

Mary LaPolice  
7 Magrath Road  
Durham, NH 03824

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February 1, 2022

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board:

I am writing in concerned opposition to the proposed Mill Plaza Redevelopment building plan and in support of my fellow Faculty Neighborhood friend, Scott Bogle and his professional opinion on Town Planning, specifically his comments and documentation of Conditional Use, in his letter to the Board dated January 6, 2022.

In Mr. Bogle's letter he summarizes his requests as such, to begin to comply with all eight of the Conditional Use criteria identified in the zoning ordinance, specifically addressing four points of conditional use failure in the project:

1. Commission a study estimating noise and other external impacts from on-site and near-site pedestrian activity by the occupants of the proposed 258 new beds and their companions at various times of day and night.
2. Stipulate a quantitative study using established paired-sales appraisal methodology of anticipated impacts of a large scale, high-density student apartment development on property values of adjacent senior condominiums and single-family residential neighborhood.
3. Keep the public hearing on the project open until these studies have been completed and made available for review and comment by the public.
4. Adhere strictly to the Conditional Use zoning criteria that protect our town. The burden of proof that all criteria are met is on the applicant. In the absence of proof that the concerns stated above are misguided, the application should be denied.

I am also in support and wish to reiterate fellow Faculty Rd neighbor, Electrical Engineer and Data Analyst, Andrew Kun's statement, who wrote to the Planning Board on January 6, 2022, to summarize in his professional opinion that the current deliberations on the Mill Plaza do not adequately utilize data to determine if Conditional Use criteria would be met by the proposed changes to the site.

Mr. Kun's summary is as such:

1. There is no clear understanding if there will be worse flooding due to the proposed development.
2. There is no noise study.
3. There is no understanding of pedestrian traffic on the Plaza and around it with 250+ beds.

I am a longtime 2<sup>nd</sup> generation resident of the Faculty Neighborhood and graduate of UNH. My parents moved here in 1959 so that my father could begin his 36-year career as a professor and department chair at UNH. I lived there until 1990, then returned, one street over in 2001 with my husband and we raised our son here and eventually cared for my elderly parents.

While I am not an engineer nor a town planner, I have worked for a multi-billion dollar Global Sporting Goods business for 32 years. We have large offices across the country and the world, and we work not only in digital sales, but in partnership with our wholesale retailers. I have seen a lot of retail trends over the years. Growth, consolidation, closures. I would like to state from everything we have learned, both retail and the need for external office space is declining, as is college enrollment numbers attributed to the well-known "enrollment cliff."

Pls visit the following NY Times article from April 2021 entitled in part, *Shrinking Need for Office Space Could Crush Landlords:*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/08/business/economy/office-buildings-remote-work.html>

As I drive around Durham's core circular route, I've seen more Rental and Commercial Rental advertisement signs up for longer than ever before. We are not filling the current commercial spaces or the rental units that we have now. It is a sign of the times not to mention the growing expense of leases.

Should Colonial Durham Associates believe they will simply replace our torn down businesses from the second plaza, add more, and fill the remaining stories with students, in my opinion is a very short-sighted use and something completely disserving to the downtown and residents of Durham.

I can attest, living in Faculty Neighborhood there is a strong yin and yang with the student life of UNH. In the Fall and Spring especially, you can walk around the block and hear loud noise from the Christianson Williamson area as well as from the lawns and decks of the many student rentals living among us. We've come accustomed to walking down many streets towards campus littered with beer cans and solo cups either dumped on the walk to Libby's or blown away from beer pong games and other intrusive activities forced upon the residents here. And yet, despite that, we've had a sense of buffer from the Plaza helping us feel like we do have a small oasis from campus.

My mother, who passed away at age 85 in 2017 after living in Durham in the Faculty Neighborhood for 60 years, was a worrier. She would develop notions in her head that we would inevitably try to negate as nonsense in attempt to ease her anxiety. One such on-going notion for decades, was that eventually Faculty Neighborhood would someday "all be turned into condos for UNH." Year after year we'd assure her that could never happen.

And yet: As it turns out, perhaps she wasn't so far off after all? Certainly not literally, however the concept of the infringement into our lovely residential area with large UNH and Commercially occupied buildings may finally have come to fruition. Where does it stop? Perhaps she will continue to be even more correct if we allow this expansive project to continue as planned and to create precedence for additional build up in the face of residential areas.

Please consider, in addition to adhering to our Condition Use ordinances, the true *need* for this project at this time, in this space, in this manner.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,  
Mary LaPolice  
7 Magrath Rd  
Durham, NH 03824