

To: Durham Planning Board/ **From:** Joshua Meyrowitz, 7 Chesley Dr. / **Date:** Sep 20, 2021

Please consider amending 8-25-21 Draft Minutes to reflect essence of Ellie Lonske's concerns

"Ms. Lonske said the demographics of the university population is dropping, and instead of providing private student housing, what is really needed is workforce housing and they would not have to change the architecture of the plan and that would eliminate a large number of objections to the project." ([Minutes](#))

Lonske ([video](#), 8:00 - 8:05 pm): I'm new to the Board, but not new to Planning. And I want to compliment you; I think you've done a fine job of addressing a lot of the issues that have been raised. What I'm gonna start off with will sound critical, but I do have a constructive suggestion, after the hard part.

And the elephant in the room here is the private student dorm part. And, uh, you know, one of my eccentric old lady things I do, is pick up beer cans. And beer cans are not the issue. That's just litter. But I'll tell you something – I've been doing this for a year and a half, and well over 1,000 beer cans –but it isn't the beer cans; it is also, fortunately that it's not as many, beer bottles, particularly broken beer bottles that you find along the road, which for children, for people walking dogs. But even that isn't a *huge* deal. Here's the part that may be surprising. My usual route, and I live in Riverwoods, and I'll walk up to Bagdad Rd and then Madbury and then into the center of town and drop off 30 beer cans in the receptacle that says "cans and bottles only." But along the way, not only do I pick up cans and bottles, but particularly after a weekend, I pick up *masks*. And this is the part that is, it's no surprise to me when Covid was spreading through the University. Cause when you would find piles of beer cans, you would find discarded masks. And I'm not talking about disposable masks. Those you just break off the strings, and you throw them in the trash. But over 200 cloth masks. And this is the same time where Covid was spreading. And now we have the Delta variant. Well, where am I going with this? Where I'm going with it is that you look at the [looks at notes] "external impact" part and the "character of the site development," and it talks about noise, yeah, noise is noise, you know, kids in those kind of— But here's the thing. This is right beside a residential area, where there are children of all ages. And it really disturbs me that there could be a danger to the safety and health of families. Now that's the part, and I won't go on about that anymore.

But there's a simple solution. Instead of a – and it won't affect the architecture that much – instead of having private dorm rooms. And you know, the demographics of the University population is dropping. You know that might not be a good long-range plan. Seven years ago. I read everything. And I felt like I was reading the Dead Sea Scrolls, it went back so far. But how about, what is really needed in this town is workplace housing. Suppose, that that those were work—, you know, many of us when we were young, our first place was either a studio apartment, or a one-bedroom apartment. You know, down in New Jersey where I lived for a couple of years, they called them "garden apartments." But you wouldn't have to change the architecture or the plan or anything very much at all. And what you would do is, you would have, you know, I mean workplace housing, typically young people, with families or not. And it would fit in with the residential character, and it would eliminate a huge amount of the objections to this project.

I'm in favor of the project. The only part I'm not in favor of is the almost 200 students because of what I see and what I know about. I come from a university background, I've been a professor, and so forth. And up in Plymouth, New Hampshire, I lived very close to there. The problem with private student housing is so *bad* that the university – this is what I heard at the last visit there – that they are ready to make it that students have to live in university dorms. So I think this is my helpful piece of advice. I think in terms of financially that you'd be better off with workforce housing than you would with student housing. That's my thought. Thank you.