

Karen Edwards

From: Carroll, John <John.Carroll@unh.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 02, 2019 4:50 PM
To: Jen Berry; Karen Edwards
Subject: climate crisis, parking lots, subdivisions

Dear Town Council and Planning Board,

I don't know if you have seen the opening segment of PBS Newshour on Tuesday evening last week, but it featured material of immediate interest in our town's decision-making at both TC and PB. (SEE LINK BELOW.) In this opening segment, Columbia University's Dr. Radley Horton of their Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, echoing UNH scientists here in Durham, stated that we must reduce our carbon emissions by 7%-8% a year, starting immediately, in order to achieve a 50% overall reduction by 2030 (with most of the remaining 50% to be eliminated in the 10 to 20 years following). This slows down climate change impacts and gives us additional time to deal with them.

While we can be proud of the initiative that Durham is taking in both preparing our town for a few of the impacts such as rising sea levels and, as well, educating our residents, we need to be aware that climate and sustainability efforts also encompass bigger town decisions such as the creation of a new parking lot designed to permit and encourage a whole new population of motor vehicles in Durham, a population not now in town. As well, it affects various new subdivision applications that appear before the PB, applications that too often encourage more sprawl and thus more driving and more carbon-spewing vehicles, in contrast to centrally locating new residences in the town center, and thus in walking distance of services.

Not only does Durham's policy of and reputation for sustainability depend on correct decision-making in these areas (making full use of the town's available tools such as Conditional Use, Wetlands Rules - as PB member Bubar has put forth - and even town ownership of land and rights-of-way, among other tools) but, according to Dr. Horton and many of our own scientists right here at UNH, our lives and those of our children depend on right decision-making in this area. Sharp cuts in carbon emissions apparently must begin immediately, rather than on some uncertain date in the future. Durham, in its decisions and in its reactions to applications and proposals to its Planning Board, along with every town in America, has its role to play. Well meaning Sustainability Programs, while good in and of themselves, will not be sufficient to do the job..

John

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From: Abigail Carroll <carroll.abigail@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 28, 2019 12:03 PM