

May 5, 2008

Dear Town Council members,

The Mill Plaza Study Committee is proud to transmit our report and recommendations for redeveloping the Mill Plaza property. This report reflects dozens of public meetings, workshops, and focus groups with the Durham community held during the past year with generous assistance from our partners in the New Hampshire Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. With the encouragement of Plaza owner John Pinto, we have accomplished what he asked of Durham in Fall, 2006: to “develop its vision for the future” of a redeveloped Plaza property.

The goal of this report is to offer a vision for a redeveloped “village center” that revitalizes our downtown, brings economic return to the property owner, and is reflective of community needs and concerns. It is most likely to be embraced by the community, because it stems from extensive consensus building.

In addition to our seven recommendations, this report includes a series of site plans that evolved throughout our work. These are intended to serve as a reference for the many possibilities that exist for the site. The latest of these, the so-called “hybrid” design, received much positive feedback from the community. It is not intended to be “the design” for the site, but rather demonstrate how Durham’s many goals can be met in a single approach.

While we have accomplished much, the critical task remains to align the community’s goals with the concrete needs and objectives of the property owner, leaseholders, and the developer of the site. So we begin with our recommendation to “Work Together for Success”– to arrive at plans for a redeveloped village center that leverage the vision expressed by our public in this report. We thank you for the privilege and challenge of serving the town in this task and look to your leadership in the exciting work ahead of establishing a new village center.

Most Sincerely,
The Mill Plaza Study Committee,

Dave Howland, Chair
Faculty Neighborhood

Julian Smith, Vice Chair
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*University of
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