

February 3, 2022

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board,

I have followed the years' long discussions about the redevelopment of the town plaza and have read the thoughtful contributions of town citizens to those discussions. I think you will have to be purposely blinding yourselves to certain realities if you support putting student housing in the plaza.

One of those realities is that family and student life are inherently incompatible. Student life is fractured. Tuesday-Thursday and Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes, morning, afternoon and evening classes. Socializing takes place throughout the week whenever time is available. Family life, on the other hand, centers around jobs, 9 to 5 most often, and school 9-3. Weekday nights are for sleep so that one can get up to meet these schedules. Weekends are for socializing. We have all experienced these realities which have been the same for generations.

No one who acknowledges these realities can believe that more than 200 student apartments in the plaza will not disrupt family life in the Faculty Road area. I live at the corner where the path through the patch of woods enters Faculty Road. This is the path that most children from the neighborhood take to go to and from school. I shudder when I think of the number of cars associated with 200+ student apartments in the plaza. They pose a threat to children on their way to and from school. To make matters worse, you have not adequately studied pedestrian flows or safety within the plaza.

I appreciate and concur with the many reservations to the redevelopment plan expressed by various citizens that have to do with other issues. I have lived at the corner of Faculty Road for 44 years, always concerned for the safety of the children who cross at my corner and grateful to the Durham Police Department for their response to requests for a stop sign and crosswalk at the corner. They regularly monitor the corner to catch offenders who ignore the stop sign. I cannot imagine that they would favor the plan to locate student housing in Mill Plaza. Or that you on the planning board would favor a plan that would be so disruptive to family life and potentially so tragic for children.

I ask you to seriously consider the issues of disruption of family life and the safety of our children and vote against any plan for student housing in the plaza.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Komonchak  
1 Thompson Lane