

5 Denbow Rd.
Durham, NH 03824
Jan. 7, 2020

Dear Planning Board:

I want to provide comment concerning the 19-21 Main Street Project, which is currently being reviewed. For the past 30 years I have worked for government agencies in the specialty area of Urban Forestry. This involves assisting communities in planting, maintaining and protecting trees, woodlands and associated resources in developed areas, for the many benefits they provide.

Since the 1990's, all 50 U.S. States have recognized the value of urban forests and have established Urban Forestry Programs with the intent of better managing this resource. As our urban areas expand (80% of the U.S. population now lives in urban areas) managing this resource becomes more important.

Individual trees and small wooded areas may not seem significant to some, but these trees cover a significant portion of the community ("forest canopy" covers 30% of the average U.S. community). There has been much research in recent years to show the value of this urban forest to the community. A couple of examples from U.S. Forest Service Research:

- Wooded areas help manage storm water & Improve water quality.

- Trees save energy for homeowners - 56% of annual air conditioning & up to 25% of winter heating costs.

- Tree lined business areas result in more frequent and longer shopping trips and shoppers spend more for parking and goods.

Durham continues to grow at a rapid pace. I don't know what the current canopy cover is for Durham, but I know it is decreasing (Perhaps that is something we can begin to monitor). Each year construction activities and new development removes more trees or small wooded parcels. It happens in small amounts, but adds up - what will Durham look like in 30 years?

The 19-21 Main Street Project will result in the loss of another small wooded area. This is in a prominent location as it is one of the few remaining wooded sites in the core downtown area, it provides a valuable aesthetic buffer between businesses and properties, and it provides watershed protection on a fairly steep slope.

I know some development is warranted, and there are always trade-offs to these projects. There are some assessment tools available that would enable us to estimate some of the environmental service values that this small forest provides the town. I think those values would be significant.

I appreciate the planning board's efforts to consider our community trees and forest in past project reviews and I hope you give this strong consideration in this case.

I would be glad to provide information or assistance related to anything mentioned above.

Sincerely,

John Parry