

From: [Eric Lund](#)
To: [Karen Edwards](#)
Cc: [Michael Behrendt](#)
Subject: Comments for Planning Board re: Church Hill parking lot application
Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021 4:36:37 PM

Dear members of the Planning Board:

I am writing in advance of the scheduled continuation of the public hearing on the subject application. I would like to raise some of the many concerns I have about this project.

First, as this is a Conditional Use application, there is a requirement that the applicants must demonstrate no adverse fiscal impact on the town and no detrimental effect on the property values of nearby properties. As of 21 January 2021, I see no documents on the town website where the applicants have attempted to address either issue. A parking lot is a potential site for fender benders and altercations, so it is likely that there will be incidents that will require a police response. I question whether the parking lot would add significantly to the value of the subject property, since parking lots in general require a substantial amount of maintenance and therefore, to the extent that spaces are not fully leased, may be liabilities rather than assets. The applicants need to demonstrate that their project will not produce additional police calls beyond the limited extent to which the lot would increase the value of the property. Second, the combination of a large retaining wall and the intended use of rental to students who do not live on site are likely to be detrimental to nearby property values both because the wall would replace views of forested land and because the intended use is likely to generate a significant increase in noise during the late night hours.

Second, I would like to comment on the applicant's claims that the subject property is surrounded by parking lots. I am aware of the following existing parking lots in the vicinity of the subject property:

- 1-2. The Community Church (next door) and Episcopal Church (across the street). These lots are intended primarily for church business, and are particular not significantly used for overnight parking. There is explicit signage in the Community Church lot that on Sunday mornings all spaces in the lot are reserved for church use.
- 3-4. The Park Court Apartments (diagonally across Main Street) and Church Hill Apartments (on the opposite side from the subject property of the Community Church). These lots are for use by residents of these buildings and, in the case of the Church Hill Apartments, their guests, similar to the use of the existing lot on the subject property.
5. The Mill Road Plaza. This parking lot serves customers and employees of businesses in the Mill Road Plaza. Long-term rental of parking spaces is not a permitted use of this lot, and in the course of their pending redevelopment application, Colonial Durham Associates have specifically stated that they do not intend to seek such permission.
6. The Post Office. There is a small lot facing Madbury Road for customer use, and a lot behind the building for employees and USPS delivery vehicles.

On none of these lots is the intended purpose of the lot proposed for the subject property, namely long-term parking for people who do not reside on the property, a permitted use.

Finally, I have a bit of confusion regarding the applicant's plans for snow removal. The plans provided to the Planning Board do not include an obvious on-site location for short-term or seasonal snow storage. The plan, as I understand from comments by the applicant's engineer at the site walk, is that some device for melting snow will be employed, and I am not clear on whether this system is to be embedded underneath the pavement or whether the snow would be scooped into machines to perform the melting. The former approach would eliminate the need to apply salt to the lot but is likely to be prohibitively expensive. The latter approach retains the need for salt application, which is problematic as discussed in Robin Mower's letter of 8 January 2021. Both approaches would be energy intensive: as a Ph.D. physicist I have calculated the thermodynamic requirements for melting snow, and find that, assuming the typical 10:1 water equivalent ratio, melting one inch of snow from one acre of surface area requires about 930 kWh of energy (if the melting machines are fuel powered, the requirement would be even higher since conversion of fuel energy to other forms of energy is never 100% efficient).

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Lund

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