

From: [John Hart](#)
To: [Karen Edwards](#); [Rick Taintor](#); [Michael Behrendt](#)
Subject: Comments on plan by Toomerfs LLC for additional parking on Church Hill
Date: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:58:15 PM

January 13, 2021

Mr. Paul Rasmussen, Chair, and
Durham Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham NH 03824

RE: Comments on proposed plan by Toomerfs LLC for additional parking area on Church Hill

Dear Chair Rasmussen and Planning Board members,

I am an abutter to Mill Plaza, the redevelopment of which is wholly contingent on the Toomerfs LLC proposal for additional parking area on Church Hill. As a "semi-abutter," I am especially concerned by the Toomerfs proposal. I also concur with John Carroll's point (letter of 11/23/20, and Robert Russell 12/14/20) that these two projects are inextricably intertwined from an ecosystem perspective, and cannot be realistically considered as distinct entities. I realize that they are distinct legal entities, but as you consider the many violations of Conditional Use inherent in both applications, you should stay aware of the overall environmental and public impacts of these combined projects.

My concerns with the Toomerfs' parking plaza have been eloquently addressed by others, so I briefly reiterate their comments in opposition to this project as presently conceived:

- The proposal would destroy a healthy young mixed hardwood forest in central Durham with attendant ecosystem services such as carbon capture, oxygen release, water percolation and groundwater recharge, reduced runoff and low pollutant load to College Brook, and healthy habitat for fauna and microfauna (see letters of scientists Dr. Richard Hallett 12/9/20, John Parry 12/10/20);
- This healthy ecosystem would be replaced with impervious surface with attendant high runoff, increased pollutant load, all headed to College Brook, along with much reduced (toward zero) ecosystem services;
- Proposed parking will violate numerous Conditional Use criteria, including (in addition to negative effects to natural resources, as noted above) such effects on the neighborhood as increased noise, increased litter, increased odor/fumes, increased pollutants (sand, salt, petroleum and other chemicals), light pollution (Diane Chen, 12/11/20, Robert Russell 12/11/20, Joshua Meyrowitz 12/16/20 and 1/8/21, Robin Mower 1/8/21); as Dr. Meyrowitz states, this project "is a poster-child for almost all that is forbidden under Conditional Use";
- The additional 140 cars will spill out into a busy two-lane Main Street on a hill with somewhat impaired sight-lines, which seems ill-advised and will certainly require a more thorough traffic study than that which has been submitted (Dr. Dennis Meadows, 12/20/20, Robin Mower 1/8/21);
- There is nothing shown that speaks to Durham's "sustainable development" commitment. Absent are bioswales and raingardens, runoff and pollutant mitigation, salt and sand mitigation, solar collectors, electric vehicle stations, extensive landscape

vegetation to offset the massive asphalt heat-island, pedestrian safety, etc.

I would ask the Planning Board to respect the Durham Master Plan and also to hold the developer to the rule of law, in particular, Conditional Use criteria. I remain hopeful that these issues will be satisfactorily addressed If this proposal moves forward.

Thank you,

John Hart, President, Brookside Commons Condo Assn Board of Directors, 13 Mill Road, Durham