and associated businesses would be a good mix of compatible uses, add hours of use, money etc.

Chuck Cressy commented that a sense of community can be built by folks coming in, like in Ogunquit or other destination towns.

Art Guadano commented that UNH has a draw with visiting professionals, parents, etc., that would benefit a hotel there.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer commented that a nice restaurant was needed, and visiting folks to UNH do not lunch or dinner in Durham. She continued that a multi-use auditorium at a hotel could bring activity to downtown as well.

Art Guadano commented that a hotel would likely help fund the parking garage as well. He continued that one example to compare to could be the Exeter Inn.

Dave Howland noted that the RKG report outlined hotel numbers as well in terms of estimated tax revenue and so forth.

Warren Daniel commented that unlike other retail or commercial space where Committee input could not decide what would specifically go in, for a hotel it would be appropriate to discuss if the Committee wanted it.

Art Guadano noted that the zoning in the Master Plan included for hotels.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer commented that thinking about a "hotel" vs. a "mixed use inn" is very different.

Patrick Field raised the topic of housing on the Plaza site for feedback.

Tom Newkirk indicated he wanted to see housing back on the table, and that retail seems more questionable in its market demand than housing.

Perry Bryant agreed with Tom Newkirk, that housing needed to be looked at, and that a mix of housing was more viable than clusters of all the same type, i.e. not all retired or work force or student housing.

Crawford Mills also agreed that housing had a place, especially work force housing mixed in with other non-student housing.

Dave Howland commented that something like Forest Park housing would be nice on this site. He emphasized the international nature of the housing and how much that diversity added to things.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer agreed with Dave Howland's thoughts, but cautioned against too many units and the site being too dense. Specifically she mentioned that student housing if any should be on the Main Street side and not College Brook side.

Doug Bencks disagreed with this sentiment and how much density this site could handle, commenting that the place to have density is downtown. He commented that housing was key to bringing people downtown and adding vitality, and maybe some high end housing could be built to balance out the tax revenue concerns.

Warren Daniel commented that retail has tremendous potential downtown, and that housing would have a positive economic impact on that retail.

Art Guadano asked how the Committee felt about housing that was divorced on the perimeter of the Plaza rather than integrated.

Dave Howland commented that mixed and integrated would be his preference, as it would feed into idea of giving life to the downtown.

Warren Daniel asked what would we call this redevelopment project overall, a "town center" or "shopping plaza", cautioning that the Committee needs to think carefully about the big picture plan of what they want the redevelopment to be. And he would advocate for housing being central vs. on the periphery of the plaza.

Patrick Field asked what everyone thought about office space, particularly class A office space.

There was some discussion about what the difference between classes A, B, C office space was, but everyone agreed that some office space and especially class A office space should be developed.

Patrick Field asked what folks thought about retail going in?

Crawford Mills commented that the development's job is to sell stores coming here, and a flexible plan to allow for what the market will bring in should be adopted.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer voiced concern about chain/box store retailers coming in. This started a small discussion about chain stores that have actually failed in Durham, such as a Burger King and Arby's before that.

Warren Daniel reiterated that he saw opportunities for the retail market, and noted that it is a captured market and will support new retail.

Perry Bryant commented that the market will drive what actually comes in, that it will take time to fill it, and that it will be a matter phasing the redevelopment over time.

Patrick Field next raised the issue of the Town Hall and library being located on the Plaza site, noting that there seemed to be support for if not consensus about the library being located on the site, but did not sense much agreement about the Town Hall for a variety of reasons, cost, moving, tax revenue etc.

Warren Daniel commented that he was content with where Town Hall was currently, and suggested that any new building should be taxable as much as possible.

Tom Newkirk commented that he was ambivalent about the Town Hall and needed to hear more about the rationale for locating it on the site and why it should be combined with the library. His thought was that the library by itself would be preferable.

Lorne Parnell commented that the library and Town Hall being relocated were two of the original motivating ideas for looking at this redevelopment. He continued that the library would like to be on town owned land and that the corner location would make the most sense.

Julian Smith said he would agree with what Lorne Parnell had said.

Dave Howland commented that if people thought the library should go on the Plaza they should speak out concretely, and the same with other items like a grocery store, as these would give a corner stone to the designing plans.

Crawford Mills commented he would leave Town Hall where it is, as currently there is no problem with traffic or parking, but if it moved there could be issues with this and it should be kept in mind that the Town Hall serves more than those in walking distance of it.

Perry Bryant commented that he thinks the library and Town Hall should be housed in the same building on the Plaza as they would work well together.

Doug Bencks commented that the library wanted to be on the site, and whatever moved that forward the library thought was the best idea.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer said “yes” to the library being located on the Plaza site, and was open to listening to comments about the Town Hall being there.

Perry Bryant commented that if the library was on town land then it would make sense to put the library and Town Hall together on that property.

Julian Smith commented that he would like to pull the town together on that site, and supported locating both the library and Town Hall at the Plaza and sharing the same building.

Crawford Mills commented that if there were space for other town facilities there like the museum as well, then maybe there was some merit to combining the library and Town Hall

Patrick Field commented that some amount of uncertainty and flux in the design was good and he was resisting formulating concrete plans yet to allow the design process to unfold creatively with as much flex as possible.

Chuck Cressy commented that the “while I am here concept” should be looked at, suggesting that providing as many goods and services as possible on the location would be of benefit, making the Plaza a place to come for all one’s needs. He continued that the Committee needed to find a way to sell the redevelopment to folks, and this idea could be a way to do that.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer commented that if the Committee envisioned a strictly functional use of the Town Hall, for housing the Town bureaucracy and their services, then leave it where it is, but if a broader concept of the Town Hall, if the museum was incorporated or other stuff, then maybe it made sense to move it.

Chuck Cressy left at 6:30pm

7. Set next meeting dates

The next regular MPSC meeting was scheduled for 11/28/07, with some food being offered at 6pm, and the meeting lasting from 6:30-9 pm, with the location TBA.

[Announced as of 11/10/07 the location will be Gregg Hall Room 110 on the University of New Hampshire campus]

Following tonight's meeting (11/7) and the next meeting (11/28), this information will be presented to the design teams, tentatively scheduled for Wed. 12/5 or 12/12 at 4:30 pm, also with food, with the location TBA.

[Announced as of 11/10/07 the MPSC/ Design Team Meeting will be held 12/5/07 -- Wednesday at 5 p.m. at Oyster River High School Multi-purpose room]

As part of a general discussion among Committee members about the direction of the next couple of meetings and developing a report for the Town Council, Patrick Field cautioned against having specific expectations that the Committee had little or no control over, and noted that the relatively detailed designs so far will be tweaked by the owner and developer, and emphasized there was only so much the developer could be held to these recommendations. And for that reason the Committee should articulate what will be put in the report given the required flexibility of parties involved.

Dave Howland commented that a balance needed to be found, advocating for those elements that are really important to folks, and noted that creating a document that was completely open would not serve anyone.

8. Other Business

None

9. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Anne Marie Harris commented on an apparent bottle neck with the loading zone, and urged rethinking of the location of the drug store given loading and walking issues. She noted that she thought the distance between stores is a non-issue.

Robin Mower echoed Warren Daniel's thinking that questioned what this space should be, i.e., a retail shopping plaza vs. a town center, and recommended that this issue be hashed out more at the next meeting.

Art Guadano commented that having the library and Town Hall together was integral to building community, that a mix of activities was a positive thing to a community center, and as much as you can bring together would be positive. On the issue of housing he wanted to see it brought back in as a key part of building a

town village and having diversity. He liked comments he heard about building retail along Mill Road, and he urged doing everything possible to give design teams a clear direction.

10. Adjournment

Julian Smith made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Tom Newkirk, and was unanimously approved at 6:48 pm.

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Town of Durham
MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE
Room 110 Gregg Hall
University of New Hampshire campus
November 28, 2007
6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Mark Henderson, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch Mayer

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Crawford Mills, Lorne Parnell

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative), Patrick Field (Facilitator), Kate Hartnett (Presenter for College Brook Restoration Report), Members of the Public: Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Art Guadano, Mike Castagna, Nancy Lambert, Ed Garcia, Bill McDowell, and John Carroll.

1. Call to order
6:37pm by Dave Howland
2. Welcome and Overview
Dave Howland summarized the outline for the meeting, and talked on each Agenda item.
3. Approval of Agenda
Julian Smith moved to accept the Agenda, Tom Newkirk seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
4. Approval of minutes
For the November 17th minutes Perry Bryant moved to approve the Minutes, Warren Daniel seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
5. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)
No public comment.
6. Presentation of preliminary report by College Brook Restoration Work Group
Kate Hartnett opened her presentation by acknowledging those who helped put the report together, then reviewed the major highlights of the report.

She presented a Photo tour of College Brook including historical photos and photos of the course of College Brook from UNH to its exit from the Mill Plaza. This was followed by an outline of the report, followed by a listing and description of appendices, and then a presentation of the objectives of the report.

Kate Hartnett emphasized that now was a one-time opportunity to connect storm water management to the redesign of Mill Plaza with the improving health of the brook, the redesign of the Mill Plaza to improve the health of the brook, and to work with UNH on improving the quality of the water leaving the UNH campus. She noted that the watershed was degraded; storm water management was inadequate, current water quality was poor, and only enough was known about the brook to know that more needed to be known. At this point there was discussion of UNH's long-delayed Drumlin project and possible UNH cooperation in any restoration project, noting upstream issues of College Brook and limitations of the Mill Plaza Redevelopment to restore College Brook given this situation.

Restoration would mean bringing College Brook to more natural conditions, starting ongoing projects to improve the brook's condition, collaborating with UNH and NH DOT to develop an integrated watershed management plan. Kate Hartnett detailed some potential action items: Restoration needs to start uphill from Mill Plaza, looking at developing an innovative low impact storm water management plan, and then have ecological restoration of the stream corridor downhill. And long term action items: work with UNH, maintain a storm water management plan, work on removing invasive species, link Mill Plaza to local history, measure, evaluate and continue to refine.

Finding Resources: design for multiple benefits for capital cost savings, multiple funding sources possible from state, Feds, in kind donations, and expertise from UNH.

[All this material will be available in the report, which will be made available at the Mill Plaza website:

http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/GOVERNMENT/boards/mill_plaza/mill_plaza_study_committee.htm]

At this point the discussion incorporated aspects of the next Agenda item, and dealt with issues pertaining to College Brook and the Mill Plaza Redevelopment.

Dave Howland commented that the report was to help drive the next round of designing, and to stimulate discussion for this process.

Art Guadano asked if the goal of restoring the brook to a completely natural condition, or to incorporate it into the hard design of Mill Plaza, and if the brook was on Mr. Pinto's property? Julian Smith explained the brook's relation to the Pinto property, as it does in places border directly on and cross the Pinto property. Art Guadano suggested that the design teams needed guidance as to how to incorporate the brook into their designs.

Warren Daniel asked what other possibilities there were for storm water runoff to go to, and if it was possible to pipe it to other places. Patricia Sherman responded that there were other ways, engineering solutions, but the main point was that what happens currently could not happen after redevelopment. At this point there was discussion about potential storm water runoff control methods, and included bio-retention swales, rain gardens, allowing a chance for bio-filtration, and wet meadows.

Warren Daniel asked what the impact of brook restoration would be on the development space, what the impact it would have on financial considerations, and suggested that the MPSC needed to look at this. Kate Hartnett suggested one storm water management strategy would be to minimize runoff through methods such as discussed above and also “green roofs”, and emphasized the desirability of using design innovation to minimize runoff before talking about water management.

Patrick Field noted that the report would be brought to the design teams and that it would be considered going into the upcoming charette. He also asked what was the MPSC’s thoughts or recommendations for the design teams concerning a buffer zone along College Brook?

Julian Smith liked the recommendation for the stream corridor on page eight of College Brook Restoration report, that the extent of the buffer should be maximized as much as possible, recognizing constraints on what the buffer size could be without specifying the exact number of feet. Dave Howland noted that this language was not an accident as it was recognized we are dealing with a constrained area in a developed environment, and also offered that the design teams should look at a variety of designs along the brook, incorporating more natural areas with more integrated areas.

Julian Smith mentioned the idea of tax increment funding to help finance storm water mitigation.

At this point there were several comments noting that the main purpose of this report was to inform the MPSC on how to deal with College Brook as it relates to the Mill plaza, and that this was the prime responsibility of these discussions. It was also noted that this was an opportunity to help get things started for the restoration of the whole Brook. There was discussion about the need to balance the economics of the development with a setback for the brook. It was emphasized that the brook would add value to the property and the designers would need to explore this balance of space for development and the value the setback area would add to the property. Patrick Field cautioned about picking a certain number of feet for a College Brook setback, as it would draw a line in sand, and he recommended providing guide lines and parameters for what was desired at this stage in the designing process.

An audience member commented on one of the designs from the second round that featured a pond, and noted that the pond idea did not work at UNH and are generally ineffective in riverine settings.

It was recognized that the brook was an integral part of the Plaza, that the goal was to balance the value of the land associated with Brook and land for physical development, and to establish that balance for all parties involved. If more than a 25ft. buffer was needed the designers would need to show why in terms of cost benefit. The summary and bullets from the first page of College Brook Restoration Report were cited as germane to this understanding.

Following a short break Julian Smith moved to thank the work group that developed the Report. Doug Bencks seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Karen Hartnett noted that the two primary audiences for this Report were the MPSC and the AIA design teams, and hoped it would get posted as PDF document on the website. There was general

interest in helping the Report survive beyond the mission of the MPSC. It was agreed the Report would be put on the MPSC website with a cover sheet explaining how the MPSC was using the report, and Julian Smith said he would present the report to the Durham Conservation Commission forthwith.

7. Discuss ways to ensure effectiveness/ longevity of our collaborative work

Dave Howland and Patrick Field presented a working list of ideas to help ensure the longevity of the Mill Plaza Study Committee's work:

1. Reach back to the public and constituents represented by the committee (the neighborhood, landlords, business owners, etc.) and develop a statement that they can sign onto supporting the Committee's work. Dave Howland noted this would add value and weight to the Committee's recommendations and report to the Town Council.
2. Start a dialogue with the Town Council and Planning Board about incorporating the Report into the Master Plan for the Town.
3. Consider supporting the AIA's recommendation that the town retain a professional consultant to assist town planners at such time actual redevelopment plans are put into motion.
4. Keep the MPSC on retainer down the road for support.
5. Encourage and welcome the owner to move forward with the redevelopment.

There was discussion generally supporting these ideas or similar plans, but many noted that right now was premature to begin work on these ideas, that energy needed to be focused on completing the MPSC's goals. Dave Howland noted that they were presented now for more detailed consideration as the committee wraps up its work. Patrick Field commented that these ideas were potential pieces of the end game and did not need action immediately.

8. Continuation of facilitated discussion with Patrick Field on Round Three parameters

Public space:

The discussion circled around a balance between the recognized importance of public space and the realistic constraints on how much dedicated public space was possible. A general consensus was reached that public space was important but should not dominate, it should be multipurpose. An important interest was that whether dedicated as "public space" or not there should be spaces that could be periodically used for public functions, such as concerts or festivals for 200 plus people. It was clarified that a farmer's market in this space was not possible as it would conflict with the lease agreement of the grocery store. Patricia Sherman noted that any road through the Plaza could be closed a few times a year for functions to meet this need.

Patrick Field summarized the points discussed: public space is important, but should not dominate, should be multi-functional and integrated, creating a series of interconnected spaces to expand and contract, with a combination of hard spaces and greens spaces.

Parking:

The main points of this discussion focused on a parking garage, and providing additional parking for downtown. There were concerns about having a centrally located parking garage and the aesthetics of that, and a possible negative effect it would create for retail shopping. People also commented how centralized parking would be important, especially for helping with Main Street parking. Patricia Sherman summarized that the issues with the parking structure seemed to focus on how to mask it so it fits into the general scale of the Plaza.

Chuck Cressy commented that none of the current designs from either round have sufficiently detailed space for deliveries and space for dumpsters. Warren Daniel also echoed this sentiment. Mike Castanga noted that the designing was still in big scale design phase, and the details that were being sought are not doable yet.

Mark Henderson commented that he specifically liked the Midnight Oil plan because it addressed Main Street parking, and phasing would work in this plan.

Doug Bencks commented that he thought the best long term plan would move the grocery store to a different location, and until then things will be constrained.

Patrick Field reiterated what he heard, that if the grocery store stayed in place for now and expanded it would extend the lease and complicate moving the store. And he acknowledged that it sounded like the notion of phasing needed to be wrestled with further. Patricia Sherman commented that she would like to see the site developed as a whole, but recognized the challenges in doing this.

Patrick Field summarized the points of the discussion as: mask or conceal parking garage, phase in parking structure, traditional parking mitigated by green spaces, help out Main Street parking, and detail access for deliveries and dumpsters.

Access:

Dave Howland read from the vision statement on “access”.

Patrick Field started by noting that all the plans show some kind of continuous road thru the site, and asking what people thought about that.

There was general agreement that some kind of roadway thru the Plaza site made sense, and there comments that touched on where it made the most sense to have the street enter and exit, as well as noting that College Brook along the roadway would need to be addressed. Perry Bryant suggested another entrance/egress at the post office corner, and possibly routing all traffic thru the Plaza, making a large loop around downtown. Mark Henderson raised the concerns that this layout would be problematic for the daily fluctuations of traffic as well as special event traffic.

Patrick Field summarized the comments thus far as positive on the thru way with some concerns as to the actual hardscaping.

Doug Bencks commented that the Town was working on contracting for traffic modeling that could be used to look at all kinds of what ifs, to include Route 4 to Concord Road, to Route 108, New Market Road, etc., a wide area that would include the Plaza redevelopment site. Dave Howland commented that he was hoping the traffic model would be available for the final report of the MPSC to the Town Council.

Patrick Field next raised the issue of whether or not to look at opening Chesley Drive to motor vehicle traffic. At this point there was a discussion that revisited some of the pros and cons of putting Chesley Drive on the list of potential motor vehicle access points for design teams to consider. There were comments questioning the utility of this given the long history of public outcry against this idea in the past. Some offered it should be looked at even if the ultimate decision was to remove it from the final designs and that it would be remiss to overlook any possibility.

Patrick Field suggested that the debate on Chesley Drive not be redone tonight, and that he would present the nuances of the Chesley Drive issue to the design teams and let them decide whether to include it.

Doug Bencks raised the question of who would own any road that went through the Plaza. Patrick Field commented that whose road it would be and who maintained it were not known quantities yet.

Kyreages property:

Patrick Field asked what we should tell the design teams about the Kyreages property.

Dave Howland commented that as a committee some the final report should not be silent on the Kyreages land, given that the Town is actively pursuing this property.

At this point there was discussion about what to tell the design teams about the Kyreages property, to which Patrick Field said: put something in about the property in terms of what would it look like “if there were access”, but not include it in the main designs.

Doug Bencks commented that the Library Board of Trustees was interested and committed to the idea of the library being on the Plaza, but concerned about how long the process may draw out given phasing, and that the Library Board was interested in being in the first stage of phasing.

Patrick Field summarized including comments from previous meetings: the library wants to move quickly, so if a library then yes definitely, and people are not so sure about a town hall.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer left at 10:07pm

Dave Howland clarified next steps, and included the next two meetings, a private meeting on Friday November 30th with the design teams and then the December 5th meeting with MPSC and design teams at Oyster river High School.

9. Other Business

None

10. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

John Carroll commented that he did not hear any discussion about housing tonight, and that he thought that housing was an important part of the design, with growing importance of folks moving downtown.

Several people responded that this had been discussed at the last meeting, and that the Committee wanted housing back in.

Art Guadano commented that he wanted to emphasize two points from the AIA perspective, first that they wanted to use this project as a model for collaborative development (addressing the issue of a broken development model in NH). AIA's goal was very much to get buy in for the concept and approvals from Town committees, and part of this is being done. He hoped this committee will help this aspect as well. Second, he emphasized that a town center was important, and that a library and town hall are important to building a town center as envisioned in the master plan, and that input from town council on how they feel about this should be sought.

Dave Howland closed the meeting and emphasized that the Committee's work product would only be as good as the consensus on the Committee, and that in the third round of designs this process would likely get more attention and feedback from a wider slice of the Durham community.

11. Adjournment

Tom Newkirk moved to adjourn, Warren Daniel seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved at 10:17pm.

DRAFT
Mill Plaza Study Committee and Design Team Charette
Oyster River High School, Multi Purpose Room
5 pm, Wednesday, December 05, 2007

Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair of Committee), Mark Henderson, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch Mayer (arrived 6:42), Lorne Parnell, Crawford Mills (arrived 6:52)

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos

Design Team Members Present: Walter Raus, Chris Drobat, ChrisUrner, Robbi Woodburn, Fabiana Orlando, Elizabeth Dudley, Tom Inglebertson, Bill Schoonmaker

Also Present: Patricia Sherman (AIA Representative), Patrick Field (Facilitator), Kate Hartnett (Presenter for College Brook Restoration Report), Members of the Public: Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Art Guadano, Mike Castagna, Nancy Lambert, Ed Garcia, Bill McDowell, and John Carroll, Ed Valena, Ray Belles, Ed Tillinghast, Margaret Tillinghast, Maggie Moore, Judith Spang, Annemarie Harris, Joshua Meyrowitz, Cathy Frierson, Walter Staples, Susan Thorne, Bruce Dicker, Maura Adams, Greg Grigsby

1. Welcome and overview, Dave Howland
Chair Dave Howland called the meeting to order at 6:37pm and explained that the goal for tonight was to develop a plan/and or guidelines for going into the final hybrid design round, incorporating elements from all three design teams.
2. Approval of Agenda
Tom Newkirk moved to approve the Agenda, Warren Daniel seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
3. Approval of Minutes
The approval of the minutes from the Nov. 28th meeting was postponed to the next meeting.
4. Public Comment (2 minutes perperson,10 minute maximum)
Annemarie Harris commented she was delighted to continue on with the designing process, and hoped the teams would continue to delve through all the available options, and that she hoped no individual or business would restrict the “dream” concept for a community center, and a viable economic center. She also thanked the design teams and the MPSC Committee for all their work.
5. Architectural teams present revised draft “program” for the site
Patrick Field set the stage for a back and forth discussion to develop guidelines and recommendations for a hybrid design, and summarized the recent steps and meetings of the design teams and the MPSC.

Chris Drobat spoke for the design teams and summarized their understanding of agreements and important considerations for developing the hybrid design.

College Brook: minimize and manage storm water on site, maximize vegetative buffer, create inviting access to Mill Plaza natural area (foot path etc.), buffer extended as much as possible, maybe punctuated by buildings (library possibly).

Access: continue to use Mill Road, create an access point from Main Street and possibly use a small roundabout at Main and Madbury Road, further traffic study needed (model in works by Town), and Chesley Drive was not a good option. Patrick Field explained how the design teams came to this point on Chesley Drive, that the conversation took a broad perspective beyond just the neighborhood concerns. Reasons noted were:

- More entrances would limit developable space.
- A new entrance on Main Street rather than Chesley Drive would keep traffic and activity centered on and around the downtown, helping to preserve Main Street.
- The green space that surrounds the property along College Brook, the corner at the end of Chesley Drive, and the eastern edge adds value to the site.
- The corner at Chesley Drive is a good location for a small, pedestrian friendly park potentially to be used as a green area for a new library or other use.
- The corner provides a useful buffer to residential neighborhoods.
- Various other roads (and corners) feeding into Chesley Drive are insufficient for any major traffic as currently constructed, and thus, improvements to make the Chesley Drive corner access useful would be substantial and extend back to Mill Pond Road.

Hospitality component: referred to as an “inn” to reflect the intended character of the building, not a large chain, proper size and scale for Main Street, and it should be on Main Street and possibly step back into the site. The inn should be mixed use, provide opportunities for restaurants, events, and so forth.

Main St. access: anchor retail should have access to Main St.

Library: to be brought down and to the side, where it is quieter, draws folks into site after hours, and a draw for future retail.

Town Hall: several options: next to a library where there would be efficiencies of sharing buildings, or design them together as a central town center without sharing a building, but parking could be a little tricky this way.

Patrick Field clarified that for the town hall there was little agreement among MPSC and the design teams about whether or not to locate it on the site, and this issue locating it on the site or not by design teams and MPSC, and this issue would need some further consideration tonight.

Parking structure: general consensus on some kind of structure.

Public space: likely not a single large space, but more of a procession of spaces and spaces capable of events, space that connected to Main Street and maybe a green space along the brook.

Housing: should be considered, mixed into the overall development vs. a big block of units, mix of types is appropriate, locations and exact mix not known yet.

Phasing: needed to be discussed further.

At this point there was discussion concerning the nature of what the design teams were being expected to produce as there was some question about the scope and extent of the design teams charge. It was explained that the teams were not expected to produce a solid design but rather to flush out elements and guidelines for use when a designer with funds actually would begin to develop a concrete design, and much of the design teams work is a framework to guide the development, a tool for the Town and the general community to defend their points of view, and for developer to have something to hold the community to what they said they wanted. Several people noted that the work of the MPSC and the design teams so far needed to be preserved in some way in case the development process was delayed. Dave Howland referred to the discussion on Agenda item 7 of the last MPSC meeting dealing with this topic.

There was a question as to what UNH's current involvement was with the project, and if there was any indication of cost sharing. Doug Bencks clarified that UNH was not interested in cost sharing, but was more broadly very interested in anything that would impact the quality of student life. Patricia Sherman noted that UNH saw the project as positive, and there was interest in any improvements to downtown, and to opportunities for building relationships with Durham. Patrick Field also noted that UNH is involved with Durham in developing a traffic model work where the Mill Plaza would be a test run.

At this point there was a discussion that involved concerns with the scale of development on a nine acre site, the value of mixed use housing and potential impacts of housing units on this size site, and a more general discussion of what the goal of the development is. Several people noted that a nine acre plot was relatively small, and cautioned about how much would be built, and what the nature of the development would be given the relatively small size of the plot. There was also a point of view that nine acres by European standards was large, and that the development should not be afraid of relatively high density, on the scale of villages around Oxford and Cambridge Universities. There was concern about what housing units may turn into given that their intended use may shift over time, and several people commented on the positive nature of having mixed use and how this adds to the value and vitality of the site.

Patrick Field noted that an important idea in considering the scale of development is the balance how much the community exports activities due to lack of services, and what would be needed to import to keep folks using services in town. Patricia Sherman noted that development would set a precedent of good design, and would promote good design around the Mill Plaza nine acre site, and that it could be a first step to redesigning the downtown.

There was a question for Chuck Cressy concerning the ratio of student shoppers to year round residents. Chuck Cressy said that in terms of dollars it was approximately 10% student, 90% non-student.

An audience member commented that the design should look to maximize what would be best on site, and that the brook should be protected, rather than be considered auxiliary. Housing should look to who needed to be there; low income and elderly populations, and that the main purpose of the Plaza was to serve the Durham community not folks from other communities. A design team member responded that the focus was on the town of Durham, and if others came it would be positive, but it was not the end goal.

Patrick Field began summarizing the discussion and transitioning to the next Agenda item, and noted potential points that would need to be worked out, such as the town hall on the site and

access points. At this point there was a brief discussion about energy concern, solar orientation and the “green” nature of the development in general. The design teams commented that the exposure to the sun was really good on the site, and much of this will not be looked at till next level of design.

6. Design teams and committee sketch various components, as needed

At this point the room was rearranged to facilitate a more back and forth conversation between the MPSC and design teams. Ideas were openly discussed and several sketches were made to try and capture the ideas being discussed. Several of the main points, areas of consensus, and issues follow:

Possibly provide two designs, with one that included suggestions for access to and use of the Kyreages property, and one design with the grocery store fixed in its current location, and one with the grocery store located where it conceptually would be the most fitting.

College Brook: flexible buffer depending on interests and potential uses, at least 25ft or status quo whichever is better, keep an eye on mitigating any impact.

Parking – yes to a parking structure, possibly look at surface parking under the parking structure to save space.

Access: access from Mill Road and Main Street with the specific point not yet fixed on Main Street, would look for strong recommendations from design teams. Pedestrian access from Mill Road, Main Street and Chesley Drive, a continuous street not routed through a parking structure.

Civic buildings: – library integrated into the site. Town Hall undecided, possibly look at including the town hall as part of phased design, or leave space for a place holder for second civic site possibly to be a town hall.

Housing: at least a modest amount of housing with consideration as to where it is with consideration for buffer to current residential units.

Kyreages property: need to speak to this property in broad strokes thinking about future access, but do not build out into the property, don't let phasing hinge on the Kyreages property, but leave space for it in the design.

7. Facilitator identifies final agreements/elements

See above

8. Public comment

None

9. Next steps

Dave Howland noted that the committee's final report should be useful and enduring and an aide for to guide future development of the site. The format of the MPSC final product needs further discussion and action.

The next MPSC meeting date was flexibly scheduled for the 9th and/or the 16th of January, at 4:30, with the second meeting possibly being held somewhere at UNH.

10. Adjournment 9:37 pm

Warren Daniel moved to adjourn, Doug Bencks seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Town of Durham
Mill Plaza Study Committee
10 Gregg Hall
University of New Hampshire
January 16

Members Present: Dave Howland (chair), Julian Smith (Vice-Chair), Mark Henderson, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Lorne Parnell, Thomas Newkirk, Crawford Mills, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch-Mayer (arrived 6:44).

Members Absent: Edgar Ramos, Perry Bryant

Also Present: Henry Smith (Town Council), Bob Westhelle (JSA), Bruce Dicker (JSA), Bill Schoonmaker (Durham team), Emily Smith (Library Trustee), Martin Lee, Nancy Lambert, Sibylle Carlson (Library Trustee), Michael Slavin, Robin Mower

Also at the table: Patrick Field (facilitator), Patricia Sherman (AIA)

1. Welcome and Overview.

David Howland called the meeting to order at 6:37. He explained the handouts and noted the two main agenda items: acting on a proposal for Phase 1 development of the library, road, and brook border; and discussing a format for the final report to the town council.

2. Approval of Agenda.

Julian Smith moved to approve the agenda. Mark Henderson seconded. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes.

Julian Smith moved approval of the 11/28 minutes. Tom Newkirk seconded. Approved unanimously with one abstention.

Warren Daniel moved approval of the 12/5 minutes. Julian Smith seconded. Approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment.

Henry Smith responded to the Facilitator's Summary, generally supporting the key features—inn/hotel, grocery store, and roadway.

Michael Slavin noted that Chesley Drive was one of his concerns and that a vehicle roadway into the plaza would be undesirable.

5. Discussion Specific Proposal for Library Location and Access.

Most of the meeting was taken up by an extended discussion of a proposal for the location of the library, an access road, and a border for the brook. Patrick Field explained that there was a sense of urgency to have the library needs met “sooner rather than later.” A decision on the library could jumpstart development. Douglas Bencks reaffirmed that the Board was supportive of the library being part of the plaza development—and that this proposal would have benefits for the landowner, community, and site.

Dave Howland explained that, if approved, this plan would be incorporated into the design presented to John Pinto—to get his input. This phase 1 plan would ground the development. He noted that there is no guarantee that this would happen—but it represents a best effort.

Patricia Sherman explained the “graphic” depicting the proposal. She cautioned that it was not a design, but shows what the placement of the library and access road might look like. The graphic showed a road, with two 11’ lanes along the south boundary of the property; it cut into the current parking area in only two spots. In response to questioning she admitted that it contained no bike path. The roadway did not diminish the land that could be used for development.

Julian Smith noted that in some ways this plan goes back to the original (1960s) plan for the plaza that had a T-junction with a road to Main Street. The plan is advantageous to the owner because the town takes on responsibility for the brook and maintenance of the road or snow removal.

Mark Henderson asked if the town was prepared to buy land. Julian Smith said that the town may be willing to buy or trade (for example, the Grange property). He hopes that Pinto will see the advantages of this relationship with the town. He speculated the two unbuildable parcels on the south of the plaza (Pinto $\frac{3}{4}$ acre and Bryant $1\frac{1}{4}$ acre) might serve as a buffer with some higher parts used for paths, and the parcels used to mitigate storm drainage.

Chuck Cressy raised the issue of tax dollars going for a privately owned project. He asked how this would be explained to a potentially skeptical public. How will we reach out to the public? Patrick Field responded that if the library site is donated it will demonstrate good will and help the development—that it would be in the public interest. Patricia Sherman added that the road and library might precede the rest of the development and be financed by a TIF.

Chuck Cressy raised several other issues—the challenge of snow removal; the way in which this plans precluded other possible locations for the grocery store. It would have to be rebuilt where it is. Bill Schoonmaker countered that there would be more options.

Warren Daniel asked about the nature of the road; would it have a curb? What is its relationship to the parking lot? Doug Bencks said it would be a new road, and Bill

Schoonmaker added there would be options for entry into the parking lot. Patricia Sherman said that this would need to be worked out in development. Daniel also commented that a land swap might mitigate concerns about cost.

Lorne Parnell stated that he shared Chuck's concerns. If the library is located where it is there needs to be a right of way. The owner has to buy into this—we need his commitment. Crawford Mills stated he didn't like the idea of a T-junction. Julian Smith noted that purchase of the Kyregeas and the former Davis properties would allow for a left curve.

Patrick Field pointed out that the proposed Phase 1 is not that interesting by itself—it needs to be seen as embedded in a wider design. Crawford Mills asked if the town would have to fund the building of the library. Doug Bencks responded that it would be a combination of town and library funds. \$800,000 has been raised—the entire cost of the library would be \$3.9 million, not including land. The Lavallee Brensinger design is the one that most closely takes in this design.

Patrick Field noted that the proposed design would preclude public housing south of the road—and that there was a good deal of public comment that criticized designs that cut the public off from the brook.

There were several comments about the value of this proposal for owner: utilities go underground (Cressy); the most controversial edge of the property is taken off the table (Henderson); the Chesley Drive issue is defused (Smith).

Warren Daniel asked if the Pinto and Bryant parcels south of the brook could be developed. Patricia Sherman said they were not really accessible and probably not terribly buildable—much of the property acted as a flood plain. Daniel asked if this plan took that property “out of play.” Crawford Mills said it should just be all hillside or open space. Daniel had one other comment—he recommended that Pinto not be approached with the request to donate land. It would be better to come with a business arrangement, like a swap for the Grange property.

Crawford Mills asked for clarity on the last point of the proposal—what is meant by an “urban block.” It was agreed that this may not be the best description.

Patrick Field asked representatives from the design teams for reactions to the proposal. Rob Westhelle affirmed that it was a good design. Bill Schoonmaker seconded an earlier observation that this design takes an enormous problem off John Pinto's plate.

David Howland summarized the action we might take. If we are comfortable with the plan, it would be sent on to the library trustees and embedded in the hybrid plan. The Library Board would send a letter to the Town Council and the town would send a letter to Pinto reflecting this proposal. The trustees would need to do further study of the proposal to create a final concept, which will be incorporated into the larger scheme and presented to the public.

Tom Newkirk asked if the library was comfortable with the site, even if, for some reason further stages were delayed or not realized (e.g. Building 2 remained). Doug Bencks affirmed that the Board liked the site in the Plaza. At this point there was public comment about the proposal

7. Public Comment

Nancy Lambert expressed concern at the prospect of developing the Bryant and Pinto properties. She supported retaining these properties as natural buffers—and found the prospect of an easement exciting. Dave Howland said representatives from a couple land trusts told him that this corridor would be unlikely to qualify for a conservation easement but that instead deed restrictions could accomplish the goal of protecting the land. Patricia Sherman affirmed that the land was not buildable—that was a given.

Sibylle Carlson, a library trustee, expressed support for the proposed location of the library and noted the trustees are eager to get on with it.

Robin Mower noted that placing the library in this corner would help reduce vandalism. She also asked that if the town acquired the land—what would they do with it? She doesn't want a network of trails.

Patricia Sherman responded that acquiring this parcel would make the library location attractive and green. Doug Bencks noted that the parcel would have potential value as a community space—or perhaps value for water filtration.

Robin Mower asked if the Economic Development Committee react to this proposal. (Julian Smith indicated it could.)

Emily Smith, a library trustee, said that it was a “miracle” that we were at this point, but had three or four issues to bring up. She wanted to know: if the Library Board approved the plan—would that be a commitment?

Doug Bencks said that the Town Council needs to know the library's position. The Board would need to craft a letter to the Town Council. Patrick Field noted that new factors can come into play which means there is no hard and fast commitment.

Emily Smith asked if there would be room for future expansion. Patricia Sherman said that would be determined in future planning for the site. Doug Bencks said that one of the things that needs careful attention is parking. There needs to be as much shared parking as possible—but we need to understand how that would work. One of the problems with having the library at UNH was the shortage of convenient parking.

Emily Smith asked about what happens if they don't tear down building 2. Julian Smith indicated that this proposal would be presented as part of larger redevelopment of the plaza.

7. Action on Phase 1 Proposal.

Patrick Field suggested that we vote on the proposal which included four items. The motion was that the Mill Plaza Study Committee endorses:

- A publicly-owned site for a new town library at the southeast corner of the property that would act as a community-oriented catalysts for future development of the site. While enhancing pedestrian traffic, the library footprint would preclude motor vehicle access to the site from Chesley Drive, addressing a critical concern of the Faculty neighborhood.
- A publicly-owned road (“parkway”) including a walking path, to lead to the library site along the College Brook from the current Mill Road entrance. Designed, built, and maintained by the town, this would include new utility lines sized for the future. The road would join with a future vehicle entrance on Main Street.
- An enhanced College Brook naturalized area near the library, with a network of paths, which might also serve as a naturalized drainage filter. This would buffer residences on Faculty Road and could be secured by deed restrictions (or other instrument) on future development.
- The balance of the site would become an attractive urban “block” of developable land presenting a range of future possibilities that the MPSC and design teams are investigating and will present to the owner and the Town Council.

It was proposed that this plan proposal, if approved, would be sent to the Library Board, the Town Council, and the design teams.

Patrick Field suggested that, based on the discussions at this meeting, he would add the following:

- A statement about tax considerations (TIF financing of road).
- The town assuming responsibility for plowing the roadway and for ongoing maintenance.
- There would be a plan for the inter-relationship between the road and current parking.
- Parcels across the brook would not be built upon.
- The plan was contingent on how it fits into the entire design.

Crawford Mills moved acceptance of the proposal with these additions. Julian Smith seconded. It was approved unanimously.

8. Discussion of Proposed Format for Final Report and Next Steps

There was a brief discussion of the format for the final report which Dave Howland indicated would be presented in March. Crawford Mills suggested that it be substantial and include the various studies and statements generated in the process. Chuck Cressy noted that taxpayers need to be sold on the plan. And Mark Henderson cautioned that taxpayers want the development to generate tax dollars. Cressy agreed, saying that the proposal should not foreground taxes. Patricia Sherman mentioned that she will approach Dick Gsottschneider to see about recalculating his TIF projections which she sees as low.

There was discussion on the sequence of how John Pinto will be approached on this issue, and what the Town Council and Town Administrator's role will be. Lorne Parnell noted that the Town Council had not decided to build a new library. At some point a decision by the Council needed to be taken. Doug Bencks said that if the town goes forward with a warrant article, there needs to be a site.

It was determined the next meeting would be on February 20 at 6:30 for the presentation of a draft hybrid design.

9. Adjournment

Warren Daniel moved to adjourn at 9:15. Crawford Mills seconded. Unanimously passed.

These minutes submitted by Tom Newkirk.

Mill Plaza Study Committee Public Forum Minutes
Wednesday, February 20th, 2008

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Re-envisioning the Mill Plaza
A workshop of the Mill Plaza Study Committee & AIA150 Partners
Wednesday February 20, 2008, 6:30-9:30 PM
Oyster River Middle School, Multipurpose Room, Durham, NH

MPSC Committee Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Mark Henderson, Douglas Bencks, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk, Warren Daniel, Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Lorne Parnell, Crawford Mills

MPSC Members Not Present: Edgar Ramos

AIA150 Team Members Present: Michael Castagna, Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, Bill Schoonmaker, Robbi Woodburn, Walter Rous, Carolyn Isaak, Walt Staples

Town Officials Present: Town Administrator Todd Selig, Town Planner Jim Campbell

Some Members of the Community Present: Jane Crooks, Bob Crooks, Jerry Needell, Al Frost, Diana Frost, Stephen Tilton, Timothy Horrigan, Eric Lund, Phyllis Heilbronner, Vi McNeill, Robert Morrison, Pedro Alba, Nick Zappo, Don Hatt, Brent Bell, Don Brautigam, Robin Mower, George Carey, Doug Greene, Aime Lockhardt, Michael Lockhardt, Tom Merrick, Maggie Bogle, John Kavanagh, Lynn Bogle, Sam Pouard, Diane and Tim Tregea, Jay Gooze, Linda and John Mengers, Cicely Buckley, Vincent Avery, Tom Malde, Cynthia Cote, Sibylle Carlson, Jim Campbell, Ed Valena, Anne Knight, Michael Behrendt, Ed Garcia, Michael Slavin, Stan and Janice Aviza, Ed Tillinghast, Susan Roman, Renee Vannatz, Nancy Lambert, Malcom McNeill, Elise Daniel, Peter Andersen, Nat Balch, Arlene and Bob Eckerson, Ann Windsor, Emma Rous, Kathleen Kentner.

6:39 Welcome, introductions, and agenda for evening – Patrick Field, facilitator and Dave Howland, MPSC Chairman.

6:40 MPSC approval of tonight’s agenda and MPSC’s 1/16/2008 meeting minutes.

Julian Smith moved to accept the Agenda, Crawford Mills seconded the motion, and the Agenda was approved unanimously. Julian Smith moved to approve the minutes from 1/16/08 MPSC meeting, Warren Daniel seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

6:50 Process reminder: where we have been, where we are today, where we are headed – Patrick Field and Dave Howland.

7:00 Presentation and discussion about the hybrid concept by the combined AIA150 design team: Lavalley Brensinger, Manchester, NH; Schoonmaker's Midnight Oil Team, Durham, NH; and JSA Inc., Portsmouth, NH.

Patrick Field introduced this segment, explained the display placards, and how the hybrid design was brought together, blending the best of the ideas developed so far. Bill Schoonmaker presented the hybrid design.

Bill Schoonmaker explained the AIA150 project idea as designing a model process for large scale development with meaningful public involvement. The design teams were introduced and explained that their time has been donated for the last eleven months to get to this point. He briefly went over the history of the design schemes, individual design schemes, and then the hybrid sought to incorporate best elements from these schemes.

Next he described some of the common components from the earlier individual design schemes that are also in the hybrid including: a roadway through the site from Mill Road to Main Street, which would allow for increased density and provide frontage to build along; protecting the College Brook, with more passive uses such as a bike path or walkway; a library in the Chesley Drive corner, which would preempt further development in that corner; pedestrian oriented spaces with connections to Main Street, bringing Main Street traffic down onto the site. Some of these major pedestrian conduits and access points were explained. Another common component addressed was how to tie in Main Street commercial and retail, including locating a small inn on the Main Street side of the plaza.

Some of the common physical components were the main buildings: Durham Marketplace, the drug store, a parking garage centrally located, and then place holders for future commercial and retail development. The parking garage was centered and hidden with grade change and masked with buildings. Surface parking was broken up as much as possible. A roundabout was included at the post office corner, and would allow traffic from the east not go all the way around downtown, providing easier access to the plaza and would minimize the need to cut through Faculty Road.

The hybrid design was created with phasing in mind. Phase one would likely include the road, the library, an inn, and possibly commercial space near the Mill Road and Main Street corner. Phase two might include the new market and maybe demolition of some existing buildings for the parking garage. Phase three would then include the demolition of existing grocery and moving the grocery.

Also considered in the hybrid was the separation of pedestrian and motor vehicle access to the plaza, potential future access to the Kyreages property, and how to mitigate run off and other issues with College Brook.

Patricia Sherman added that results from a traffic model with UNH and the Town are expected back in March.

Public Questions about the new hybrid design: (Answers to public questions are shown in italics)

The roundabout, would it be capable of handling existing traffic in both directions, plus post office traffic, and substantial of that access to plaza and UNH? Is all this doable?

-Bill Schoonmaker – Typical roundabout shown, and would not need the post office to move, but it would cut into the Plaza property. It is unknown if the roundabout could accommodate all the traffic till the traffic study gets taken to next level.

For the two story commercial space shown, during phasing would that space be left green or would it be built in anticipation of business coming in?

Bill Schoonmaker- Bite size pieces are shown which could be built as needed. There is approximately 120,000 sq. ft. of office/commercial, the library is 13,000, and the inn, grocery, and drugstore would be about 120,000.

Would commercial buildings hide the parking structure?

Bill Schoonmaker – There was lots of discussion of a main access way thru the plaza, with commercial office on top of grocery bridging over to the parking structure, which would disguise the structure a bit more. He also cautioned folks about the appearances of the vignette pictures, that their blocky appearance does not reflect intended design, only their volume.

Can you tell us about the library building?

Bill Schoonmaker – It would have a public meeting space, green space in the back against Chesley Drive and the brook.

With regard to Main Street and the roundabout, was it considered making Main Street a two way stretch again?

Bill Schoonmaker – We are waiting for the traffic model to know this. The hybrid was informed by a traffic engineer, but it would need more study definitely. Dave Howland noted that from a conversation

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with fire and police officials that roundabouts have some advantages and in general pose no serious safety concerns.

How much thought was given to the solar orientation of the development and how it will feel in this regard?

Bill Schoonmaker – There are lots of north south accesses built into the hybrid design shown, but building design would have to play critical role in helping capitalize on the sun.

What are the considerations of bus and trolley access to the plaza for the University transit system, and what about bicycle and pedestrian access to the site? The green spaces are wonderful, and they should be extended.

Bill Schoonmaker – There is green space along the brook, behind the library and scattered along the main walkways. The design emphasized mixed use of space and some compromise, or balance, needed to be struck. There is access for public transit.

How can kids can walk or bike to school, high school or middle school, and in general how could bicycle traffic move through safely and take advantage of the site?

Bill Schoonmaker – The hybrid design has roadways wide enough for two lanes, a side walk and bicycle traffic. There could also be little things like access paths from the pedestrian ways to the stores, bike racks and so forth.

Two questions: What would truck access to the central commercial area with the supermarket be like, how would they get in and out, and what would the corridor between the parking garage and the grocery store look like?

Bill Schoonmaker – There was a lot of discussion about truck access, and in this design the access point on the eastern side of the grocery store is hidden by buildings. As for the drug store minimal service would be needed and so much less of an issue.

Would there be a covered bridge from the garage to the grocery store complex?

Bill Schoonmaker – Yes, the second and third level would bridge to the grocery store. There is also potential to put in some commercial in that alley, or some kind of façade to improve the appearance

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of the alley. There has been a lot of discussion of this part of the design and there was not a consensus, and it will need to be looked at again.

With regard to the roundabout, look to Keene as they recently installed two new ones in similar situations to good effect. What is the existing parking versus what is shown in the hybrid design?

Bill Schoonmaker – there is also an example of a roundabout in Plymouth, and one on Rt. 21 near Pinkerton Academy. There is 520 spaces shown, and currently there is in the low 300s.

What consideration was given to access and egress for fire trucks to these structures, and for vehicle fires, trailer truck deliveries, and snow plowing?

Bill Schoonmaker – This plan would need a public works review, safety review etc., from a technical standpoint at that time. This is a concept design stage and has not considered those technical aspects in great detail.

There is concern about light and noise from the plaza with multiple levels that may look over existing barriers. What is being anticipated in the second and third floors? There is also concern that Faculty Road seems to be getting the back end of the plaza.

Bill Schoonmaker – The intention is for office or commercial space. The library is a quiet passive structure and would represent a quiet barrier to some parts of the Faculty Road neighborhood. Due to grade changes the ground floor from Faculty Road would be roughly second floor level at the brook, which would be only one story higher than what exists on faculty road given the trees. The question will be how to minimize a certain increase in light and noise. Patrick Field noted that there had been discussion about possibly grading day time uses vs. night time uses in towards Faculty Road, with office space that would minimize night time use. Bill Schoonmaker added that for now retail, commercial, and office space is just space, not designated as anything yet.

Dave Howland noted that this design was the result of intense discussions with the community by the MPSC, which was then relayed to the design teams, so many community concerns such as this have been taken into consideration even if not immediately apparent in the design. Patricia Sherman emphasized the big picture, that the project is trying to show how a complex project like this can be designed with the community, and the end result sought is to leave Durham something that is a product of public participation.

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What has been done with regard to the energy foot print of the Plaza and alternative energy? Particularly with regard to integrating it with the whole plaza, on a larger scale for efficiency.

Bill Schoonmaker – One of documents this project embraced was a new LEEDS document with many “green” criteria. This has very much been in our thinking process and will be a part of a final recommendation. Specifics, however, are still premature, but there is potential.

What about placing the Town Hall on the plaza site?

Bill Schoonmaker – Earlier schemes did have it unified with the library. The current direction was to go with just the library and leave space for future development. Patrick Field noted that this question has been wrestled with extensively. There are questions about the cost, taking up taxable property, etc., and it made sense to come up with a plan that could go forward and leave the question aside for now.

A comment that taking advantage of the light is a good thing, and that the previous scheme with the Town Hall and library together working off a central plaza was a good idea.

One audience member commented that this was a really good design, and the pieces are making more and more sense as he looks at them. He liked the roundabout, and noted it could be an iconic feature if it could work, and converting the downtown to two way traffic was a good idea, and should be looked at as it would make the downtown healthier. It would offer better access to UNH as well. He liked the pedestrian walkways, and commented that the Memorial park area had potential. There was concern about the space behind the Durham Market and the parking garage, and noted a wide friendly access through, but not around the store, needed to be pedestrian friendly. He liked separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and noted that thought needed to be given to how to attract a critical mass of pedestrians, and that there was potential with the downtown and UNH students. He suggested screening all parking and brick walls, and to watch any hard corners at the end of walkways. Maybe provide garage access to left of the tower. The library space could work very well. And trees should be between the sidewalk and the road.

Another comment: that the balance of proportions, parking to facilities, was nicer than what exists now, for sure. Also, potentially where could the TownHall be placed in the perimeter?

Julian Smith explained some of the history around potential sites for the Town Hall, noting the Hamilton Smith garden, vacant lot, the Kyreagas property, and past thought to locate the Town Hall across from the Post Office.

A comment encouraging whatever is developed to be buffered, and to consider building appropriately, using indirect lighting and so forth. The Town Hall needs to stay in central to the business district, and an alternative to using the Kyreages property would be on back side of down town.

Is the brook the actual boundary of the property? What is the current zoning?

Bill Schoonmaker – The brook is not the property line most of the way. By and large the development does conform to zoning, but there has not been a significant zoning test yet. He noted one possibility would be to rezone or issue variances for something that everyone wants and could embrace in terms of this project.

To what degree has a financial analysis been done for this design?

Bill Schoonmaker – There was no detailed analysis on this sketch. Previous designs were analyzed by RKG Associates which did inform this design though.

Is the rest of the property under one owner?

Bill Schoonmaker – There are two owners, the Pinto property, and then Varsity Durham.

Several UNH students in attendance noted that as part of a school project they were working on redesigning the plaza as well and they would be glad to share financial analysis information, and could make a presentation for Durham.

A concern and comment on the locating of commercial space, that it would be most beneficial to attract folks from Main Street with continuous store fronts, like between the parking garage and grocery store, as this would make a make more friendly, village feel.

Patrick Field asked for a general sense of the audience, if this design was heading in the right direction, they could not say right now, or it was heading towards something that one wanted to steer away from.

Ship heading in a direction that you feel good about – roughly 40

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Can't say – 4

Steer away – 2

8:30 Next Steps – Patrick Field and Dave Howland

Dave Howland, now addressing the MPSC, noted that there would be a meeting with the property owner, and that everyone should keep Wednesdays open and look to wrapping things up.

MPSC member's impressions of the hybrid design:

There was a comment that the design teams did great job, and that the commercial anchor tenets are key; and asked if they could see you see themselves working in this plan?

Chuck Cressy noted that truck access was of concern, but the central site location for the grocery store was great. Snow removal would be of practical concern.

Warren Daniel commented that the commercial space west of the parking garage had no parking near it. There needed to be delineated what was office space and what was not, but understood this was not the time yet. Generally speaking he thought this was a great plan.

Lorne Parnell commented he thought this was an excellent plan they have come up with. The road was a positive feature and an excellent idea. The general commercialization of the site was of concern, parking and building situation, but not at this stage, and wished it luck going forward.

Julian Smith noted the original plaza was supported by residents with the idea that it would support business on Main Street and provide services. He hoped there would be significant interest for Town Hall and Library together, and would like to see the site be useful for a mix of people.

Perry Bryant commented that the design was great so far. He commented he would also like to see more done with LEEDS, solar, and alternative energy in general. He commented that there was a real opportunity in the alley behind the grocery, and thought that the design was moving in the right direction.

Crawford Mills had some concern about the parking structure, and Bill Schoonmaker further explained the parking layout as shown in the hybrid. Crawford Mills also commented that Highland Park in Dallas Texas would be of value to look at, and another example in Southern California. He also commented that we do not want to build a canyon that sits empty for much of the day.

Doug Bencks commented that the design process kept opening eyes with the possibilities. He noted that no matter what service vehicles would be a challenge, as they knew from the beginning. What he especially liked was that he could see how this design could be phased in a number of different ways

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based on how the owner wanted to focus. He also liked that the design allowed for the library to go ahead at any time.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer liked to see all the pedestrian paths, and also noted that the center alleyway between the grocery and the garage was of concern. She liked the placement of the library, and liked the mix of buildings and parking, that one could get away from cars in places, and that the pockets of greenery were great. She also noted that the teams did a great job of incorporating the feedback.

Tom Newkirk noted he loved the arc of the road, and that it was an attractive feature. He thought the entry to the library would be very appealing, and agreed that the library was a good place to start.

Dave Howland commented that finding room for trucks was necessary. He also noted that the consensus building process, bringing different constituents together has been great, and that the plan strikes a balance in many ways, pedestrian and auto, green space and buildings, able to address several environmental issues, and access to services like groceries was good. The new site for the library was critical to inspiring support, that it helps make it a village center and not just a shopping center. He noted that John Pinto had the courage to ask for what the Town's vision for the property was and that this took a tremendous amount of foresight, and that the community was invested so far.

Julian Smith thanked Jim Campbell for helping get the grant that has made this process possible, and also thanked Todd Selig for his considerable time and energy.

Walter Rous mentioned a development in Arizona he saw recently, which he thought had examples of what the design was heading for in his opinion. He offered the MPSC and designers pictures of this development.

David Howland discussed upcoming meeting dates, that they will be worked on, and to keep Wednesdays open for now.

Robin Mower commented that they would be very much interested in hear what John Pinto has to say if news of this could be disseminated.

9:06 Adjourn and mingle with design teams

Deborah Hirsch Mayer moved to adjourn the meeting, Julian Smith seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
Town of Durham
MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE
Town Council Chambers
March 5, 2008

MPSC Members Present:

Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice Chair), Crawford Mills, Douglas Bencks, Lorne Parnell, Warren Daniel, Mark Henderson, Chuck Cressy, Perry Bryant, Thomas Newkirk, Deborah Hirsch Mayer

MPSC Members Not Present: Edgar Ramos, Lorne Parnell

AIA150 Representatives, Design Team Members, and Members of the Community Present:

Patricia Sherman, Patrick Field, Bill Schoonmaker, Rob Westhelle, Fabiana Orlando, Tom Ingebritson, Tem Ogan (TNH reporter), Jerry Needell (Durham Town Council), Dan Sheehan, Doneta Sheehan, Sibylle Carlson, Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Chris Mueller, Mike Hoffman, Mike Castagna.

7:07

1. Call to Order (Dave Howland)

2. Welcome and Overview (Dave Howland)

The Agenda was reviewed and some details about each item were discussed.

3. Approval of Agenda

Julian Smith moved to accept the Agenda, Deborah Hirsch Mayer seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Julian Smith wanted to leave time at the end of the meeting to speak about some public misperceptions regarding the plaza redevelopment.

4. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Robin Mower sought clarification of what Julian Smith intended to speak about, as this was something she had wanted to address as well.

5. Discussion about 2/20 hybrid design workshop and update from Patrick Field & Todd Selig on latest developments

Patrick Field updated where the process stood, and reported back that a smaller group met with Mr. Pinto and a potential developer. As he provided some context for this conversation he noted first that the motivation of a developer was expected to be twofold, one to make money, and two because they like to do development. He also cautioned that they would be tough negotiators as

part of their job, and that the MPSC process has been the reverse to normal, with town input on the process prior to the developer's role, and due to that they were taken aback a little. The hybrid design showed Mr. Pinto that the town was open to options for a very different development than what was there today, and it engaged Mr. Pinto and a developer to think about the plaza property's potential, and it pushed along a private process through the MPSC's good work. Patrick Field added that the plaza designs were working without concrete financial underpinnings, and the owner and developer's reaction was geared around that.

Patrick Field commented that the MPSC needed to pull out common themes from across the designs for the final report, and that the library was not a done deal and depended on further work in developing an overall package, as it was unknown if Mr. Pinto wanted to engage other property owners due to the complexity of those relations.

The next steps would be to finish the final report, submit it to the Town Council in a way that pulls out the underlying logic and – in order to allow some flexibility – does not focus on one design. He encouraged the MPSC to hand off the baton, and that a small AIA team may be a good candidate for this, so they could potentially engage the developer, and thus the design work could in that way be influenced by the MPSC work. He also suggested that it may be possible to reconstitute MPSC later if needed.

Dave Howland suggested that the MPSC comment on the ideas in the summary provided by Patrick Field.

Patrick Field suggested that the discussion be separated into two parts, first questions and then ideas for down the road.

Chuck Cressy thanked Patrick Field for all the work in making the summary and all the work done thus far. All other MPSC members added their thanks.

Dave Howland commended that the MPSC has done justice to the task assigned to them by the Town Council and that the final report would be its most important product – would speak loudest for the work of the Committee with the public – and so should have clear, easily understandable recommendations.

Several Committee members mentioned that they were not surprised by the developer's reaction to the hybrid design, and also noted that they were heartened and encouraged that Mr. Pinto was very much engaged and taking steps, and saw the whole process as generating valuable momentum to move the redevelopment forward.

Patrick Field noted that the developer was interested in value added (increased density), and not just expanding a grocery store.

Warren Daniel asked what the Hannaford Brothers said about their meeting with Mr. Pinto.

Chuck Cressy answered that they wanted a 40-year lease.

Crawford Mills expressed concern that the discussion thus far tonight and with Mr. Pinto seemed to imply that all the MPSC work was for naught, and the developer and designers were working on a new plan.

Following was a discussion that circled around Crawford Mills' comment. Several people noted that realistically there was little chance that Mr. Pinto and his developer would have accepted the designs in whole. That the value of the design process was generating a body of principals, guidelines, logic and preferences that followed input from a large body of stakeholders and have a visual expression of these in the designs. Dave Howland described their work as a solid reference for future development, and Perry Bryant noted that the plan to be presented to the Durham Town Council would not involve developer or owner information, but would be based on the MPSC work and the design process. Patrick Field noted that lower density plans (later plans) may be less feasible than higher density plans (earlier plans), and if it was a situation of take it or leave it we would be stuck. Julian Smith commented that the MPSC's job was to present the interest from the town and their preferences, concerns and interests, and to present something fairly simple to the Council and let them know it is up to them and Todd Selig to encourage this process of working with Mr. Pinto.

Patrick Field noted that some of the developer's initial reaction to the hybrid design was "culture clash", as he may not have a full understanding of the work and thinking behind it. At this point the MPSC needed to wait and see what the developer came up with and how well they listen to the community.

Todd Selig commented that the MPSC has done a wonderful job, noting that at the start nothing was going to happen and he believed owner will move forward, but unsure of exactly how or what. Hannaford was interested and this needed to be considered as well as what was best for Mr. Pinto. He said Mr. Pinto came confused about what our intentions were, and he did not want to be cast as a villain if he did not come through with land for the library. He had a sense that Mr. Pinto was open to the community's goals, but needed economic analysis, and needed a housing component to make the economics work for him. Mr. Pinto was also sensitive to existing tenants and needed to accommodate them. Todd stressed that if housing was coming he would like it out along Mill Road. Todd also noted that it would make sense to have a continuing relationship with some component of AIA to interrelate with the owner, if only to advise him along the process.

Todd Selig noted one of Mr. Pinto's primary concerns was that he did not know how he wanted the site oriented yet, and the design may be seen as limiting his options, and he was not ready for that yet. Julian Smith noted that the original development from the late 1960's did not go through this process, and that this process was very important.

There was some discussion and a sense from some MPSC members that the Town should be encouraged to work with Mr. Pinto and take steps to make it known that the Town was willing to work with him, and that this should be noted in the final report of the MPSC.

Todd commented that Mr. Pinto was interested in working with the town, possibly expanding the site to include the downtown, and that the town was interested and noted possibly using something like a new statute to freeze taxes of up to five years to encourage redevelopment. He said Mr. Pinto was open to locating a new library at the plaza but needed some consideration such as possibly money, a land swap, investing in infrastructure, tax arrangements or condoizing the building so that the town would own the library. Mr. Pinto was concerned about 13,000 sq. ft. on the property, and Todd noted that that he communicated the town was ready to work with him on this.

Following was a discussion of what some members thought that the town could do now to encourage Mr. Pinto, and largely focused on streamlining the permitting process.

6. Committee discussion with Patrick and Todd about next steps:

- a. Discuss and consider recommendations for the process ahead, up to and beyond MPSC presentation of work to Town Council
- b. Consider scope and format of MPSC report to Town Council to enable the drafting process to begin

Dave Howland suggested including Todd Selig's approach to working with Mr. Pinto in the report, as well as including the suggestion of keeping a smaller group of the AIA team on call, and that the report include a recommendation to pay the AIA folks from here on for their future work. He commented that the final report should obviate the need to create another group like the MPSC, as another group might not represent the diversity that this committee did. Patrick Field also commented that the AIA folks need to be paid, and it may be helpful to think about where the money might come from, and possibly from a developer. He also encouraged the town to hold onto the AIA team and not have them paid directly from developer, but hypothetically the town could get money from the developer to compensate the AIA team, and this would maintain the integrity of their contribution.

Julian Smith asked who would write the report.

Patrick Field commented that Julian Smith should be the editor, and that Patricia Sherman, Dave Howland and himself could take a stab at the draft.

Following was a discussion about what should be included in the final report. The discussion covered possibly including something about the Town's permitting process in order to streamline the development process. After some discussion, which included comments from Todd Selig that these topics are being taken up by the Town Council, there was a consensus that some language encouraging the Town Council to be open to working with Mr. Pinto and the developer to make things happen in a timely way, or language that encouraged a willingness to compromise and that the Town Council should do whatever they could to make this project work, should be included in the final report.

The discussion also focused on what should be highlighted in the report. There was some discussion about restructuring the Facilitator's Report to reflect the priorities of the MPSC and let Mr. Pinto know that the MPSC also has his interests in mind. The consensus of this discussion was that the final report should be restricted to reflecting the interests of the MPSC constituents and all the community stakeholders that had participated in the process thus far. This discussion also focused on how flexible the final report should be, and the consensus among the MPSC was that the report should focus on the principals of design established early on in the process, on the common threads and principals that emerged through the design process, but not on concrete specifics pictured in the designs. The designs could function as conceptualization of these principals rather than specific requirements. There was an understanding that being too concrete in their recommendations could unnecessarily hinder and restrict the development process at this stage.

Following that, Mike Castagna suggested that the final report should be a synopsis of all the work over the last year, and that the information be categorized in more generic terms. He provided an example of what a basic chapter progression might look like: chapter one – initial proposals and goals; chapter 2 – stakeholder interviews in bullets. Then he suggested that the iterations of the designs could be gone through with what was heard from the public about each and a synopsis for each design. The hybrid design, while not recommending it, but suggesting it, could be provided to give all the possibilities and realities that were discussed in a systematic form. He also commented that this process was changing how Durham did business, and the report should iterate this, and that what was missing from the process was buy-in from the developer. He concluded that the report needed to emphasize the process of how this has happened, and establish the process for future development.

Dave Howland recommended a very readable executive summary that was not shy about the MPSC recommendations.

Doug Bencks commented that the value of this process was in sharing everything that was learned, and that the process provided an opportunity for developers to condense the process, that it provided a real leg up for them, and that is how the report should be portraying the process. He also commented that mention of the library as a potential political chip to get some of the things the developer may want could be useful.

Following that Dave Howland ended this discussion and noted that he, Patrick Field, Patricia Sherman and Julian Smith would draft something, send it out, and then the MPSC could meet publicly to discuss it.

Next dates for meeting – Wednesday April 2nd, 9th, 16th

Dave Howland noted that he would like to find a date when the MPSC all could be present to present to the Town Council.

7. Other Business

Julian Smith read a question from the Durham Taxpayers Association's Forum for Town Council candidates the night before which referred to a huge 'funding gap' in the Mill Plaza redevelopment project. He said he had set the record straight by explaining that no funding gap had been proposed.

8. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Robin Mower commented that she was glad Julian Smith mentioned this question from last night, and this misimpression suggested a failure to effectively communicate with those who had not been following this. She noted the difficulty of developing in Durham, and asked if there couldn't be a way to streamline the process by creating a list of what developers would need to complete the permitting, zoning, etc., processes, and the MPSC could recommend this to the Town Council.

She hoped that on the subject of Hannaford that it be made clear that the Durham community did not want anything like what is on Route 108 that it would need to fold into the community's conception of what the design should be.

Dave Howland encouraged everyone on the MPSC to be spread word that the study process is wrapping up and to clarify as needed any misconceptions about the group's work to date, including the outcome of the meeting with Mr. Pinto on the hybrid design concept.

An unidentified community member commented that the process was very positive, and that the MPSC should be sure to explain what happened with the developer, that they were kept informed of the process and voluntarily chose not to engage sooner.

Chuck Cressy encouraged everyone to recall that it was Mr. Pinto who asked the town what it wanted to see on the site, and that the MPSC has provided that.

9. Adjournment

9:16 – Deborah Hirsch-Mayer moved to adjourn, Julian Smith seconded the motion, and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

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Mill Plaza Study Committee
April 2, 2008

D-R-A-F-T Minutes
MILL PLAZA STUDY COMMITTEE
Town of Durham
Town Council Chambers
April 2, 2008
6:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Dave Howland (Chair), Julian Smith (Vice-Chair), Mark Henderson, Chuck Cressy, Warren Daniel, Doug Bencks, Deborah Hirsch Mayer, Perry Bryant, Lorne Parnell

Committee Members Not Present: Crawford Mills, Edward Ramos, Tom Newkirk

Non-MPSC Members also Present: Patrick Field (Facilitator), Patricia Sherman (AIA 150), Bill Schoonmaker (AIA 150 and Midnight Oil Design Team), Art Guadano (AIA 150), Robin Mower, Henry Smith, Thomas House, Brooke Hallinan, Annmarie Harris, Heidi Ely, Neal Ferris, Ed Garcia

1. Call to Order (Dave Howland), 6:37pm

2. Welcome and Overview (Dave Howland)
Brief overview of the Agenda for the meeting.

3. Approval of Agenda

Julian Smith moved to accept the Agenda, Perry Bryant seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes from 2/20/08 public workshop and 3/5/08 meeting

Julian Smith noted that on the 2/20/08 Minutes Tim Treghea should be added to the list of Community Members Present, and that the spelling of the name “Heilbronner” needed to be corrected.

Lorne Parnell noted he was not present on March 5th.

Robin Mower noted a concern from the 2/20/08 minutes where a comment made by Bill Schoonmaker (page 5 second to last paragraph) suggested that the library being placed in the Chesley Drive corner of the Plaza lot would serve to block light and noise to the Faculty Road neighborhood, and noted that this location would not serve that function for much of the Faculty neighborhood. Bill Schoonmaker was present and noted that indeed what was implied in the wording would not be the case, and the

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wording could be amended to read as “parts of Faculty Road” or words to that effect. Robin Mower also noted that in the 3/5/08 Minutes on the last page her comment had been misquoted and wanted to change that wording to “noted the impression that it is difficult to develop in Durham” or words to that effect.

Bill Schoonmaker noted that in the 2/20/08 Minutes, “phase one would likely include Mill Pond Road” was incorrect and that it was actually “Mill Road”.

Julian Smith moved to accept the Minutes as amended, Perry Bryant seconded the motion, and the motion was carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Robin Mower thanked the MPSC for being so thoughtful with the many challenges that have faced this project.

Henry Smith commended the MPSC for the reports produced thus far, and noted that the village center concept was critical, and that the economic development aspects and locating the library were very positive. He noted there was no mention of an inn or hotel in the report, and sees this as positive. Item # 6 in the long report dealing with Chesley Drive, he would add wording that made it clear that opening that issue could be disastrous to the whole project, and he was glad that it was off the table.

6. Discussion and approval of key elements of MPSC final report (Patrick Field and Dave Howland)

Dave Howland commented that he would like to incorporate illustrations with these documents, which could be pulled from the designs, or new perspective drawings could be created.

a) Table of Contents

Patrick Field read through the layout of table of contents and asked for specific feedback on the organization as a first step.

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April 2, 2008

Perry Bryant commented that it looked good and he could go with it as is, and there was general consensus among the Committee members agreeing with Perry Bryant's comment.

b) One-page MPSC Recommendations summary

Patrick Field asked for comments and feedback on the seven general headings.

Dave Howland commented that despite the numbering the topics were specifically not prioritized, and were numbered to facilitate discussion.

Perry Bryant suggested removing the number headings altogether in the final draft to avoid possible confusion regarding prioritization, and there was consensus among Committee members that this would be good idea. Perry Bryant also recommended that in heading seven, "Protect College Brook and Its Buffer" that they take out "protect" and maybe put in "Buffer College Brook". There was a short discussion on this point by several Committee members supporting the existing wording and Perry Bryant noted that the wording was not essential to him and he was OK with it.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version "Work Together for Success" narrative.

Doug Bencks noted that the tone of the language in the long version and short version were not in sync, and that he thought the language should follow the short version, promoting interaction and advocacy. Dave Howland noted that they would make sure that the language in the long version followed the tone of the short version.

Perry Bryant raised a concern that the language suggested that the developer had to make concessions, and he noted that because this was private property this was not the case, that any changes would be voluntary. Julian Smith asked if it would help to remove the words "mutually acceptable". Perry Bryant agreed that would help, and that he would also suggest removing "before the process begins".

Dave Howland commented that the intent was to ask the town to work with the owner, and that the "before the application process" wording was important. Patricia Sherman commented that one of the reasons the AIA started this project was to shift how the development process was done, and that they were not seeking to be co-designers or to micro-manage, and that they were asking if they could sit

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with the owner and developer prior to the application process to come up with a concept that would be acceptable to all parties. Patricia Sherman commented that the original thought was to have AIA become an advocate for the town, but that now the role was being conceptualized as more of a face to face with the designer and have some discussions about the redevelopment with all the interests from this public process in mind. Doung Bencks noted that the language in the long version was more in line with what Patricia Sherman said than the short version.

Mark Henderson commented that the specific wording suggested that the developer would have to bring the design to the public and this would send the wrong message. Warren Daniel noted that they could shift wording to be softer in tone and more in line with the MPSC intent, to which there was general agreement.

Patrick Field summarized the discussion and noted that people preferred wording that recommended the town work with the owner and the developer to “align” interests. He noted also that there were concerns about asking the developer to run his design by the public in addition to the public hearing process, and that in terms the timing of negotiations AIA input would be better earlier than later. He noted a consensus that the wording “mutually acceptable” would be taken out of the short version and language from the longer version would be used. Doug Bencks noted that the last sentence from the long version would work well. Patrick Field also noted a consensus that the words “share with the public” would also be dropped, following a discussion on this wording.

Dave Howland emphasized the goal was to work with the owners to align interests, and do this before the formal process began. Dave Howland also commented that it was not out of order that the MPSC recommend that the Town Council take the MPSC work and recommendations seriously. Deborah Hirsch Mayer cautioned that it was also important to not weaken the language too much.

Chuck Cressy suggested that the report not be specific about locations for a particular businesses, and make it clear that locations are fluid. There was general assent to that idea.

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Warren Daniel noted that there was no mention about the three design plans in the document. Dave Howland responded that this tied back to his initial comments about Bill Schoonmaker and how the design might be presented, that drawings could illustrate the principals being put forth in the report.

Doug Bencks suggested that upfront the report ought to emphasize to the Town Council the iterative process that the design process underwent as this was key, capturing the process and public input that was incorporated into the designs.

At this point there was a discussion about using graphics to illustrate the report, as a way of representing the principals the report. Patrick Field noted possibly using sketches of businesses wrapping around Mill Pond Road, the roundabout, one of the designs that shows setback design buffer for the brook, maybe with a nice curve, pull out some articulation of traffic and pedestrian flow, and articulation of the rounded nature of the designs, not huge brick edifices. Bill Schoonmaker commented that his idea was to find small pieces from the designs that would not be too generic so as to be meaningless, but not so specific as to get a negative reaction. He noted that he would add to Patrick Field's list a depiction of community space, show the idea of mixed use, show the College Brook buffering, show some green space, maybe from the path bike path along the brook to the road to show some depth. He noted that visuals would make the report clearer.

Bill Schoonmaker also commented that he would recommend a more fully resolved hybrid plan, and that he was reluctant to leave the hybrid as is as a bench mark. Patricia Sherman commented that she would be reluctant to make more revisions as it might seem like the MPSC's recommendation, as "the plan", but maybe they could put comments in the margins. Bill Schoonmaker agreed that this would likely be a better idea and that adding comments or notes would be fine as well.

Patrick Field summarized that the crux was that it would be good to add graphics.

Doung Bencks asked what the cost of using color in the report would be. Patricia Sherman commented that at least some color copies should be made.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback about how to use the Hybrid Design.

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There was discussion about the hybrid design and general consensus that the hybrid should be used in part or whole to illustrate the principals of the report and reflects the public input, but that it should not be “the plan” that MPSC would recommend.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Village Center” narrative.

This discussion lead to two changes in the narrative, removing the first 8 words prior to the first comma and changing the heading to “Create a Village Center with Quality Design” rather than “Establish a Village...”

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Promote Balanced Mix Use” narrative.

There was general consensus that this section was fine as is.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Balance of Site access and Flow” narrative.

This discussion suggested adding wording to the effect of “integrate the redevelopment with the existing downtown”.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Include a New Town Library” narrative.

There was general agreement that this was an important point, and that it would be a good idea to keep the strong recommendation to provide negotiation points for the town and developer.

Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Respect the Neighborhood” narrative.

Patrick Field summarized this discussion and noted that they needed to bring the longer narrative into line with the shorter version in respect to “student housing”, leaving in student housing and fixing the longer narrative.

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Patrick Field next asked for feedback on the short version “Protect College Brook Buffer”.

There was general consensus that this section was fine as is.

c) Detailed Recommendations as drafted by Patrick Field (generate with architects ideas for illustrating this section)

For this Agenda item Patrick Field had one question, if the MPSC wanted to be specific about the location of the library, if people wanted that there or not. He mentioned that copy edits for the rest of the report could be given to him personally.

There was a general sense that the specific recommendation for the library in its designed location should stay in.

Dave Howland commented that he, Julian Smith, Patrick Field and Patricia Sherman would make the revisions discussed during this meeting, draft an executive summary and a letter of transmittal, which everyone would sign. He also noted that he would work with Adam Knowlton-Young, the recorder working with CBI and AIA 150, to build the appendices, and that Bill Schoonmaker could work on the graphics. The plan was to have a couple PDF files to send before the next meeting to get final comments and approval of.

Julian Smith recommended that in the table of contents the first appendix (the town council charge to the MPSC) should become the first item in part II “Process and Background”.

Dave Howland commented that he would work with Luke Vincent to have the MPSC website be a repository, and then have hard copies of the MPSC report at the Town Hall and at the Library. He also encouraged the MPSC members to invite their constituents to come to the Town Council meeting when the report would be presented and to build some excitement about it.

Warren Daniel made a motion to approve what has been generated so far and the revisions discussed tonight. Deborah Hirsch Mayer seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

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7. Confirm final work schedule

4/16/08 – MPSC/ AIA150 meeting to discuss and approve completed final report, 6:30pm

5/5/08 – MPSC/ AIA150 team attends Town Council meeting to present report, 7pm

Dave Howland noted that he was aiming to have a draft ready by the Monday before the next meeting on 4/16/08.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer asked if they could request that the Town Council schedule this item first.

Julian Smith noted that presentation items come earlier in the process typically.

8. Public Comment (up to 10 minutes w/ max 2 minutes per person)

Robin Mower commented with respect to the neighborhood item, the long version. She first pointed out that surveying has been happening on the property owned by John Pinto, and some areas are designated as wetlands, and the wording on page five, the first paragraph, “Construction of buildings” should be clarified given this wetland designation.

In the last paragraph, about faculty neighborhood input, she recalled there was discussion that some neighbors did want all the housing closer to the Main Street side. She also noted that there was no mention of height recommendations of buildings in the report so far and there may be some resistance to tall buildings going in. Patricia Sherman commented that wording such as “scales appropriate to surrounding neighborhoods” could be inserted.

Robin Mower noted that there was still some residual concern about broken promises and past compliance with rules from the current development and that something about iron clad adherence to recommendations might be in order.

Annamarie Harris commented that conditions of approval could also be addressed through the formal planning process. She also thanked the Committee for their hard work, and asked where Mr. Pinto was on all this, and that she had good feelings about this.

Chuck Cressy commented that the surveying was a positive sign that Mr. Pinto was involved.

Henry Smith expressed thanks for all the hard work of the Committee.

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Warren Daniel wanted to publicly acknowledge Dave Howland and Julian Smith and all their work in this process.

Deborah Hirsch Mayer thanked Adam Knowlton-Young for his work as well.

Julian Smith wished to thank Todd Selig for all his work as well.

9. Adjournment 8:24pm

Deborah Hirsch Mayer moved to adjourn, Chuck Cressy seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.