

MEMORANDUM

September 27, 2012 (update of May memo)

To: Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
From: Dave Kurz, Chief of Police
Re: Peak Campus Development - Student Housing

I have reviewed the proposed subdivision plan for the new construction of a student housing complex located on Mast Road and have the following comments:

Traffic/Parking

While I anticipate that a traffic study will be developed which could offer additional insight to the proposed egress onto Mast Road, I do not have significant concern regarding the intersection of Old Concord Road due in large part to the following realities:

- Student schedules are very diverse and wide ranging. Additionally, parking at/on the UNH campus is virtually no-existent and the location of the Peak Campus project would ensure that walking to campus is a far better strategy than attempting to locate a parking space at a distance as equal or greater than the original walk.
- I noted on the initial plans that a walkway from the Peak Campus Housing directly to a transit shelter at the UNH West Edge Parking lot is planned. It would be commonsensical for residents to engage the UNH Transportation System thereby negating any concern regarding traffic to and from the UNH campus.
- Parking must be sufficient to provide, at minimum, one parking space for each bed. While every resident will not have a vehicle, there will be quests and other visitors who will quickly consume spaces.

On-site management – Police Services

While early in the process, I was unsure of the role that Peak Campus assumes once the property is constructed, after review of their properties in other regions via websites, it appears that there is on-site management oversight. While the issue surrounding on-site versus no on-site management of student rentals is not

simplistic, the Durham Police experience has demonstrated very positive attributes of a well-managed property when the owners/managers remain with the property and are engaged with the community! The Durham Police have long maintained that management must equate to more than simply retrieving the rental checks at the end of each month. It is critical that they be involved with the building complex, community and desirous of being responsive to the surrounding neighborhood, albeit in this specific location that issue is minimal at best as it concerns large fields and UNH's largest parking lot, West Edge. The management company that is invested, literally and figuratively into the Durham community, is the most critical component for a well-managed and mutually successful property from a police perspective.

I used the verbiage "mutually successful" in that Peak Campus's desires to experience a positive profit stream while the Durham community enjoys a solid tax base with minimal dependency upon limited Town and School District resources. While a large complex such as this proposal will not generally inject students into the Oyster River school system, it would be erroneous to believe that a complex of this size will have no impact upon the demands for policing services. However, it is my opinion and aspiration that a complex of this nature, located in the appropriate location, as this complex is, would assist in providing student housing away from the historically residential neighborhoods where the lifestyles of students and residents most often collide. When this collision occurs, there is increased demand for police presence and demand for stern action by the police.

Seeking to develop a viable comparison for a potential workload impact upon the Durham Police, I contacted the UNH Police who have responsibilities to respond to the Gables Dormitories. This complex is located on the western side of campus adjacent to the Downeaster Railroad tracks. There are adjacent parking areas and the residents are serviced by the UNH bus system. Because the University is not required to adhere to Durham occupancy calculations, the Gables 199 units have a population that exceeds 1,000 students which undoubtedly heightens tensions and provides fuel for disagreements that often result in additional calls for police services.

The following matrix provides data from the Gables complex for calls to the UNH Police Department. In addition, live-in resident assistants address a number of incidents that simply do not rise to the level of requiring police presence. While it is fully expected that on-site property managers will often serve in the capacity of resident assistants, there may be a percentage of these matters that will ultimately result in the request for police mediation and resolution of the issue. In any event, if the statistical data originating from the Gables were the responsibility of the Durham Police, the additional calls would represent an approximate 6% annual increase.

Year	All calls for service to the Gables and adjacent parking lots	Policy violations that are handled by Resident Assistants and/or referred to Judicial	Potential total calls for police services
2009	392	422	814
2010	281	356	637
2011	290	402	692

While my comments regarding this project appear negative, they are not as I enthusiastically endorse the concept of a well-designed and situated student housing complex. However it would be an error to believe that the addition of a complex of this size and composition, even when professionally managed, will have no impact upon policing services in Durham. It should be noted that in addition to calls for service, the Durham Police has developed and implemented a program in partnership with the Durham Landlord Association that notifies landlords via email after each incident that police are required to respond to their property. Each quarter, every landlord receives a correlated analysis of ALL calls to any rental property in Durham for that three-month period. This allows the landlord to compare activity, or non-activity of their property to other during the same timeframe. As successful and proactive as this program is, it still involves a department employee to complete the reports, correlate the data and send notifications to the landlords.

(9/27/12) Peak management may be well advised to have contracted security on site during the beginning of each academic year to establish the expected protocol and behavior as noted in the Rules and Regulations each tenant signs. The hours of 9PM to 3AM are prime hours that security personnel would be warranted in my opinion. Sadly, experience with other similar properties has demonstrated that but for this added step, rules and regulations will be tested by the residents and visitors alike and police intervention will become necessary.

Additional Comments

- In a complex of this size, it is critical that unit numbering be developed so that public safety personnel can easily and quickly locate units, i.e., Building A which would contain A120 for unit 20 on the 1st floor; A320 for unit 20 on the 3rd floor, etc.
- Landscaping designs should focus upon keeping intruders easily observable by maximizing visibility of people in parking areas, building entrances, eliminating darkened areas by a well-conceived shrubbery planting and deliberately placed lighting on streets, parking areas and sidewalks.

- Hardware should feature window locks, dead bolts for doors, interior door hinges and well light interior corridors. All common building entrances should have locks that automatically lock when the door closes
- Any electronic surveillance such as video taping high traffic areas would be highly encouraged.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.