

October 26, 2020

Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

RE: Public Hearing - Mill Plaza Redevelopment. 7 Mill Road. Continued review of application for site plan and conditional use for mixed use redevelopment project and activity within the wetland and shoreland overlay districts. Colonial Durham Associates, property owner. Sean McCauley, agent. Joe Persechino, Tighe & Bond, engineer. Emily Innes and Sharon Ames, Harriman, project designer. Ari Pollack, attorney. (Rick Taintor is serving as the Town's Contract Planner.) Central Business District. Map 5, Lot 1-1.

Topic of this letter: Conditional Use Permit review for WCOD and SPOD | Conservation Commission

Dear Members of the Board,

You may have received an alert to my October 21st letter-plus-exhibits—and the October 25th one-pager—to the Conservation Commission regarding its upcoming review. I intended to send that material to the Planning Board myself along with an introductory note, but since both letters have already been posted on the Mill Plaza's "Citizen Comments" web page, here is my separate introductory note.

The Board may primarily be interested in the "bottom line," i.e., whether the Commission finds that the proposal meets the required four Conditional Use criteria.

But it is my experience that the nuances of the Commission's discussions may prove relevant to the Board in its own broader deliberations, and I provided materials that some of you may either not have seen before or may not remember from earlier Board meetings. That may also be the case with comments submitted to the Commission by other residents.

Our lives have been a bit topsy-turvy in the months since the March 11, 2020 meeting at which several of us provided the Board with presentations expressing concern about the environmental impacts of the proposal. You have weathered an onslaught of materials.

Your eyes are no doubt often on the "prize" of upgrading this white elephant of a site and realizing both tax revenues and the potential for greater downtown vitality. Yet I urge you to review letters and materials sent to the Conservation Commission with an eye toward the long-term environmental impact of the proposal as it currently stands versus the potential benefit of requiring improvements.

Thank you for your continued attention to the details of this extraordinarily challenging application.

Sincerely yours,

Robin