

From: **Joshua Meyrowitz** <prof.joshua.meyrowitz@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 23, 2021 at 6:04 PM

Subject: Appreciation of PB

To: Michael Behrendt <mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us>

Dear Michael,

Given the spirit of the season for renewal and improvement, I did not want to miss an opportunity for praise of recent PB moments in review of the Church-Hill-Woods-to-parking-mound application.

Thus, I write to you to express appreciation for you and Board Member James Bubar acknowledging and commenting on a resident letter (a reference to public input that has not been as common of late as it was in Durham days of old).

I refer particularly to James Bubar mentioning around 8:22:07 pm on Dec 15 ([video](#)) a “nice email” from Robin Mower “back on September 7” ([Robin Mower 9-7-21](#)), regarding site-plan regs and “steep slopes.” You echoed that, at 8:23:47 adding that this was something “we probably should have talked about earlier,” specifically site plan reg 8.2.1 “extensive grading and filling shall be avoided.”

Although that discussion was cut off by the chair’s desire to discuss a site-walk date and get to the Public Hearing, I appreciated the topic being mentioned as something that definitely needs to be addressed. (As you may recall, I also raised the site-plan regs regarding “extensive grading and filling” at the Sept 8 Public Hearing, [video](#), at about 9:17 pm, even quoting from the Mower letter and referencing her point that nearly three-quarters of the site would be extensively regraded.)

I also appreciated Acting Chair Parnell pressing Mike Sievert on the raise in grade (at about 43:53 into the meeting, though it took Mr. Sievert a bit to admit to “about 17 feet” – the same change of grade as the original retaining-wall plan). And, then, Mr. Parnell pressed even further on any place more than that, leading to an admission at 45:25 “yes, see this corner right here” that it would be about 18 feet raise in grade. This exchange reflected admirable attention to detail and crucial holding of applicants accountable for the accuracy and thoroughness of their presentation.

Additionally, I appreciated Council Rep Sally Tobias (at about 51:25) asking for additional renderings capturing what the proposed parking mound would look like, such as from the south (Chesley Drive), a request echoed by Mr. Hotchkiss “given the amount of interest” in it.

Regarding that “amount of interest,” as you know from my recent [Joshua Meyrowitz 12-15-21](#) and extensive prior comments and letters (and ZBA appeals and Superior Court filing!), such requests have been made by citizens (and by you) for over two years. The requested information continues to be a very long time in coming. (If you think that I’ve made any errors in that 12-15-21 letter, do share.)

Finally, for now, I was encouraged by Council Rep Alt Chuck Hotchkiss gently pointing to misrepresentations on the so-called “representations” (the “renderings”) at around 7:52:15 pm, such as the discrepancy in parking spots between the site-plan drawings and the pretty renderings.

The more that you and the Planning Board members address the Zoning, Site-Plan Regs, public written input, and missing information, the less members of the public need to speak and write and to repeat our request – and, of course, the more thorough and efficient the review process.

(Do keep this expression of appreciation in mind when you hear any future complaints from me!)

Enjoy the season!

Best, Joshua