

City of Portsmouth Planning Department 1 Junkins Ave, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Portsmouth, NH (603)610-7216

#### **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Zoning Board of Adjustment FROM: Jillian Harris, Principal Planner

Peter Stith, Planning Manager

DATE: April 9, 2025

RE: Zoning Board of Adjustment April 15, 2025

The agenda items listed below can be found in the following analysis prepared by City Staff:

#### **II. Old Business**

- A. 635 Sagamore Avenue Extension Request
- B. 39 Dearborn Street Extension Request

#### **III. New Business**

- A. 121 Mechanic Street
- B. 636 Lincoln Avenue
- C. 558 Islington Street
- D. 205 Bartlett Street
- E. 620 Peverly Hill Road
- F. 210 Commerce Way REQUEST TO POSTPONE
- G. 170 and 190 Commerce Way REQUEST TO POSTPONE
- H. 195 Commerce Way REQUEST TO POSTPONE
- I. 215 Commerce Way REQUEST TO POSTPONE
- J. 230 Commerce Way REQUEST TO POSTPONE

#### II. OLD BUSINESS

A. 635 Sagamore Avenue – Extension Request (LU-22-209)

# **Planning Department Comments**

On May 16, 2023 the Board of Adjustment granted the following variances for the removal of existing structures and construction of 4 single family dwellings:

- 1) A Variance from Section 10.513 to allow four free-standing dwellings where one is permitted.
- 2) A Variance from Section 10.521 to allow a lot area per dwelling unit of 21,198 square feet per dwelling where 43,560 square feet is required.

The Board voted to grant the request with the following condition:

1) The design and location of the dwellings may change as a result of Planning Board review and approval.

The approvals listed above are scheduled to expire on May 16, 2025. The Ordinance allows for a one-time, one-year extension if the request is acted on prior to the expiration date. The applicant has requested an extension as a permit has not yet been obtained. A letter from the applicant and the 2023 letter of decision is included in the meeting packet. You can view the original application material at the following link:

https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/files/planning/apps/SagmaoreAve\_635/635+Sagamore+Ave\_boa\_05162023.pdf

#### II. OLD BUSINESS

## A. 39 Dearborn Street – Extension Request (LU-23-5)

## **Planning Department Comments**

On May 23, 2023 the Board of Adjustment granted the following variances demolishing the existing shed and constructing a two-story addition which requires the following:

- 1) Variance from Section 10.521 to allow a) 5 foot front yard where 15 feet is required; and
- b) 2 foot right side yard where 10 feet is required.
- 2) Variance from Section 10.321 to allow a nonconforming building or structure to be extended, reconstructed, or enlarged without conforming to the requirements of the Ordinance

The approvals listed above are scheduled to expire on May 23, 2025. The Ordinance allows for a one-time, one-year extension if the request is acted on prior to the expiration date. The applicant has requested an extension as a permit has not yet been obtained. A letter from the applicant and the 2023 letter of decision is included in the meeting packet. You can view the original application material at the following link:

https://files.portsmouthnh.gov/files/planning/apps/DearbornSt 39/DearbornSt 39 BOA 052 32023.pdf

A. The request of Jason T. and Trisha Brewster (Owners), for property located at 121 Mechanic Street whereas after-the-fact relief is required for a roof sign which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1240 to allow a roof sign where it is not an allowed sign type; and 2) Variance from Section 10.251 for an aggregate sign area of 191 s.f., which is greater than the maximum allowed. Said property is located on Assessor Map 103 Lot 31 and lies within the Waterfront Business (WB) and Historic Districts. (LU-25-5)

## **Existing & Proposed Conditions**

	Existing	Proposed	Permitted / Required	
Land Use:	Mixed-Use	Roof Sign*	Primarily Commercia	
Lot area (SF):	6,534	6,534	20,000 Mir	٦.
Building frontage (Ft.):	Bait Shop: 16	Bait Shop: 16	NR	
Wall Sign (SF)	11	11	16 Ma	IX.
Roof Sign (SF)	180	180*	Not Permitted	
Aggregate Sign area	191	191	16 Ma	IX.
<u>(SF)</u>				
		Variance request(s) shown in red.		
		, , ,		

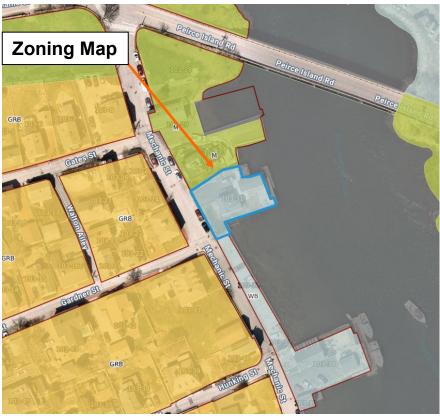
<sup>\*</sup>A roof sign is not a permitted sign type in Sign District 2 per Section 10.1241

#### Other Permits/Approvals Required

- Historic District Commission Approval
- Sign Permit

# **Neighborhood Context**





## **Previous Board of Adjustment Actions**

- December 17, 1975 Request to allow to extend existing workshop an additional 12' onto existing wharf, extending an existing nonconforming setback(s). The Board voted to grant the request with no stipulations.
- November 18, 1986 1) a Variance from Article III, Section 10-302 to allow the construction of a 8' x 14' building for the retailing of lobsters with a 9' side yard and a 1' rear yard where a minimum side and rear yards of 20 ft. are required; and, 2) a Variance from Article IX, Section 10-906 to permit the use of a 14 s.f. free-standing sign located 2' from the front and side yards where a minimum of 35 ft. to all yards is required. The Board voted to grant the request with no stipulations.
- January 22, 2014 A Variance from Section 10.321 to allow a lawful nonconforming building to be extended or enlarged without conforming to the requirements of the Ordinance. A Variance from Section 10.531 to allow a right side yard setback of 7'10" ± where 30' is the minimum required. The Board voted to grant the request as advertised and presented.

## **Planning Department Comments**

The applicant owns and operates Brewster's Bait and Tackle at 121 Mechanic Street. In October 2024 the applicant painted "Bait and Ice" on one side of the roof of the bait shop. As this constitutes a sign, the applicant is required to obtain a sign permit and to meet sign regulations for the Waterfront Business (WB) and Historic Districts, in which the property is located. The applicant is requesting relief for an after-the-fact roof sign (180 SF) as painted letters on the roof where it is not a permitted sign type in sign district 2 and an aggregate sign area that is greater than the maximum permitted for the property.

#### Variance Review Criteria

This application must meet all five of the statutory tests for a **variance** (see Section 10.233 of the Zoning Ordinance):

- 1. Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.
- 2. Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance.
- 3. Granting the variance would do substantial justice.
- 4. Granting the variance would not diminish the values of surrounding properties.
- 5. The "unnecessary hardship" test:
  - (a) The property has <u>special conditions</u> that distinguish it from other properties in the area. **AND**
  - (b) Owing to these special conditions, a fair and substantial relationship does not exist between the general public purposes of the Ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and the proposed use is a reasonable one. **OR** 
    - Owing to these special conditions, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

# 10.235 Certain Representations Deemed Conditions

Representations made at public hearings or materials submitted to the Board by an applicant for a special exception or variance concerning features of proposed buildings, structures, parking or uses which are subject to regulations pursuant to Subsection 10.232 or 10.233 shall be deemed conditions upon such special exception or variance.

**B.** The request of **Mezansky Family Revocable Trust (Owners**), for property located at **636 Lincoln Avenue** whereas relief is needed to demolish an existing detached garage and to construct an addition which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.521 to a) allow a 2 foot left side yard setback where 10 feet is required; b) allow a 16 foot rear yard setback where 20 feet is required; c) allow 29% building coverage where 25% is the maximum allowed; and 2) Variance from Section 10.321 to allow a nonconforming building or structure to be extended, reconstructed or enlarged without conforming to the requirements of the Ordinance. Said property is located on Assessor Map 148 Lot 17 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) District. (LU-25-27)

## **Existing & Proposed Conditions**

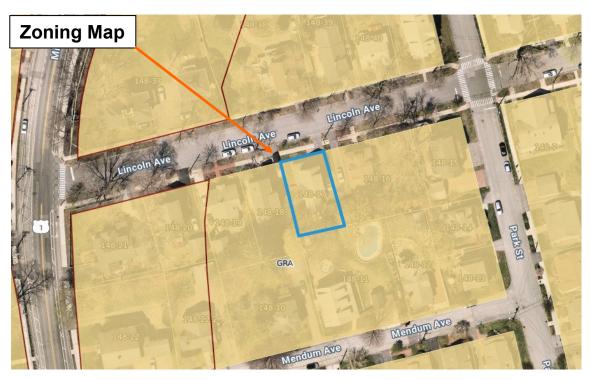
	Existing	Proposed	Permitted Required	<u>/</u>
<u>Land Use</u> :	Single-family	Construct rear addition	Primarily Residentia	al
Lot area (sq. ft.):	5,669	5,669	7,500	min.
Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (sq. ft.):	5,669	5,669	7,500	min.
Lot depth (ft):	85	85	100	min.
Street Frontage (ft.):	50	50	70	min.
Front Yard (ft.):	10	10	15	min.
Right Side Yard (ft.):	15	House:15 Addition: >10	10	min.
Left Side Yard (ft.):	Garage: 0	Addition:2	10	min.
Rear Yard (ft.):	House: 30	Addition: 16	20	min.
Building Coverage (%):	27.2	29	25	max.
Open Space Coverage (%):	63	64	30	min.
<u>Parking</u>	3	2	2	
Estimated Age of Structure:	1913	Variance request(s) s	hown in red	

# Other Permits/Approvals Required

Building Permit

# **Neighborhood Context**





## **Previous Board of Adjustment Actions**

October 16, 2012 - A Variance from Section 10.321 and Section 10.324 to allow a
lawful nonconforming building to be extended or enlarged in a manner that is not in
conformity with the Zoning Ordinance. A Variance from Section 10.521 to allow a
building coverage of 38.4%± where 36.8%± exists and 25% is the maximum allowed.
The Board voted to grant the request as advertised and presented.

## **Planning Department Comments**

The applicant is requesting to demolish an existing detached garage and to construct a onestory addition to the existing home to expand the living area. The addition is proposed to blend with the design of the primary structure and will require relief for rear and side yard setbacks, in addition to extension of an existing non-conforming structure.

#### Variance Review Criteria

This application must meet all five of the statutory tests for a **variance** (see Section 10.233 of the Zoning Ordinance):

- 1. Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.
- 2. Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance.
- 3. Granting the variance would do substantial justice.
- 4. Granting the variance would not diminish the values of surrounding properties.
- 5. The "unnecessary hardship" test:
  - (a) The property has <u>special conditions</u> that distinguish it from other properties in the area. **AND**
  - (b) Owing to these special conditions, a fair and substantial relationship does not exist between the general public purposes of the Ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and the proposed use is a reasonable one. **OR**

Owing to these special conditions, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

## 10.235 Certain Representations Deemed Conditions

Representations made at public hearings or materials submitted to the Board by an applicant for a special exception or variance concerning features of proposed buildings, structures, parking or uses which are subject to regulations pursuant to Subsection 10.232 or 10.233 shall be deemed conditions upon such special exception or variance.

**C.** The request of **Dreyer Family Revocable Trust (Owners)**, for property located at **558 Islington Street** whereas relief is needed to allow a salon which requires the following: 1) Special Exception from Section 10.440, Use # 7.20 to allow a personal services use where it is allowed by Special Exception. Said property is located on Assessor Map 156 Lot 23 and lies within the Character District 4-L2 (CD4-L2) and Historic Districts. (LU-25-30)

## **Existing & Proposed Conditions**

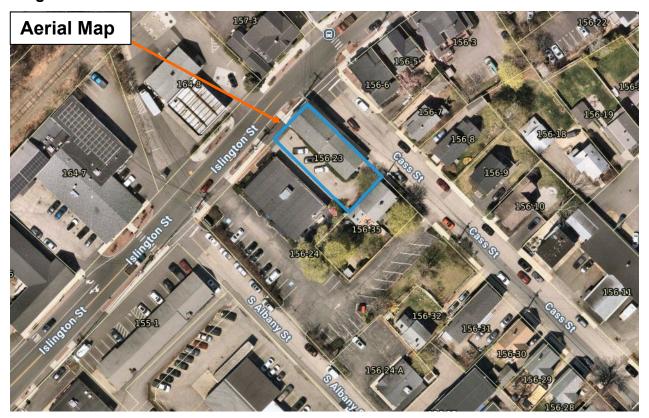
	Existing	Proposed	Permitted / Required
Land Use:	2 Commercial	*Salon (Allowed	Mixed residential and
	Units, 2	by Special	commercial uses
	Residential	Exception)	
	Units		
Unit Area (sq. ft.)	1000	1000	NR
Parking (Spaces)	10	10	Residential
			(2 Units): <b>3</b>
			Personal Svc
			(2 Units @1000SF): <b>5</b>
			(1 per 400 s.f.GFA)
			Total: 8
Estimated Age of	1920	Special Exception	request(s) shown in
Structure:		red.	

<sup>\*</sup>Salon is considered a "personal services" use that is allowed by Special Exception in the CD4-L2

## Other Permits/Approvals Required

- Building Permit (Tenant Fit-Up)
- Sign Permit

# **Neighborhood Context**





## **Previous Board of Adjustment Actions**

No previous BOA history was found.

# **Planning Department Comments**

The applicant is requesting to establish a salon at 558 Islington Street, a first floor commercial unit in a mixed-use building with a main address of 562 Islington Street. Salons are considered a "personal service" under the Zoning Ordinance and are allowed by Special Exception in the CD4-L2 district. There are currently 10 on-site parking spaces and the proposed mix of uses on-site requires 8 spaces.

## **Special Exception Review Criteria**

The application must meet all of the standards for a **special exception** (see Section 10.232 of the Zoning Ordinance).

- 1. Standards as provided by this Ordinance for the particular use permitted by special exception;
- 2. No hazard to the public or adjacent property on account of potential fire, explosion or release of toxic materials;
- 3. No detriment to property values in the vicinity or change in the essential characteristics of any area including residential neighborhoods or business and industrial districts on account of the location or scale of buildings and other structures, parking areas, accessways, odor, smoke, gas, dust, or other pollutant, noise, glare, heat, vibration, or unsightly outdoor storage of equipment, vehicles or other materials:
- 4. No creation of a traffic safety hazard or a substantial increase in the level of traffic congestion in the vicinity;
- 5. No excessive demand on municipal services, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, waste disposal, police and fire protection and schools; and
- 6. No significant increase of stormwater runoff onto adjacent property or streets.

#### 10.235 Certain Representations Deemed Conditions

Representations made at public hearings or materials submitted to the Board by an applicant for a special exception or variance concerning features of proposed buildings, structures, parking or uses which are subject to regulations pursuant to Subsection 10.232 or 10.233 shall be deemed conditions upon such special exception or variance.

D. The request of Freeze J. L. & Riecks J. D. Revocable Trust (Owners) and Kimberly Boualavong and Matthew Meyers (Applicants), for property located at 205 Bartlett Street whereas relief is needed to allow a barbershop which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.440, Use #7.20 to allow a personal services use where it is not allowed. Said property is located on Assessor Map 162 Lot 33 and lies within the General Residence A (GRA) District. (LU-25-31)

## **Existing & Proposed Conditions**

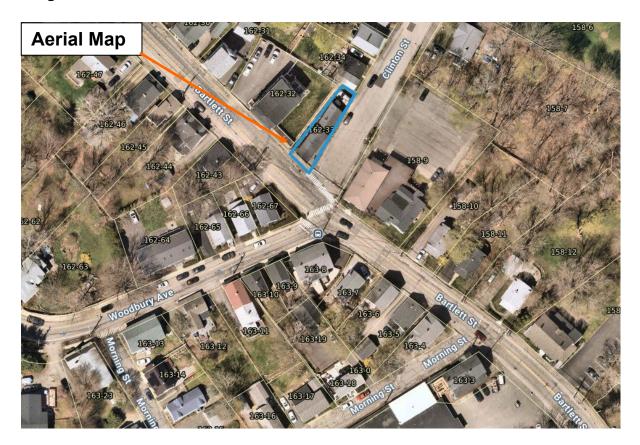
	Existing	Proposed	Permitted / Required
Land Use:	1 Commercial Unit, 1 Residential Unit	*Barbershop	Primarily Residential
Units Area (sq. ft.)	275	275	
Parking (Spaces)	2	2	2
Estimated Age of Structure:	1910	Variance request(s	) shown in red.

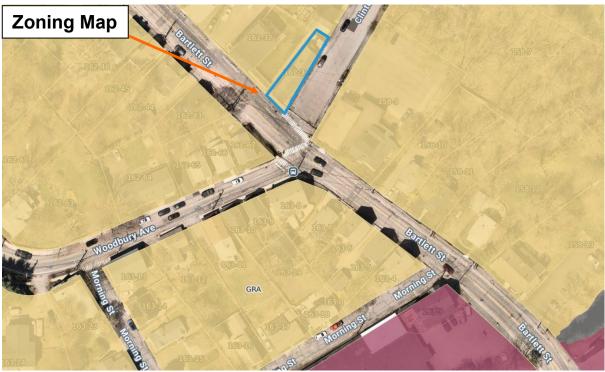
<sup>\*</sup>Barbershop is considered a "personal services" use that is not a permitted use in GRA

## Other Permits/Approvals Required

• Building Permit (Tenant Fit-Up)

# **Neighborhood Context**





## **Previous Board of Adjustment Actions**

- August 18, 1998 1) A Variance from Article II, Section 10-206 to allow a 442.6 s.f. take out only restaurant in the former Reyes Upholstery Shop (282.6 s.f.) and a portion of the existing dwelling unit (160 s.f.); and 2) a Variance from Article XII, Section 10-1204 Table 15 to allow no parking for the take out restaurant where 4 parking spaces are required. Application was withdrawn by applicant.
- **September 21, 1999** A Variance Article IV, Section 10-401(A)(1)(b) to allow a 6' x 9'6" walk-in closet in the apartment to be converted into an office for the upholstery shop. The Board voted to **grant** the petition as presented and advertised with a **stipulation**:
  - That the area for the office remain an office and not be used for other aspects of the business.
- April 29, 2014 A Variance from Section 10.440, Use #6.20 to allow a medical office where
  the use is prohibited in this district. A Variance from Sections 10.1111.10 and 10.1112.30 to
  allow no off-street parking spaces to be provided where 2 off-street parking spaces are
  required. The Board voted to grant the petition as presented and advertised with a
  stipulation:
  - o That the regular hours of operation will be limited to 20 hours per week.

## **Planning Department Comments**

The applicant is seeking a variance to permit a personal service use for a barbershop in an existing commercial unit at 205 Bartlett St. There is also an existing residential apartment in the rear unit of the existing mixed-use building. The front unit has historically been a non-conforming commercial use with the most recent tenant being permitted as medical office use. The commercial and residential units each require 1 parking space and there are 2 parking spaces at the rear of the lot.

#### Variance Review Criteria

This application must meet all five of the statutory tests for a **variance** (see Section 10.233 of the Zoning Ordinance):

- 1. Granting the variance would not be contrary to the public interest.
- 2. Granting the variance would observe the spirit of the Ordinance.
- 3. Granting the variance would do substantial justice.
- 4. Granting the variance would not diminish the values of surrounding properties.
- 5. The "unnecessary hardship" test:
  - (a) The property has <u>special conditions</u> that distinguish it from other properties in the area. **AND**
  - (b) Owing to these special conditions, a fair and substantial relationship does not exist between the general public purposes of the Ordinance provision and the specific application of that provision to the property; and the proposed use is a reasonable one. **OR**

Owing to these special conditions, the property cannot be reasonably used in strict conformance with the Ordinance, and a variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable use of it.

# **10.235 Certain Representations Deemed Conditions**

Representations made at public hearings or materials submitted to the Board by an applicant for a special exception or variance concerning features of proposed buildings, structures, parking or uses which are subject to regulations pursuant to Subsection 10.232 or 10.233 shall be deemed conditions upon such special exception or variance.

E. The request of Alexander Nancy H. Revocable Trust (Owners), for property located at 620 Peverly Hill Road whereas relief is needed for a change of use to allow a health club that requires the following special exception from Section 10.440, Use #4.42 to allow a health club greater than 2,000 s.f. gross floor area. Said property is located on Assessor Map 254 Lot 6 and lies within the Industrial (I) District. (LU-25-33)

## **Existing & Proposed Conditions**

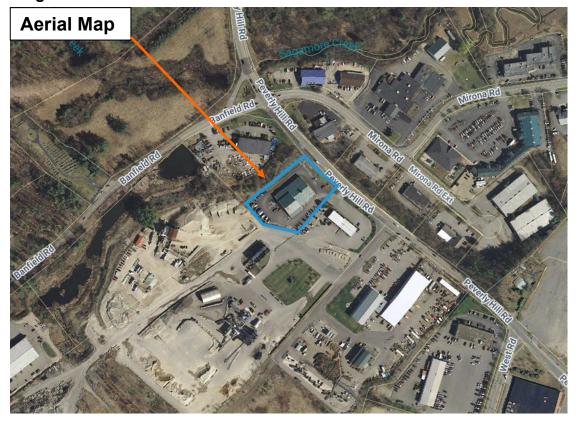
	Existing	Proposed	Permitted / Required
Land Use: Units Area (sq. ft.)	Health Club / Commercial / Industrial  Existing Health	*Convert Unit to Health Club >2,000 sq.ft. GFA Proposed	Primarily Industrial
Office Area (Sq. It.)	Clubs:4,500 Warehouse/Distribution: Apria Healthcare: 3,200 Johnson Paint: 6,550 Retail: 1,450	Health Club: 4,000	
Parking	60	60	Warehouse/Distribution:5 Retail: 5 Existing Health Clubs: 18 Proposed Health Club:16 Total: 44
		SE reques	t(s) shown in red.

<sup>\*</sup>Special Exception for a health club use greater than 2,000 SF GFA

## Other Permits/Approvals Required

Building Permit

# **Neighborhood Context**





## **Previous Board of Adjustment Actions**

- **September 19, 2000** A variance from Article XII, Section 10-1201(f)(2) to allow parking 31' from the front property line where 50' is the minimum setback required. The Board voted to **grant** the request as advertised and presented.
- May 27, 2008 A Variance from Article II, Section 10-209 was requested to allow a private school for grades 6 through 12 in a district where such use is not allowed. The Board voted to deny the petition as presented and advertised.
- August 21, 2012 A Special Exception under Section 10.440, Use # 4.42 to allow operation
  of a 2,000+ s.f. gross floor area martial arts studio. A Variance from Section 10.1112.30 (4) to
  allow 69 parking spaces for the property where 80 parking spaces are required. The Board
  voted to grant the petition as presented and advertised.
- **January 15, 2019 –** Special Exception, use a portion of the property for a children's gym Section 10.440, Use # 4.42 Health club, yoga studio, martial arts school, or similar use more than 2,000 sq. ft. where the use is only allowed by special exception. The Board voted to **grant** the petition as presented and advertised.
- **June 18, 2019** Special Exception under Section 10.440, Use #4.40 to allow a yoga studio up to 2,000 s.f. of gross floor area in the Industrial District. The Board voted to **grant** the petition as presented and advertised.

## **Planning Department Comments**

The applicant is requesting a special exception to convert the existing vacant commercial space into a health club. The 4,000 SF unit was previously approved for a kids play gym in 2019, although the applicant at that time did not pursue tenancy after the approval. The conversion requires a special exception for a gym space larger than 2,000 Square feet in the Industrial District.

# **Special Exception Review Criteria**

The application must meet all of the standards for a **special exception** (see Section 10.232 of the Zoning Ordinance).

- 1. Standards as provided by this Ordinance for the particular use permitted by special exception;
- 2. No hazard to the public or adjacent property on account of potential fire, explosion or release of toxic materials;
- 3. No detriment to property values in the vicinity or change in the essential characteristics of any area including residential neighborhoods or business and industrial districts on account of the location or scale of buildings and other structures, parking areas, accessways, odor, smoke, gas, dust, or other pollutant, noise, glare, heat, vibration, or unsightly outdoor storage of equipment, vehicles or other materials;

- 4. No creation of a traffic safety hazard or a substantial increase in the level of traffic congestion in the vicinity;
- 5. No excessive demand on municipal services, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, waste disposal, police and fire protection and schools; and
- 6. No significant increase of stormwater runoff onto adjacent property or streets.

## 10.235 Certain Representations Deemed Conditions

Representations made at public hearings or materials submitted to the Board by an applicant for a special exception or variance concerning features of proposed buildings, structures, parking or uses which are subject to regulations pursuant to Subsection 10.232 or 10.233 shall be deemed conditions upon such special exception or variance.

F. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of The Kane Company (Owners), for property located at 210 Commerce Way whereas relief is needed to remove, replace and relocate an existing freestanding sign which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1253.10 for a freestanding sign to be setback 4 feet from the front property line where 20 feet is required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 216 Lot 1-4; and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (LU-25-35) REQUEST TO POSTPONE

# **Planning Department Comments**

G. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of The Kane Company (Owners), for property located at 170 and 190 Commerce Way whereas relief is needed to remove, replace and relocate two existing freestanding signs which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1253.10 for two freestanding signs to be setback a) 2 feet and b) 10.5 feet from the front property line where 20 feet is required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 216 Lot 1-2 and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (LU-25-42) REQUEST TO POSTPONE

# **Planning Department Comments**

H. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of The Kane Company (Owners), for property located at 195 Commerce Way whereas relief is needed to remove, replace and relocate an existing freestanding sign which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1253.10 for a freestanding sign to be setback 6 feet from the front property line where 20 feet is required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 216 Lot 1-8 and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (LU-25-43) REQUEST TO POSTPONE

#### **Planning Department Comments**

I. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of The Kane Company (Owners), for property located at 215 Commerce Way and 75 Portsmouth Boulevard whereas relief is needed to remove, replace and relocate two existing freestanding signs which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1253.10 for two freestanding signs to be setback a) 1.5 feet and b) 9.5 feet from the front property line where 20 feet is required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 216 Lot 1-8a and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (LU-25-44) REQUEST TO POSTPONE

## **Planning Department Comments**

J. REQUEST TO POSTPONE The request of The Kane Company (Owners), for property located at 230 Commerce Way whereas relief is needed to remove, replace and relocate an existing freestanding sign which requires the following: 1) Variance from Section 10.1253.10 for a freestanding sign to be setback 4 feet from the front property line where 20 feet is required. Said property is located on Assessor Map 216 Lot 1-5 and lies within the Office Research (OR) District. (LU-25-45) REQUEST TO POSTPONE

# **Planning Department Comments**