

Impacts of the Tideline Public House
Comments to the Durham Planning Board
Dennis Meadows; March 23, 2022

There are good reasons to be especially concerned about the Tideline Public House project. Of course, any effort to alter properties within Durham's Historic District deserves careful study. Beyond that, several thousand drivers will pass by that site every day.

Many Durham residents have said they generally like the Letourneau's proposal and expect they would visit it. But the zoning code requires the Planning Board to base its decisions on objective data, not on intuition and opinion.

Therefore from Durham's zoning code I have identified objective indicators for deciding what values the Tideline project will actually bring to our town.

The Tideline proposal can be evaluated by eight impacts on Durham: jobs, diversity, history, environment, profits, zoning, neighborhood impacts, and community support.

Jobs

Tideline will create 17 to 20 new jobs in town.

Diversity

Tideline will bring new dining options, a gourmet food and wine shop, and family entertainment into central Durham.

History

Tideline will restore historical structures in Durham.

Environment

Tideline will reduce the size of an existing parking lot, removing asphalt and creating a landscape that offers families diverse recreational opportunities.

Profits

Profits from Tideline will flow to local residents.

Zoning

The Tideline project complies fully with Durham's zoning codes.

Neighborhood Impacts

Tideline will be built in an area where its light, noise, and traffic will affect few nearby residents, and its hours of operation will be restricted.

Public Support

When Scott Letourneau presented his preliminary ideas at the Historic District Commission meeting Council member Andrew Corrow said, "At first blush I see no negatives for this whatsoever. And this is something the town of Durham longs for." All the testimony I have heard since then supports that view.

In 2015 Scott Mitchell proposed tearing down the old town hall and replacing it with a drive-through drug store. The town badly needed the money to cope with a large cost overrun encountered in building the new town hall. *Friday Updates* even described Mitchell's project as the highest and best use for the site. But finally the town decided to reject the proposal and wait for a better project that would serve the real needs of people living in Durham.

After looking at the objective data, it's obvious that the Tideline proposal is that better project.