

November 4, 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board

(I am sorry I couldn't make this letter more brief. God knows I tried.)

RE: Proposal for 19-21 Main Street

At PB meetings, I have seen Mr. Pete Murphy offer “evidence” that the board should authorize an override of Durham’s zoning code in order to create his proposed parking mesa at 19-21 Main.

This evidence he brings to the board consists of letters from potential customers of his-- students who lament the unavailability of parking near their downtown apartments.

I have to say that I am entirely unmoved by these letters that are offered as justification for Durham to override its zoning to allow an incongruous parking lot for leased parking—in the center of town and at a very complicated location. The fact that a particular venture would bring patrons does not justify Durham’s bypassing its zoning to allow it. . . . if it’s not right for the town.

So much of the newer housing that has sprung up within a small radius of, let’s say, the Post Office, has been built within the last ten years— relatively recently.

Let us remember that the Planning Board(s) at those times INTENDED that there not be parking associated with these downtown apartments. It was not an oversight. With each successive construction in 2002, 2012, 2014, 2015, parking was intentionally not included. Today’s downtown Durham is as was planned by those Planning Boards –a village environment.

When one chooses a place to live, s/he considers proximity to what is important to him or her. If ability to drive away from Durham is more personally important than walking to class or to shopping in just a few minutes, there are options such as The Cottages or The Lodges,. . . or others. Those complexes DO have parking for tenants. There are frequent bus runs from those sites to take tenants to

campus if they choose not to walk. And, from core campus, as we know, there are buses to/from other seacoast locations as well.

I ask again, where is the benefit to Durham to override zoning to allow this venture? I can think of only one---Extra tax revenue. Well, sure. But that would come at a very high offset in services, and otherwise—an equation that would not be beneficial to the town.

I have not seen any permanent Durham residents speak, or write, in favor of this venture. Maybe I missed those?

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SEPARATE ISSUE:- Realistic renderings

I will just quote from the Town Planner's review and recommendations of August 2021 (below) regarding the need for specific, realistic visual representations of the finished project, . . with human, on-the-ground perspective that has been requested. We have still not yet received these important elements, which are way overdue. We have only been placated with one fanciful rendering. Perhaps the applicants' requested delay indicates that they are preparing some representative renderings.

For those of us who are not birds, why have we not seen. . . (insisted upon) . . a true ground-level view of this proposal, with, as has also been suggested, a juxtaposition of this project with its neighbors, including the plaza proposal.

I have no doubt that technology can make this happen. In fact, Mr. Sievert indicated he could produce something like that. We need to have a true visual. If this has not been recently submitted, please, please insist upon realistic images, from all viewpoints.

Planner Behrendt's Message to the Board 8/2021:

• *There have been numerous requests from abutters for specific images to give a better understanding of the plan. Only the board can determine what exactly is needed. I recommend the board discuss the following items and specify what must be submitted, recognizing that we should wait if there will be significantly modified plans forthcoming:*

1. a) *An image of the revised plans as seen from the south. Tim Murphy provided one using Photoshop or equivalent for the prior plans. Is there a concern with who provides this image? Should this be provided from Chesley Drive or from the southerly lot line of the subject parcel?*
2. b) *A longitudinal profile extending from Main Street to at least Chesley Drive.*
3. c) *An image of the subject site plan juxtaposed with the proposed Mill Plaza project.*
4. d) *I believe that Mike Sievert spoke about a 3D type image that could be produced on a two dimensional sheet.*
5. e) *Some kind of rendering to understand how the parking lot and regrading meets the stone wall on the westerly side.*
6. f) *An image of the parking lot as seen from the Urso property.*

=== End of Quote===

I do apologize, again, for the length of this letter, and I thank you for listening.

And, as always, thank you for your continued attention to Durham's future.

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