

To: The Planning Board
From: Diane Chen, 12 Oyster River Rd.
Date: October 8, 2020
Re: Mill Plaza – Fiscal Impact Analysis

Thank you for all you are doing regarding the difficult job of reviewing the documentation on various positions on the Mill Plaza Redevelopment.

At the most recent Mill Plaza public hearing on September 23, 2020 there was some confusion between the Fougere Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) and the Brain White Appraisal. For that reason, I am writing once again on the need for an independent Fiscal Impact Analysis that looks at the overall fiscal impact of the proposed Mill Plaza redevelopment on the Town.

The CDA-sponsored FIA came out early in the pandemic-adapted Zoom sessions. At the April 15, 2020 meeting, it was my and others' understanding, based on a prior promise, that our letters assessing this report would either be read aloud or at least that the salient points would be read/summarized by Rick Taintor at the meeting. This didn't happen. Instead, the FIA hearing was moved to April 29, when a technical failure led to the cancellation of the Planning Board meeting. And then by May 13, not only was the above promise forgotten, but the public was also forgotten. The Board improperly discussed and voted on a motion regarding an independent FIA, a motion that the Board promised to revisit when it was pointed out at the end of the hearing that the public was not given any opportunity at all to participate in a "public" hearing. That revisiting is overdue.

Here, I summarize a sample of the deficiencies in the Fougere FIA, as outlined in numerous resident and attorney letters, all reasons that we need an independent Fiscal Impact Analysis.

- The stated past UNH enrollment numbers are inflated;
- There is no discussion about the long-anticipated "enrollment cliff" (2025 on) from declining birth rates from 2007-present, which is widely acknowledged by UNH as well as third parties;
- There is no discussion of *overall* fiscal impact on the Town (a key conditional-use criterion);
- The long-term reduced tax value of other student housing intown is not addressed. These properties were already showing increased vacancy rates prior to the pandemic, which will eventually be reflected in their reduced values and decreased tax revenue for the Town;
- There are many data charts in the FIA, but the data is not analyzed in any meaningful way;
- The report is much less detailed than other FIA's that have been submitted to the Board, even for non-Conditional Use projects (I read them!); and
- This report is written more as an advocacy, not an objective assessment.

On April 10, you received letters discussing the problems with the FIA from me, Beth Olshansky, & Robin Mower. Robin wrote again on April 13. You received letters from Valentini Kalargyrou on April 14, Nathanael Stewart, Richard Gsottschneider, May LaPolice and Eric Lund on April 15th, Dennis Meadows on April 17 & May 20. Robin Mower addressed the improper May 13 vote in a May 20 letter and wrote on missing FIA data on June 2. Larry Harris wrote on May 28. **And you have 3 letters from Attorney Mark Puffer addressing the legal requirement for an overall fiscal impact study on Durham.** Former Councilor William Woodward addressed the troubling disregard of this public input on Sept. 16, as did Catherine Meeking in a Sept. 23 oral comment.

This CDA report is inadequate for basing any decision of such portent. For that reason, I again, respectfully request that the Town require an independent FIA to be paid for by the Applicant.