

From: nell neal <nellneal3@gmail.com>

Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 at 8:04 AM

To: nell neal <nellneal3@gmail.com>, Richard Kelley <richard.kelley@hdrinc.com>, Todd Selig <tselig@ci.durham.nh.us>

Subject: Good Morning Richard, Todd

and Planning Board members,

I have not until this point commented on the proposed Plaza project, but I am now compelled to do so. I am opposed to adding more student housing to our downtown and I am opposed to cutting the adjacent wooded area to make this project possible. I remember when Durham was a downtown for residents and students with a movie theater, a music store, a clothing store etc. Over time it has become a downtown primarily as a place for students to live. We have let the needs of the University and the need for a broader tax base take over the personality of the town. Now when I walk or drive through town I primarily see students. Where are the residents? I can tell you. They are gathering, eating and shopping somewhere else. Now the best place to connect with other residents is at the Transfer Station. Town dumps always have been a great place to gather but slowly and surely it is becoming the social center for adult home owning residents of Durham on Saturday morning.

If you take a visual inventory of downtown Durham almost everywhere you look there are very large buildings for student housing. Yes, there is the opportunity for adult resident oriented fun businesses to come into the first floors of

these buildings, but where are they? In fact the few that were here have closed or are closing. I see doctors offices and various specialized offices but precious little that draws me into town for pleasure or just to spend time.

The Plaza could be that place, but the potential is lost if it just becomes another large paved area minus trees and filled with a big building for student housing and a big parking lot.

Yes, residents pay substantial taxes in Durham but I am willing to pay more if it means I can have a downtown that draws me in, gives me a sense of community and feels like I live in a town and not in a dormitory.

I know there is tax potential, but we have already given over so much to dormitory type buildings. Please save some of downtown for the people who live here and love this town.

Thank you,
Nell Neal
11 Riverview Road
Durham, NH