



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Town of Durham

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Planning Consultant's Review

Planning Board Meeting – Wednesday, June 13, 2018

- XI. **Mill Plaza Redevelopment. 7 Mill Road.** Acceptance review and discussion of formal site plan application. Colonial Durham Associates, LP, property owner. Sean McCauley, agent. Joe Persechino, Tighe & Bond, engineer. Steve Cecil and Emily Innes, Harriman, site planner. Ari Pollack, attorney. Central Business District. Map 5, Lot 1-1.
- I recommend that the Board vote to accept the applications for site plan review and conditional use permits as complete and to schedule a public hearing for June 27, 2018.
 - I further recommend that the Board take the following additional actions:
 - Vote to require the applicant to prepare a Traffic Impact Analysis and a Fiscal Impact Analysis.
 - Vote to require the applicant to pay for a run of the Durham Traffic Model.

Please note the following:

- 1) In addition to the application for site plan review, Colonial Durham Associates has submitted applications for three conditional use permits: (1) mixed use with retail, (2) work within the Wetland Overlay District, and (3) work within the Shoreland Overlay District. I recommend that the Board vote to include all four applications in the public hearing.
- 2) While some items in the site plan review checklist have not yet been submitted, the application certainly contains sufficient information for the Planning Board and Town staff to understand the project and begin consideration. The applicant has identified the following items as to be submitted at a later date or to be arranged with Town staff:
 - (a) Dimensions of signs
 - (b) Elevation drawings with colors & materials
 - (c) Type of illumination, if proposed
 - (d) Construction management plan
 - (e) Traffic study, if appropriate
 - (f) Fiscal impact study, if requested
 - (g) System for addressing buildings and units

- 3) The Site Plan Regulations do not require a fiscal impact analysis to be conducted for every proposed development, but provide that the Planning Board may require such a study in individual cases (Article 5 – Independent Studies and Investigations). The Mill Plaza project is of a scale that justifies requiring such a study, and the applicant has in fact initiated a fiscal impact analysis. Based on some of the questions at the May 9 Planning Board meeting, I have suggested to the applicant’s consultant that he consider potential spin-off impacts on other businesses in the downtown area; however, it should be noted that this would go beyond the typical scope of a fiscal impact study.
- 4) Similarly, the Site Plan Regulations provide that the Board may require a traffic impact analysis to be completed when justified by the scale of a proposed development. Furthermore, in addition to a conventional traffic impact analysis, the Regulations provide that the Board may require the applicant to pay for a run of the Durham Traffic Model to determine likely impacts. Town staff and planning consultant have discussed this with the applicant’s team and have indicated that both the traffic model run and a focused traffic impact analysis will likely be required by the Planning Board. The applicant’s engineer has met with Town staff, the consulting planner, and representatives of the engineering firm that maintains the traffic model, to discuss the appropriate scope of the studies and to coordinate on data acquisition.
- 5) There are some discrepancies between the civil/site plans (designated by “C” in the plan set) and the landscape/planting plans (designated by “L”). Rather than require these discrepancies to be addressed at this time, I recommend that the applicant be allowed to consider input from the TRG and from the Board and public at the public hearing. This process will likely result in revisions to both the civil and landscape elements of the plan set, at which time the separate elements can be brought into harmony with each other.
- 6) Because of the scale and complexity of this project, I recommend that the applicant present the proposal to the Board and the public in manageable segments. My initial suggestion is that the presentation at the June 27th public hearing should address the overall site plan, the proposed building designs, and the landscaping approach. The next session of the public hearing, potentially on July 11, could then move on to detailed site issues such as circulation, utilities, and stormwater/drainage management. A subsequent meeting could focus on the traffic and fiscal impact analyses.
- 7) This proposal will be presented to the Technical Review Group on Tuesday, June 19.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Taintor, AICP
Community Planning Consultant
June 11, 2018