

May 19, 2021

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board,

I have some data to contribute to our conversation about parking at the Mill Plaza. On April 18 at 5:00 PM, I went to the Mill Plaza to observe the parking situation. I chose 5:00 PM because that tends to be a busy time at the Market.

By my count, there were **78 cars with Mill Plaza Parking Permits parked in front of Building A**. Two days earlier at 5:00 PM, there were 78 cars with Mill Plaza Parking Permits in front of Building A so I believe my count was in the right ballpark.

**On May 18, I also counted the empty spaces in front of Building A. At 5:00 PM, there were 90 empty spaces. There were 28 parked cars without permits, presumably patrons of Hannaford or Rite Aid.**

**Please consider that when CDA stops renting parking spaces as they have promised to do, there would be 168 empty spaces during one of the busiest times of day.**

Our Zoning Ordinance requires **338 spaces** for the amount of commercial space proposed. CDA claims they need 411 spaces. Why? That is unclear except that they want to maximize their claim over the space. 411 spaces minus 338 leaves 73 extra spaces, *spaces that are not needed*. That would seem to be plenty given what we now know.

**Removing 73 spaces would allow CDA to remove all pavement, roads, and buildings from the 75-ft wetlands buffer as required by the Settlement Agreement while honoring our Zoning. We must do this to better protect College Brook and the Mill Pond. Ignoring our Wetlands Regulations should not be an option! It would also allow for wider islands and some enhanced landscaping which would be of benefit to the Town.**

BTW, claims of needing additional spaces for holiday shopping is no longer relevant. I used to shop faithfully at the Durham Market Place the day before Thanksgiving and Christmas for the very reason that I loved running into friends and acquaintances I had not seen all year. The parking lot and the store were packed! After the market was sold, I faithfully returned to shop the day before Thanksgiving and the parking lot had no more than 20 cars. I was shocked. Residents were choosing to shop elsewhere because they could no longer find the specialty items they wanted. I had the same experience on the day before Christmas. Then I too started shopping elsewhere, where I ran into Durham friends and acquaintances.

I urge the Durham Planning Board to honor our wetlands regulations and the Settlement and take this one chance in a lifetime to do sometime good for the Brook and the Mill Pond. Keep in mind Dennis Meadow's vision of creating a green promenade between downtown and various conserved parcels—a true amenity for the Town.

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