



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Town of Durham

8 Newmarket Road

Durham, NH 03824-2898

Phone (603) 868-8064

www.ci.durham.nh.us

Planning Consultant's Review

Planning Board Meeting – Wednesday, January 12, 2022

- X. ***Public Hearing - Mill Plaza Redevelopment***, 7 Mill Road. Continued review of application for site plan and conditional use for mixed use redevelopment project, drive-through facility for bank, and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts. Colonial Durham Associates, property owner. Sean McCauley, agent. Joe Persechino, Tighe & Bond, engineer. Emily Innes and Sharon Ames, Harriman, project designer. Ari Pollack, attorney. (Rick Taintor is serving as the Town's Contract Planner.) Central Business District. Map 5, Lot 1-1.
- I recommend that the Board reopen the public hearing and vote to continue the hearing to February 9, 2022.

Please note the following:

- 1) Recap of previous meeting: On December 8, 2021, the Planning Board opened the continued public hearing on the revised Site Plan for the Mill Plaza redevelopment project. The Board's peer review consultant, Janet Bernardo of the Horsley Witten Group, discussed her review of the applicant's revised stormwater report and answered questions from the Board.

Following the consultant's discussion with Board members, residents commented on the existing plaza's impacts on downstream flooding and water quality, and on their concerns that the proposed project might worsen these impacts. In response to one resident's question, the applicant's engineer committed to providing information on typical rates of nitrogen removal by the proposed stormwater management system.

Residents also commented on the proposed project's potential impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, including increased noise and traffic, and discussed the conditional use criteria that must be met in order for the project to be approved.

The hearing was continued to the Board's meeting on January 12, 2022.

- 2) On December 10, in response to an inquiry from the applicant's engineer, I advised that landscaping, tree species and planting methods, and buffer restoration would likely be significant topics of discussion at the January 12 meeting. I recommended that the applicant's landscape architect and buffer restoration consultant be present to respond to questions on these topics. I also noted that impacts on traffic and property values

continue to be of concern to residents, as evidenced by comments at the December 8 meeting.

- 3) On December 20, I sent the applicant's representatives the following list of "Landscape Notes and Questions" which I requested be addressed at the January 12 meeting:

1. Protection of existing trees:

- (a) Two conflicting details: C-508 vs L3.0 – resolve by selecting one, or indicate where each one applies
- (b) Show area of tree protection in northeast corner
- (c) Address how trees will be protected on adjacent property

2. Aside from the landscaped islands in the parking lot, trees are proposed in planters along sidewalks. There appear to be three different sizes/types of sidewalk tree plantings, including: (1) larger raised planters in front of Building A; (2) smaller flush planters along south side of Building B; and (3) smallest flush planters along west side of Building B and between Buildings B and C. Details should be provided for each of these tree planting types.

- (a) Will engineered soil be used in these locations as in the landscaped islands?
- (b) Is enough soil volume provided for the red maples and other proposed trees?

3. Consider more variety in tree types. For example, the plan shows 24 red maples and 25 redbuds.
4. Clarify extent of engineered soil in landscaped islands. Is the intent to only provide the engineered soil under the trees (and extending 8 feet beyond the curb), or will engineered soil extend the entire length of the islands, including under other planting?
5. Per TRG meeting of March 16, 2021, applicant will provide specifications for engineered soil.

The above list is not meant to represent all outstanding issues that have been raised by residents and Board members, and some residents have submitted more detailed questions and concerns about the landscaping plans.

- 4) The Conservation Commission's January 4, 2021, report to the Planning Board was submitted when the proposed redevelopment plan included more impact within the wetland buffer than the current plan. In part because of the significant plan changes that have happened over the last year, the Commission will revisit the proposed project at its meeting on January 24, 2022, and will likely submit an updated report and recommendation to the Planning Board. Therefore, it would be appropriate to keep the public hearing open until after the Commission's meeting, rather than having to

readvertise and reopen the hearing in order to receive and consider the Commission's new report.

- 5) Before voting on the application for site plan approval, the Planning Board must evaluate the project against the criteria for the four conditional use permits being requested. I do not anticipate that the Board will be able to begin this evaluation at the January 12 meeting and therefore have not attached my proposed template for discussing the criteria to this report. If you wish to refer to that template, it is attached to my reports for the October 27 and December 8 meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Taintor, AICP
Community Planning Consultant
January 6, 2022