

24 February 2021

13 Mill Road  
Durham

Dear Planning Board,

Greetings from Brookside Commons and many thanks for the hard work, long hours, and stress that you all manage in the interests of our town. It is much appreciated.

We write as abutters to the Mill Plaza, having commented in-person and in writing at several points during your review of various proposals for the redevelopment of the plaza.

This note is prompted by Robin Mower's submission, dated February 23, 2021, regarding:

*"Conservation Commission advisory on WCO and SPO Conditional Use Permit | Wetland setback to College Brook (2nd letter)"*

We applaud, and fully support and endorse Robin's submissions.

Robin's note prompted a brief reflection.

We continue with "business as usual" at our peril. Degrading our watersheds instead of stewarding them; encouraging the destructive use of non-renewable resources by paving vital natural spaces instead of promoting human-centered designs; not considering externalities of economic development that harm our quality of life – these practices must stop if we are to thrive as a people, as a community.

Having followed, now for over five years, the process of review that you have undertaken with regards to the Mill Plaza, it seems abundantly clear that none of the plans that have been put forward during that time represent a fair balance of the interests of the applicant and the community. It seems clear that none of those proposals come close to complying with our Settlement Agreement. And all are far from meeting the Conditional-Use requirements that exist to ensure that the broader interests of the community are taken into account.

It's time to ask Colonial Durham Associates to fundamentally rethink how the redevelopment of the Mill Plaza can make economic sense, with a fair return, while seizing the potential of this prime property.

Thank you for listening!

Sincerely,

Mark and Jean McPeak