

January 6, 2022

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. What, then, is a video worth? How about two videos?

VIDEO #1 - PLAZA

I just don't know what to say about the video recently presented that shows, right out of the gate --at the first snowfall of the season--plows pushing the snow (and whatever else is imbedded therein) to the edge of the environmentally fragile brook.

So soon after the thoughtful, very recent input from our Conservation Commission, CDA continues to ignore all that-- and defiantly "*plow*" right through, literally and figuratively. And, unfortunately, typically.

This is an applicant who currently has a very significant project, for this same parcel, before the board. While asking the town to accommodate his desires by overriding our codes, he is discarding promises he already made to the town. Wouldn't you think an entity in such a position would be on its "best behavior" as the negotiations and promises continue?

Wouldn't you think they would be anxious to demonstrate what good business citizens of Durham they are. . . and will be in the future? That they respect our community?

Demonstrably and historically, they can't be relied upon to uphold any agreement that comes forth that doesn't suit their agenda. Previous floutings of conditions written by the town are multiple, and egregious.

They offer sufficient obeisance at hearings but, as that saying goes: WATCH WHAT THEY DO, NOT WHAT THEY SAY.

As I wrote in a previous letter to the board. . . "When a person shows you who they are, believe them." CDA continues to demonstrate who they are—and who they ever will be. What more do we need? How many slaps in the face should we accept?

VIDEO #2 – LATE NIGHT BEHAVIOR

A video of a group of students, post midnight, stumbling and tumbling and noisemaking at the corner of Faculty and Mill Road.

I live one house away from this intersection. About twenty feet from this tableau of drunken behavior, stands a sign that says: “Welcome to the Faculty Neighborhood—Families Live Here. Please Respect our Property and Your Town.”

There are several of these signs on the perimeter of this neighborhood. They were erected by the town.

I am not delusional enough to think these particular revelers, or any others in their condition, would pause to read or comprehend the sign. But the message is real, and it’s important. Families DO live here. In fact, in our 28 years, we have never seen as many young families as are currently living in the Faculty neighborhood.

I was heartened by your thoughtful discussion when the food truck application was before you, and by your acknowledgement that it would have a negative effect on Quality of Life in the adjoining neighborhood. The behavior issue is the same, or more so, for the dense student housing proposed for the plaza.

It seems like Faculty neighborhood is at a tipping point. Erection of huge four-story apartment buildings right outside some of our windows will change our neighborhood forever. For the worse.

I, and so many others, entreat you to please, please do not forsake the Faculty neighborhood. Please hold the CDA to Durham’s zoning, and to the terms of the Settlement. Require them to reduce the unreasonable density and to create, instead, a positive and aesthetic addition to the town. One that everybody can feel good about.

C’mon CDA, dazzle us!.(don’t disrespect us.)

Thank you,
Janice Aviza
2 Garden Lane, corner of Faculty Road

