

Dear Planning Board Members. I would like to re-submit this letter that I wrote exactly six years ago. **Sadly, nothing has changed to make anything better for the adjoining Faculty Neighborhood with the February 2022 Mill Plaza plan.** Please reject the terrible plan before you. – jbh

From: Julie Haines
Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2016 1:42 PM
To: Michael Behrendt
Subject: Hundreds of Students at our Gateway

Dear Michael,

Thank you to you and the Planning Board for considering this letter in advance of the discussion of proposals for adding what will almost certainly be student housing at the rear of the Mill Road Plaza near the Chesley Marsh path into our family neighborhood. That area is a fragile and important buffer that protects our neighborhood from the commercial core and from concentrations of university students. Placing a large number of students at the entrance to our neighborhood will certainly negatively impact the entire Faculty Neighborhood.

My young Middle School kids, along with many of their peers, walk to school on the path through the woods from Faculty Road to the Chesley pedestrian entrance to the Mill Road Plaza. That path is heavily used by neighborhood adults as well. It's one of the great features that attracted us to buying a house nearby. Placing hundreds of students at the edge of our neighborhood and in the vicinity of our children and our one wooded path is potentially dangerous and certainly damaging to the quality of life in the neighborhood. Students living close to that area will likely be tempted to wander into our small wooded area (and the wooden bridge over College Brook) for consumption of alcohol and other drugs and general activities and behaviors not consistent with the environment we want for our children or ourselves.

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to see the negative impact a mass of student housing in that location would have on the young kids and their families directly nearby. Student housing there will increase noise into the neighborhood, trash into the neighborhood, odors, light pollution for the neighborhood, and diminish our quality of life, particularly on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Student parties in Durham do have a history of becoming wholly out-of-bounds. Why on earth would the Town want to damage the quality of life and property values of the prime downtown neighborhood with such a move?

It is also not hard to see the delicate balance that neighborhoods such as ours have taken time to achieve between university needs and family needs, a balance which this proposal would be harming by introducing new dissonance rather than respecting our hard-won harmony.

Please respect the existing balance rather than invite problems.

Thanks again for considering our concerns.

Best wishes,
Julie Haines
42 Oyster River Road, Durham