

October 31, 2023

Michael Behrendt
Durham Town Planner
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Mr. Behrendt,

I am writing as a member of the Durham community in support of the conditional use application submitted by Arts In Reach (AIR) for the use of 81 Dover Road as a Community Center.

I am a current resident of Durham and have been for over eight years. My husband and I attended UNH, but left Durham after graduation. After the birth of our first child, we chose to return to Durham because of the excellent school system, the sense of community, and the prioritization of child development opportunities. The list is long - it includes the emphasis on community events hosted by Durham Parks and Recreation, the Oyster River Parents of Preschoolers, the Churchill Ice Skating Rink public skating, collaboration with UNH with music, art, and science experiences, and the priority of providing a safe environment for families working in conjunction with UNH and its student body. Durham has been an exemplary community, and we are proud to be a part of it.

I am a volunteer with Arts In Reach and became aware that they would like to purchase the property at 81 Dover Road as a permanent location for their programs. I can't think of a better program to join the community; it aligns with the spirit of Durham by providing creative expression opportunities to teens who often don't have other options. Durham is a welcoming community and the teens in the program are often struggling with identity, acceptance, self-confidence, and myriad other obstacles toward mental and physical health. This is not a start-up; this is a proven organization of professionals who are dedicated to their participants, integrity, and the mission of the organization.

I strongly encourage the Planning Board to approve this application and allow AIR to flourish in Durham and provide even greater benefit to our community. This is a unique opportunity for the town of Durham to welcome a much-needed nonprofit into its ranks, and continue the legacy that Durham has created as an open and accepting space. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Becky Kates
31 Sandy Brook Drive, Durham