



## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Town of Durham

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### *Planning Consultant's Review*

#### **Planning Board Meeting – Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

- XI. ***Public Hearing - Mill Plaza Redevelopment***, 7 Mill Road. 1) Site plan review and 2) Conditional Use for mixed use and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts. 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. Rick Taintor, 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 it to a date certain in January or February 2020.

Please note the following:

- 1) On November 14, 2018, the Planning Board voted to continue the public hearing on this application "to a date following an agreement being reached between Colonial Durham and Hannaford." Colonial Durham has now reached a conceptual agreement with Hannaford that involves providing more parking on site for the Plaza's nonresidential users (employees and customers) and providing a separate proximate parking lot to serve the residential uses. This proposal is shown schematically on the "Conceptual Site Plan" dated 10/22/2019 and submitted to the Planning office on October 28, 2019.
- 2) Please note that although the revised plan is titled "Conceptual Site Plan", this does not mean that the project has reverted to the Preliminary Conceptual Consultation Phase that is available through the Site Plan Review process. That phase is an optional step in Pre-Application Review, whereas the Mill Plaza Redevelopment project is currently being reviewed under a formal application for Site Plan Approval.
- 3) The "Conceptual Site Plan" shows a proposed parking lot on the adjacent parcel owned by Peter Murphy (Toomerfs LLC) with a pedestrian-only connection to the Mill Plaza site. This off-site parking lot is technically not part of Colonial Durham's application for site plan approval, and is instead the subject of a separate application for design review that is also on the agenda for this meeting. Nevertheless, there is an explicit connection between the two projects, which is spelled out in two ways.

First, the site plan includes a statement that "157 of the surface parking spaces are proposed to be leased from the adjacent parcels (Tax Map 5, Lots 1-15 and 1-16)." The applicant's cover letter states, "To link the two projects/properties, CDA anticipates a



Some changes from the 2018 site plan to the new plan include the following:

- The 2018 plan included two buildings (designated as C1 and C2) that were joined into what would look like a single L-shaped building wrapping around the third proposed building (designated as B). In the new plan, building C1 has been eliminated and building B has been shifted northward.
  - The 2018 plan proposed a continuous street and pedestrian route through the site, extending from the front of the Hannaford building across the front of building C1, and then wrapping around building B. In the new plan, that street and pedestrian route are eliminated as a result of removing building C1 and shifting building B to the north.
  - The reconfiguration of the proposed buildings results in a reduction in overall building coverage and an increase in the total area of parking spaces. Compared to the 2018 plan, the new plan increases the total number of on-site parking spaces from 363 to 424 (+61, or 17%), and the number of on-site surface spaces from 263 to 340 (+77, or 29%). This increase in the proposed on-site parking supply is accompanied by a reduction in potential parking demand due to a 22% decrease in the number of proposed beds (from 330 to 258).
  - In order to compensate (in part) for the reduction in building footprints, building B is now proposed to be four stories tall rather than three stories.
- 5) Because the Conceptual Site Plan agreed to by Hannaford differs in several respects from the previous iteration, Colonial Durham has submitted this schematic plan for input from the Planning Board before proceeding with full site engineering and design, and with detailed traffic and fiscal impact studies. After receiving such input, the applicant anticipates being able to provide a complete revised plan set and to restart the series of topical review hearings in January or February 2020.
- 6) The Technical Review Group reviewed the Conceptual Site Plan at its meeting on November 5, 2019. Some general comments were provided to the applicant at that time, recognizing that substantive review and recommendations must wait for submission of a complete plan set.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Taintor, AICP  
Community Planning Consultant  
November 7, 2019