

June 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to ask that the Zoning and Planning Boards carefully consider the proposed parking variance for The Patio. I love The Patio and think that it's been a huge success and huge benefit to the Main Street food scene. My position is no way reflective of how I feel about the owners or the business itself. My concern is the additional influx of cars and pedestrians in an already overcrowded and unsafe situation.

As many of you know, Union Street between Main and Liberty Streets is one of the narrowest on the Hill. It is also an anomaly as it has no sidewalks on either side of the street, barring a small portion off of Main Street on the Patio side. There is also no on street parking on Union Street (although this is often overlooked.) Several years ago, the town installed a small wooden fence on the corner of Liberty and Union Streets to deter people from cutting the corner into the previously existing parking. A stop sign was also installed in addition to making Union Street a one-way. These measures illustrate that the town has acknowledged a pattern of difficult traffic conditions in this area even prior to the recent development of the street itself.

Three years ago, a homeowner on Liberty Street subdivided their lot, and, what was once a garage, became two multi story townhouses. In addition, the project at 461 Main Street will create 15 housing units with six multi story townhouses on Union Street plus several businesses. This project was already given a parking variance by the town, even though there is very limited parking in this area to begin with. Streets in the immediate vicinity having parking restrictions such as no parking on one side, no parking on either side, and/or no overnight parking.

The town recently went through an evaluation of parking concerns with all of the Main Street businesses and provided updated parking requirements. This effort required a good deal of town employee's time, time on the part of the local business owners, plus was an expenditure of taxpayer dollars. The desire was to create a standard that all businesses must adhere to. These standards were created for safety and to alleviate the overcrowding on Main Street. Variances occur, but at least minimal effort should be made to meet this standard. Absolving any single business of all parking requirements will set a precedent and opens the town up to potential problems.

Up to this point, The Patio was able to utilize the previous Red Stripe's parking lot for their staff and patrons, however, this building is being renovated and those spaces will no longer be available. To provide them with a 100% variance will put additional stress on the already unsafe condition in the area. In a typical evening, the Patio can host several hundred guests, most of whom will travel there by car. Where will they park and how will it affect the safety on already narrow, one-way, residential streets?

I hope the Patio business owners and the town are able to come to an agreement that will provide some relief for the business owner, but that will first consider the concerns that I and others have voiced on the safety and overcrowding in this area.

I respectfully ask the Board to consider the above when making their decision on this variance. Thank you.

Camille Specca
35 Liberty Street
East Greenwich, RI 02818

June 21, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am a resident of 31 Liberty Street East Greenwich and I am concerned about the variance that the Patio is seeking to keep the tent up permanently. I feel that with the Red Stripe restaurant opening and the construction happening on Union street this will negatively impact the neighborhood here in terms of traffic and parking. The streets are already narrow and heavily traveled as it is but to push this additional traffic up the block will be a problem for us residents.

Please do not approve this variance I feel that the restaurant was given this for Covid relief and well utilized but the establishment was set up with the original plan and I feel with all things opened up now they should have to go back to that to keep the area from being overburdened.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

Sincerely

Anne Horvath

31 Liberty Street

East Greenwich RI

617-413-8071

Re: The Patio RI expansion

To Whom It May Concern

I am unable to attend the East Greenwich Zoning Board meeting on June 22, 2021 but wanted to provide my commentary and opinion here regarding The Patio RI's desire to keep Covid zoning modifications in place on a permanent basis.

I live one block up the street from The Patio, and have been in my home for 18 years. I've seen the space at 431 Main St change tenants numerous times and would love nothing more than for something in that space to succeed for the long haul. I have eaten at The Patio a number of times and am happy to see a small business have the success that they have had in a short time. The restaurant business is not easy - my parents owned a sandwich shop for over 20 years - and to (more or less) open and thrive during a pandemic is a testament to their hard work.

But the variance that the establishment is asking for is fraught with problems.

The Space Itself

When The Patio entered into a lease for the property, there was no idea of a pandemic or a lockdown in sight. The 21-seat space - we must assume - was suitable for their new restaurant's needs. And the fact that it comes with its own parking lot on Main St is a huge plus. But the establishment that evolved during Covid has outgrown capacity of the physical space. The indoor dining area was essentially closed for the past year, and the capacity was shifted to a temporary party tent. And this happened with a sacrifice to the parking capacity. This space was not made to accommodate 45 people.

Parking

Since the tent was erected, people dining and attending live events at the restaurant have used every available means to park their cars. This includes parking in the currently vacant lot across Union St (soon to be a new restaurant), illegally parking along the extremely narrow Union St (there is no parking on either side), and parking in the neighborhood up the hill.

Parking issues, as you well know, are an issue for Main St businesses, and those regulations were relaxed during Covid through increased capacity to help keep our Main St businesses afloat during a very unique time.

The narrow nature of Union St is already problematic, with the town even going so far as to erect "Do Not Enter" signs at the top of Union St, heading down from Liberty St. It should be noted that these signs are disregarded multiple times PER HOUR, let alone per day. Six townhouses are due to be built on Union St this year. Add in two 2-year old townhouses next door to The Patio, a new restaurant (Union & Main) opening soon, and the aforementioned illegally parked cars on Union St itself, allowing The Patio to not only double capacity, but to do so without any parking whatsoever, would create a situation on Union St and for the residents in the immediate area that would be very problematic. The traffic and parking situation in the area over the past 15 months has already gotten out of control, and the new townhouses and restaurant have yet to even add into the mix. I have attached a few photos of the parking situation on Union for reference. This is going to create a traffic nightmare

The town went through the pains of righting their parking requirements a few years back, ensuring that all the restaurants on Main St had appropriate parking for their building capacities. To essentially allow The

Patio to operate with 0% parking is a slap in the face of that effort, and opens an enormous can of worms for every single business on Main St.

I know that the owner has proposed using a valet service as an option, but I believe most people in the neighborhood find this troublesome. The valets race through the neighborhood, often the wrong way on Pierce St, with little regard for residents. Creating more traffic in the neighborhood is neither safe nor desirable.

The Tent

Because this restaurant falls within the historic district, it must follow certain guidelines with regard to both structure and signage. The guidelines exist to maintain the integrity of our historic downtown, and everyone living or operating in this district understands the rules, but more importantly, understands their benefit: to ensure the historic character of our neighborhood, which keeps property values strong and Main St busy. But a temporary tent facing Main St is just that. Temporary. It smacks right in the face of historic value, and quite honestly devalues what our historic district commission works so hard to maintain.

In addition to its appearance, the tent also provides little noise barrier. When The Patio has a band, the music can be heard up in the neighborhood, and comedians can be heard dropping "F-bombs" during their sets. A thin piece of vinyl is not soundproofing.

"Look What I Found"

As much as I don't know what the owners had in mind when they started this restaurant, I certainly can't imagine that they envisioned a restaurant twice the size of the space they leased, one that would offer nightly entertainment for 40+ patrons, and one with no parking. The Patio of June 2021 is not The Patio of February 2020. Not by a longshot.

Again, I tip my hat to their creativity during the pandemic. As the current president of the Odeum, I can attest to the shifts businesses have had to make to stay afloat, the Odeum being one of them. But the measures the Odeum took will end soon, as will measures extended to restaurants such as expanded seating and to-go liquor sales. Exceptions were made, but exceptions should and will end. At this point, The Patio has gone from sandwich shop to sandwich shop with a nightclub. And that is neither sustainable or suitable for that space.

The Patio transformed itself during Covid, and if there is a desire to become more than a sandwich shop with 20 seats, then perhaps they might look for a new, more appropriate building. The pandemic clearly opened their eyes to something new, something very different from what they imagined when they first entered into a lease and opened their shop.

If this variance is allowed, who is to say The Patio even sticks around in this location for the next 20 years, saddling the neighborhood with a grandfathered parking variance transferring a currently unknown business.

I appreciate the efforts of the zoning board to set and enforce standards that keep Main St and the Hill & Harbour neighborhood both viable and livable.

Much thanks



Dan Specia

The narrow nature of Union St



Cars often line this side of Union St, frequently parking under the "No Parking Either Side" sign



Cars frequently park up into the neighborhood, including this one, parked on a corner, just after a stop sign. Not really a spot. And an unsafe one at that.



Anthony,Lea

From: Alison Nakowicz <anakowicz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 18, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Anthony,Lea
Subject: Tuesday meet

Hi Lea,

This is Alison Nakowicz at hairloom. I was approached by Angel from the patio yesterday regarding the tent that they have up since Covid . As I want to see business succeed , I do not agree with the tent being there, it is not zoned and or aesthetically pleasing to look they should move locations to Accomodate their new businesss if there Existing structure cannot handle it. I hope this finds you and you are well. I will not be able to attend the meeting on Tuesday but wanted my voice to be heard .

Thank you Alison nakowicz

Anthony,Lea

From: Richard Land <rland@crflp.com>
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 11:33 AM
To: Anthony,Lea
Subject: Fwd: Patio parking

Please circulate and add to the record.

Richard J. Land
Chace Ruttenberg & Freedman, LLP
One Park Row, Suite 300
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 453-6400
Rland@crflp.com
(iPhone)

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jason Dittelman <j@crestarmfg.com>
Date: July 2, 2021 at 11:25:24 AM EDT
To: Richard Land <rland@crflp.com>
Subject: Patio parking

Hello Richard

I rent the property at 47/51 Liberty St from Richard Reality and have so for the last 15 years. It has come to my attention that the Patio has requested a zoning variance for parking. They have caused parking issues at our facility.

I feel that along with the new tenant going in the old Red Strip building and the new building plan for the condos on Liberty, there is a perfect parking storm brewing. We do not have time to monitor our lot for Patio customers and feel the application for a variance should be looked at very carefully.

Respectfully

Jason Dittelman
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East Greenwich, RI 02828
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