

Durham Police Department
86 Dover Road
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

MEMORANDUM

November 6, 2019

To: Michael Behrendt, Town Planner

From: Dave Kurz, Chief of Police

Re: Mill Plaza Redevelopment Commercial/Student Housing

I provide this supplement as my third iteration since 2016 with the goal to remain relevant to the proposals as they have fluctuated. After reviewing the most recent Redevelopment Plan for Mill Plaza I have the following comments:

Student Housing

I have attended and observed a number of meetings as this proposal has morphed into a multi-level complex with the student housing located to the northeastern portion of the property. While I have consistently been supportive of the concept of housing UNH students in appropriate locations within Durham, this segment of the property is the more appropriate location abutting the Orion and Grange properties which are currently student housing.

The Durham Police Department's experience with large complexes of student housing has demonstrated the importance of 24/7 on-site security and management. While the issue surrounding on-site versus no on-site management of student rentals is not simplistic, the Durham Police experience has recognized extremely positive attributes of a well-managed property when the owners/managers remain with the property and are engaged with the community! The Durham Police have long maintained that management must equate to more than simply retrieving the rental checks at the end of each month. It is my contention that owners must be involved with the building complex, the community and desirous of being responsive to the surrounding neighborhood. The management company that is invested, literally and figuratively into the Durham community, is the most critical component for a well-managed and mutually successful property that will prove to be successful.

Even a well-managed property will have an impact upon policing services. However, it is my opinion and aspiration that a complex of this nature with the housing located in the most appropriate location of the property may assist in lessening ancillary challenges with conflicting lifestyles of students and residents.

It is when this collision occurs that there is increased demand for police presence straining limited resources.

Parking

The location of this complex and the philosophy of the management group should discourage renters from bringing automobiles through a very definitive statement via lease agreements. While this location has opportunity for renter parking, it should be limited and it is my opinion that the available spaces should be designed for the use of the commercial entities within the Mill Plaza. While several spaces may be available for handicap renters, the proximity to the UNH campus should serve as encouragement that renters do not require automobiles. Additionally, Durham and UNH have worked diligently to offer alternative traffic options such as our relationship with “ZipCar” where spaces in the downtown have been committed to this ride-sharing strategy. Additionally the robust UNH bus transportation system is extremely effective enabling easy access to Dover, Newington Mall and Portsmouth. The Amtrak Downeaster Train provides easy access to Brunswick, Maine and Boston. All these options offer ample transportation for any student attending UNH.

Additional Comments

- In a complex of this size with multi-buildings, it is critical that unit numbering be developed so that public safety personnel can quickly locate units, i.e., Building A which would contain A120 for unit 20 on the 1st floor; A320 for unit 20 on the 3rd floor, etc.
- Landscaping designs should focus upon keeping intruders easily observable by maximizing visibility of people in parking areas, building entrances, eliminating darkened areas by a well-conceived shrubbery planting and deliberately placed lighting on streets, parking areas and sidewalks.
- Hardware should feature window locks, dead bolts for doors, interior door hinges and well light interior corridors. All common building entrances should have locks that automatically lock when the door closes.
- Any undercover or underground parking must be well-lighted.
- Any electronic surveillance such as videotaping in parking and other high traffic areas is **strongly** encouraged.

Final Comments

The continuous addition of students living in the downtown area, even with well-managed oversight, presents challenges for the Durham Police Department. It is hope that I have adequately conveyed that the age group that will be residing in

this complex present inherent policing challenges to a small law enforcement agency such as Durham.

It should be noted that the Durham Police has developed and implemented a number of programs including our nationally recognized community policing "Good Neighbor Program" in conjuncture with the Problem Oriented Policing concept. Additionally we have developed a program in partnership with Durham landlords that notify these them via email after each incident that police are required to respond to their property. Each quarter, every landlord receives a correlated analysis of ALL calls to any rental property in Durham for that three-month period. This allows the landlord to compare activity, or non-activity of their property to other during the same timeframe.

The Good Neighbor program allows an officer to visit off-campus student rentals in the immediate aftermath of police response to the property. The officer is able to discuss strategies that will prevent repeat police intervention and enable the residents to be less intrusive to their neighborhood. However, while these programs are designed to lessen police intervention and the need for additional staff, they still involve department employees to complete the reports, correlate the data and send notifications to the landlords.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.