

November 16, 2020

Dear Sean, Emily, and Sharon,

I want to thank you for agreeing to participate with us on our Minor Architectural Design and Color Committee. I was pleased to be asked to participate to be able to apply my knowledge and skills working with color for the past 50 years to try to create an attractive project while trying to minimize the appearance of mass in the two extremely large buildings proposed to be built in the Hannaford parking lot. Since the initial CDA's proposed color palettes had not been well received by the public, I appreciated the opportunity to join with others in the community who have an eye for color and with Patricia Sherman, our architectural consultant, with the goal of enhancing the appearance of the 3 buildings.

I knew from the start that there would be certain parameters we must take into consideration. It was made clear at the beginning that we would not be allowed to choose from any of the 700-color Hardie Dream Collection that offers every lovely color imaginable but instead would have to choose from the limited 20-color Standard Collection. Five or 6 of those Standard colors are extremely light, most often used for trim. Another 4 or 5 are inappropriately dark. Our task, within the remaining limited range, was to find at least 3 colors that work together harmoniously while serving to break up the mass.

I know that I and others on the committee took up this challenge in earnest. Beyond the 3 meetings we attended, we spent hours poring over architectural details on the renderings provided. Some of us sent away for some additional Hardie color samples and pondered them in every type of light and weather. The committee settled on an earth tone palette early on because it was the *only option* for 3-4 colors that worked together harmoniously within the allowable Standard colors that also would serve to minimize the mass. I went to Sherwin Williams in search of a trim color that would enhance our preferred color palette, only to later learn that Hardie Standard colors would be the only trim option. This may seem to some overly detailed, but the right trim color can make a huge difference.

Since the earth tones the committee had selected, which our architectural consultant said would "stand the test of time," did not look good against the orange-red brick that had been selected for the CDA palette, I went on a mission to find a compatible brick. Please also note that our Durham Architectural Regulations require a "deep red brick." My search included doing an inventory of various bricks downtown and on the UNH campus (with my Hardie samples in hand) as well as brick used in other communities. I also drove to two brickyards in Kittery, ME and Amesbury, MA in search of compatible brick colors that would enhance rather than detract from the project.

Needless-to-say, I was surprised and dismayed to learn—not until our third and final meeting—that a different brick from the smooth orange-red brick CDA had originally chosen for its color palette was not an option. In fact, I believe this announcement was made within the last 20 minutes of our final meeting. This should have been made clear to the Color Committee at the

very beginning of our process as it would have altered our discussion from the start. Frankly, I do not understand the resistance to an alternative brick, one that would complement rather than detract from the earth tone colors the committee selected. Surely there is more than a single brick that meets CDA's criteria for cost and would, at the same time, complement the color palette selected by the committee.

I was also quite dismayed to learn at the end of the third and final meeting that CDA plans to reintroduce their blue color palette to the Planning Board along with the subcommittee's preferred earth tone palette. This seems contrary to and inconsistent with the process put in motion by the Planning Board to establish a subcommittee tasked with coming up with a color palette that would enhance the project and be more widely accepted by the community.

To be frank, after all the time and town resources that went into the work of the Committee, it feels disingenuous to announce, at the very end of the process, that: 1) CDA will continue to advocate for its blue color palette which had not been embraced by the community and 2) there is only one brick option—that which CDA chose originally to go with a very different color palette and which runs counter to our Architectural Design Regulations (as noted above). These two late-breaking revelations make it appear that agreeing to work with the subcommittee was a waste of everybody's time as well as town resources. I now fear that CDA agreed to participate in an architectural design review and color subcommittee of the Planning Board simply to avoid the thorough independent architectural design review strongly recommended by Rick Taintor on several occasions. It remains a mystery how the name of our committee ended up with the word MINOR in front of it, thereby limiting the scope of the committee days after the Planning Board had established the subcommittee. I truly hope your participation was not simply so that you will be able to say to the Planning Board that you went through an architectural design review process and considered community input. If this were the case, I would find that most regrettable.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Olshansky

CC: participants in the Minor Architectural Design and Color Committee
members of the Durham Planning Board