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Planning Board
Town of Durham, NH
May 5, 2022

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

This letter requests that you reject the proposal for a parking lot to be built on the Church Hill property as proposed by the property owners. Please allow me to list and comment upon the reasons why this is a very poor site for building such a parking lot, and should be rejected.

Excessive Fill and Transformation of the land:

We know from the presentations of the owners and Mr. Seivert that in order to even consider building a parking lot where they propose to, one first needs to create a level or near level surface. To do this they estimate between approximately 1300 and 1500 cubic yards of fill must be brought in.

Conditional Use Criteria:

Even at face value, knowing nothing else about their proposal, this amount of fill flies in the face of the constraints clearly spelled out under Conditional Use criteria.

Elimination of an Urban Forest:

We know that trees and forests act to take CO₂ out of the atmosphere, and put Oxygen into it. In nearly every urban center there has been a dedicated effort by planners and builders to preserve urban forests in particular. Besides the forests carbon sequestering benefits, we know that forests help cool the environment. Yet, not only does this proposal do away with the urban forest, but it plans on replacing it with an impervious black parking surface. This creates an enormous heat sink. Anyone who has stepped barefoot onto a blacktop parking lot at the beach remembers the pain of that heat on their feet. If one had to try to figure out how to draw and increase heat in one spot, it would be the black top parking surface.

This is not inconsequential. This is the obverse of all that we need to do with a world that is close to being in runaway overheating. No serious observer would doubt this now that the data has become so clear.

Conditional Use Criteria:

How can the destruction of an urban forest, and the replacing of that forest with a parking lot heat sink not be a clear disregard of the stated conditional use criteria? It goes directly against those criteria once again.

Impact on the Neighborhood and Neighbors:

This is one of the most obvious issues beyond the environmental ones detailed above. I live at 23 Faculty Road. A short walk from my house and I am on the wooded path that connects Faculty Road to the Mill Plaza via the wooden foot bridge. I have taken my camera there and walked the few steps up into Chesley Drive many times. Standing exactly where the Andersen and Meyrowitz homes are, I turn to look at the space of the proposed parking lot, the proposed mountain of fill, and the imagined loss of

all those trees. To say that the impact on those neighbors will not be highly impactful in the most negative ways, is to ignore one's own eyes. Clearly it will impact them for the remainder of their lives should they decide to continue living there. And this set of negative neighborhood effects is for a parking lot?!

I have walked those woods, breathed that forest air, and now grieve that this proposal is even being considered. I live well away from the proposed parking lot mountain, and yet I know it will impact me negatively. I will see it every day from my porch, kitchen windows, and lawn. I can only imagine the serious negative impact it will have on those neighbors at the end of Chesley Drive.

Conditional Use Criteria:

The extensive land fill, grading, steep slope, heat, and loss of trees that this proposal guarantees, goes directly against the Town's conditional use criteria, which prohibitively caution that *none* of these can be allowed. Each one negatively impacts the neighbors.

Please Refuse the proposal for building this parking lot. It fails to uphold the conditional criteria created precisely to *disallow* such a project.

I appreciate your kind attention, and sincerely request that you do not allow this proposal to go through.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

John Mince