



TOWN OF DURHAM
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Town Planner's Recommendation
Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Mill Plaza Redevelopment. Design Review for partial redevelopment of Mill Plaza Shopping Center site including 44,110 square feet of new commercial space, with an addition to the existing Durham Marketplace building, two new mixed-use buildings, a separate bank with drive through, 120 residential apartments, and other site changes. Colonial Durham Associates, LP, c/o John Pinto, owner. Joseph Persechino, Tighe & Bond, Design Engineer. Adam Wagner, DeStefano Architects, Architect. Tax Map 5, Lot 1-1. Central Business Zoning District.

- I recommend the application be discussed and continued to October 22 when the public hearing will be held.

Please note the following:

- Design review. As a design review, pursuant to the Planning Board Rules of Procedure, we have already sent notices alerting the public that the project would be presented on October 8 and the public hearing would be held on October 22.
- Positive elements. I think that many in the community would like to see the Mill Plaza site redeveloped/updated in some fashion. There are many favorable aspects of the proposal:
 - turning the rear building perpendicular to the existing front building will create a much better sense of space
 - the landscaping will be improved
 - there is potential to create harmonious pedestrian circulation through the site
 - The proposed bank as an outbuilding will reinforce the streetscape along Mill Road
 - The Durham Marketplace building will get a new design and an addition to front Mill Road
- Residential apartments. However, the Planning Board will certainly want to evaluate the proposal to add 120 residential apartments to accommodate 480 residents very carefully.
- New ordinance. Note that the Planning Board is proposing an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to increase the minimum habitable area per occupant in apartments from 300 square feet to 600 square feet. The board proposed this amendment at the September 10

meeting and the notice for the amendment was posted prior to the notice for this application (which was received on September 12). Thus, in accordance with RSA 676:12, this application would be subject to the proposed amendment (unless the amendment is ultimately rejected).

- Conditional use. Multi-unit dwellings are permitted by conditional use only, so the applicant would need to satisfy the eight criteria for multi-unit dwellings to be approved.