

April 13, 2020

Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

RE: *Continued Public Hearing - **Mill Plaza Redevelopment**. 7 Mill Road. Continued review of formal application for: 1) Site plan and 2) Conditional Use for mixed use redevelopment project and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts...*

Good evening,

In consideration of all our attention spans and the meeting length, I provide this "Cliff Notes" version of my letter of April 10, in which I addressed some of the more obvious shortcomings of the **fiscal impact analysis** submitted by Fougere Planning.

Surely evaluating the financial impact on Durham of this prominent and complex project should address **uncertainties inherent in the changing economic landscape**, the future of university enrollment, and impacts on adjacent residential properties. The project could well have a positive financial impact, but we need an analysis in which the community can have a better degree of confidence.

Here are just a few questions and observations:

- 1) The Oyster River Cooperative School District funding formula is based on two components. One of those is assessed property values. Was explicitly considered?
- 2) Adjacent property values, particularly for residential properties, are not addressed (or perhaps I missed it). Why not?
- 3) This project would house a large number of students immediately adjacent to a single-family neighborhood, as well as adjacent to downtown bars. We cannot know what the impact will be on non-emergency police calls. It may not be as minimal as assumed.
- 4) Will the Town need to hire an additional Problem Oriented Policing officer?
- 5) The assumption about an increase in car registrations should be reconsidered.

It is worth noting that an article titled "Prospects and Perils of Fiscal Impact Analysis," published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, points out limitations of such analyses and raises the potential for errors, noting that "spending and revenue multipliers" are typically "based on assumptions that have not been verified in the literature."

In summary, I urge that you consider requesting a second, more thorough report. I seem to recall there is precedent for doing so in the case of Madbury Commons.

Sincerely yours,

Robin Mower