

Technical Review Group (TRG)
Tuesday, December 3, 2024. 10:45 am
Town Council Chambers
NOTES OF MEETING

Mill Plaza Enhancements

TRG members present:

Michael Behrendt, Town Planner
Audrey Cline, Code Administrator
Rene Kelley, Police Chief (on Zoom)
Brendan O’Sullivan, Deputy Fire Chief
Rich Reine, Public Works Director
April Talon, Town Engineer

Applicants present:

Matt Morgan, Torrington Properties (on Zoom)
Pete Doucet, Torrington Properties
Stephen Mayer, Allen & Major, engineer
Gregg Mikolaities, engineer/agent
Jeff Gannon, PCA, architect

Pete Doucet introduced the project. Torrington Properties bought the site about 1-1/2 years ago. Their goal now is to enhance the site and to increase pedestrian flow from the downtown and from campus. They are doing façade upgrades and site improvements. The project is being done in 5 phases. They are working with their tenants on possible relocations. They are expanding the sidewalk and adding landscaping. They will do similar façade improvements to the front building as part of Phase 4. The bank will probably relocate to the end of the building where the drive through is going.

Michael asked Torrington to give some background why they are not redeveloping the site and why they are not adding any residential. Matt Morgan said they studied adding residential and the numbers just did not work to do so. He said they consider this project to be a redevelopment of the site as it is a significant improvement.

Rich asked about the timing of Phases 3 and 4 as he said the Town is looking at doing something with the crosswalk at the upper end of Mill Road where you turn

on from Main Street, possibly relocating it down the slope from Main Street. The timing should be coordinated. Todd said the Town has allocated money in the budget for the crosswalk signal.

Pete Doucet said the timing to complete the project will be:

Phases 1 and 2 – Spring 2025

Phase 3 – Fall 2025

Phases 4 and 5 – Spring 2026 (though it could potentially be accelerated depending on various factors)

Phase 3 might be extended to include the buffer along Mill Road.

Audrey asked about a pedestrian connection from Chesley Drive along the brook. Gregg Mikolaities said they will look at this as part of Phase 5. Michael suggested they also look at connecting the path from Chesley Drive in front of the rear building and to the ramp leading to Main Street. Rich said it might be desirable to accelerate this project since the Town is looking at doing work along the Chesley Drive sidewalk that lies on Town property.

Brendan asked about emergency access at the upper part of the site where the crosswalk enters. He said this is not required but would be desirable. He also suggested looking at an emergency access from Chesley Drive.

Rich said they asked for a waiver from preparing the stormwater checklist. He said Public Works would be hesitant about this. Rich will speak with the applicant separately about this.

Pete Doucet said they are only doing a sealcoat and restriping the parking lot. They are not rehabilitating the parking lot. There is not enough money in the budget for that task though they might be able to do that some time in the future.

Gregg Mikolaities said they will provide a full survey and existing conditions plan shortly.

April said that if they move tenants, they need to look at water accounts and connections. They will need to look at flows as part of the water and sewer connection.

Matt Perry said there will be slight increase in the number of parking spaces for Phases 1 and 2 but a decrease overall of about 40 spaces. He said there will be

more landscaping added in Phase 5. They will be looking at creating a path along College Brook in Phase 5.

Michael asked if Hannaford was supportive of the project. Pete Doucet said that they are.

Jeff Gannon presented the architecture plans. They will paint the brick and use fiber cement. Audrey asked about adding some corbelling on the piers and not using primary colors for the signage. Jeff Gannon said that the tenants will submit their own sign packages. These colors are just placeholders.

Michael asked about using tan rather than bright white on the sign panels. Jeff Gannon said they like the bright white as it conveys a freshness. He said tan might feel a little dated. They will tweak the colors later.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Behrendt, Durham Town Planner/TRG Chair