



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, July 22, 2020

IX. ***Public Hearing - Mill Plaza Redevelopment***, 7 Mill Road. *Presentation of proposed architectural design.* Continued review of application for site plan and conditional use for mixed use redevelopment project and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts. Colonial Durham Associates, property owner. Sean McCauley, agent. Joe Persechino, Tighe & Bond, engineer. 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 it to August 26, 2020.

Please note the following:

- 1) On June 24, 2020, the Planning Board opened the continued public hearing on the revised Site Plan for the Mill Plaza redevelopment project. The applicant's real estate appraisal consultant, Brian White, presented his assessment of the impacts of the proposed Mill Plaza redevelopment on the property values of nearby residences. Members of the public presented extensive comments on the real estate study and requested that an independent analysis of fiscal and/or real estate value impacts be conducted. The Board voted to continue the hearing to the July 22 meeting.
- 2) The Board discussed whether to engage a consultant for an independent study of fiscal, economic, and/or real estate market impacts. It was agreed that the Chair would consult with Town staff, including Assessor Jim Rice, as to the appropriate scope of such a study, and would report back to the Board for further discussion and decision. However, due to vacation schedules that consultation has not yet taken place.
- 3) At its June 17 meeting the Board voted to request an independent peer review of the applicant's traffic study, and scheduled the traffic study presentation for the July 22 meeting so that the applicant's report and the peer reviewer's comments could be discussed in the same meeting. However, the applicant is still not ready to release the traffic study, and has therefore requested that the July 22 meeting be used instead for presentation of the proposed architectural designs.
- 4) Because the Town's architectural design standards for the Central Business District are extensive and detailed, the Board may wish to consider engaging an independent design

professional to evaluate the proposed architectural designs for the Mill Plaza project and report back to the Board at a future meeting.

- 5) As a reminder, the following items still remain to be addressed. I have provided some tentative meeting dates for these topics based on continuing the process of meeting once per month on the Mill Plaza project. This timeline is of course subject to change depending on when the applicant's materials are available, how much time is required for any independent reviews, and the Board's workload.
- Discussion as to whether the Board will commission an independent economic or real estate impact study, and what the scope of that study should be (this question was discussed at the May 13 and June 24 meetings but the appropriate scope of such a report has not been decided) (at this meeting or in August)
 - Review of proposed architectural design (including review by independent design professional, if required)
 - Presentation and review of CDA's traffic study (8/26 or later)
 - Presentation and review of the independent peer review of the traffic study (8/26 or later)
 - Presentation and discussion of the independent economic or real estate impact study (if the Board decides to commission such a study) (8/26 or later)
 - Residential uses (i.e., mixed-use conditional use permit) (9/23?)
 - College Brook buffer management / stream improvement plan (9/23?)
 - Wetland and shoreland conditional use permit criteria (9/23?)
 - Presentation and review of complete revised plan set (10/14 – 11/18?)
 - Findings, waivers, and conditions of approval – site plan review (12/9?)
 - Findings and conditions of approval – conditional use permits (12/9?)

As this list indicates, if the Board continues with the once-per-month schedule of meetings for this project, the review process is likely to continue through the remainder of this year. This assumes that multiple topics can be taken up at each meeting, which will depend on the number of other applications before the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Taintor, AICP
Community Planning Consultant
July 16, 2020