

From: [Susan Richman](#)
To: [Michael Behrendt](#); [Karen Edwards](#)
Subject: 19-21 Main Street parking lot - Church Hill District
Date: Thursday, September 02, 2021 8:31:24 PM

Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

RE: 19-21 Main Street – Parking Lot. Church Hill District.

Dear Planning Board Members,

I attended the May 26, 2021 site walk for this proposed parking site. I cannot imagine how “Conditional Use” could be construed to allow the destruction of such a huge swath of trees, construction on such a precipitous slope, with headlights glaring into the windows of abutting properties, and with more homes and the Oyster River watershed vulnerable below should the trucked-in filler material and asphalt collapse in the “100-year storms” we are beginning to experience. As we site-walkers left the cool shade of the trees and the soft forest floor, to emerge onto the hot radiant black asphalt surface behind the Red Tower building, the sudden rise of temperature was palpable and alarming. I believe this site walk provided evidence that the proposal for a 19-21 Main Street parking lot does not meet criteria for Conditional Use.

I have read the letters submitted to you, and would like to summarize some of the more recent statements that further my conviction that this plan does not meet Conditional Use standards.

[Richard Gsottschneider](#) (July 8, 2021) attests that “Student usage of parking lots is erratic and constant.” This supports Kay Morgan’s (Aug. 17, 2021) claim that a parking lot would not meet requirements for “site suitability” because of the greater impacts of “traffic noise, odors, vibrations,...fumes, hours of operation, and exterior lighting and glare.”

I concur with Robin Mower’s concern (Aug. 19, 2021) that removing trees – which provide cooling shade, absorb stormwater and hold soil in place, and absorb CO2 that pollutes the air and traps heat– is contrary to our need to act on current health emergencies caused by climate change. A bit of buffer vegetation planted to replace these acres of trees is not only insufficient – it is probably not viable (R. Mower, Aug. 5, 2021).

Eric Lund (Aug. 19, 2021) and others cite the requirement that Conditional Use observes “the preservation of natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources.” A designated Church Hill District implies cultural and historic values the Town wishes to maintain. An island of greenery is a scenic resource, as compared to a parking lot. And those cooling, CO2 absorbing, earth-retaining, water-filtering trees are a natural resource.

What are the “carbon offsets” that companies can buy, to increase their right to pollute? Most likely, these are trees they are paying to have planted. As the world looks for solutions to diminish carbon output, there can be no justification for razing down trees to encourage more vehicle traffic in the already congested center of our town.

Please let concerned citizens see that you seriously weigh these concerns. I worry that otherwise there may be legal actions dragging long into the future.

Sincerely,

Susan Richman
16 Cowell Drive
Durham, NH 03824
603-868-2758