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Sent: Friday, April 5, 2019 4:25 PM

To: mbehrendt@ci.durham.nh.us

Cc: Peter Murphy <petermurphy6@comcast.net>

Subject: FW: 18 Main Street Parking Proposal

Chairperson Durham ZBA,

Durham's business district is an area I consider beginning at the convenience stores on Rte. 108 and continuing over Church Hill to where Main Street reaches the University campus. It is faced with a critical imbalance between the availability of long term parking and the demands of Durham residents intending on doing business in downtown Durham and the need for parking by employees of downtown businesses. The situation is further exacerbated by the unusually high cost of metered parking for a municipality the size of Durham. Commercial real estate in Durham's business district (BD) experiences a higher than typical vacancy rate for commercial space and commercial rents below levels that support the cost to create commercial space. This is in part due to the lack of parking. I have followed the application proposing additional long term parking at 18 Main Street. I walk past the property regularly traveling from my home to downtown Durham and quite frankly was not aware of the existing parking area until the sign announcing the proposal made me aware of the potential on the site. After reviewing the proposal and observing the site I see nothing about what is proposed that would in any way diminish the appearance of the gateway to downtown Durham. As a former member and chair of the HDC I was disappointed in the HDC vote to disapprove the

1

proposal. With a seat open and a member absent and only a one vote majority I believe the HDC missed an opportunity to find a compromise that enhanced the district. That compromise would have been consistent with the HDC allowing the Grange to be moved to the front of the lot and the removal of two "historic" structures from the Orion site. Both actions severed the approved national and state standing of the District but saved the grange and measurably improved the gateway to Durham's community center. I believe the decisions were in the best interest of Durham and the District. The parking proposal is a similar opportunity and in the best interest of Durham. Considering the authority to grant approval of the lot but requiring it be fully screened with a 6' evergreen vegetation visual barrier is in my mind what is in both the best interest of the District and Durham. More parking is a reasonable land use in the BD. I offer my support for the approval of this needed increase in BD parking and believe it will be a benefit to both residents and businesses using public parking. I encourage the ZBA to reverse the HDC's decision with reasonable requirements that protect the District.

Respectfully,

Peter Stanhope

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Durham