

To: The Durham Conservation Commission, Mr. Behrendt and the Planning Board
From: Diana Carroll
December 23, 2020

I feel a great deal of sadness for College Brook. For 50 years, there's been insufficient buffered wetlands to protect College Brook. And buffers protect wetlands. Buffers are engineered by nature and do an excellent job when they are allowed to be.

At meetings about the Plaza, I keep hearing that all we have to do is put in a technological system and everything will work out perfectly. Well, I've never seen in Mill Plaza that ANYthing has worked out perfectly. Not the landscaping---more trees have died and needed replacement (because they were not planted correctly or cared for) since I've been shopping at the Plaza for the last 46 years than I want to think about. Look on the edge of the parking lot at the Arbor Vitae. They are in bad shape because they have never been taken care of. Not the parking---as I understand it there was no formal change of "use"---CDA just started renting spaces to UNH students and made extra money. Not the entrance or exits either. We've all seen salted snow piled

up along the Brook, all that salt, all the damage to the Mill Pond, Oyster River, and Great Bay.

I feel a lot of mixed emotions when the Plaza is discussed. Very basic and essential is that wetlands and their buffers are important. Once damaged, they can't function anymore. Humans can't replace wetlands. Scientists have tried, but have only produced wetlands that look like wetlands---they do NOT function as wetlands. Wetlands need protection, and our zoning is very clear that buffers need to be in place and protected so that they can protect wetlands. **Please make sure that our zoning is fully respected with any Mill Plaza redevelopment plan.** I am not willing to see buffers go away and be replaced by technology. The Plaza may incorporate technology but only as long as the required buffers are in place.

There are four criteria that the Conservation Commission has to look at. The plan before you does not meet *any* of those criteria. For decades, for 50 years, College Brook has been neglected. It has received very little protection, and it received a lot of insults. Many residents approached the Town to improve College Brook. Many residents attempted to work with CDA - but that was a non-starter.

Now is the time of opportunity to make up for the last 50 years. Now is the time to do it right, now is the time for protected, vegetated buffers. Other storm water work can be done but in conjunction with Wetland buffers. The applicant knew our zoning before they filed the application for this redevelopment. This was not a surprise to the applicant. The zoning is clear on wetland buffers. It should be followed.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Carroll