

DOUGLAS AND STEPHANIE DESJARDINS

5 OLDE PARISH WAY
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Re: Variance Requests for 184 Madison St.

Dear Board Members,

We are neighbors of the apartment building located at 184 Madison St. here in Portsmouth and write to oppose the request of AAM 15 Management, LLC (“the Applicant”) to obtain a variance for increased parking at the apartments. We purchased our townhouse three years ago and fell in love with Portsmouth. We love the open natural beauty of the city. To allow an exception to the City’s zoning ordinance to add an additional 22 parking spaces would destroy the character of the neighborhood and the uniqueness of the City.

AAM 15 Management, LLC has not shown that its variance request meets the required criteria as will be discussed below:

A. Public Interest: “the variance will not be contrary to the public interest”

The Applicant has shown no public interest in adding 22 new parking spaces to their apartment building. While the Applicant claims that the additional 22 parking spaces are somehow warranted to decrease on street parking—they present no evidence that on street parking is an issue in our neighborhood. As a part time resident for the last three years, cars parked along Madison Street have never been an issue. There is also no evidence that it is the residents of 184 Madison who are parking along the street. Indeed, it appears from our personal observations that out-of-town visitors are most frequently parking along the street. Our observation is further supported by the fact that the parking lots behind 184 Madison are frequently half empty.

B. Spirit of the Ordinance: “the spirit of the Ordinance will be observed”

The Applicant failed to quote the Ordinance in its request for a variance. 10.1113.20 Location of Parking Facilities on a Lot states in full that:

“Required off-street parking spaces shall not be located in any required front yard, or between a principal building and a street (including on a corner lot). This restriction shall not apply to required off-street parking for a single-family dwelling or two-family dwelling.”

The spirit of the ordinance appears to be to keep unsightly parking in the back of large residential buildings. If that is indeed the intent of the Ordinance, then clearly allowing unsightly parking spaces in the vast expanse of lawn in front of the 72 apartment units would clearly violate the spirit of the ordinance.

C. Substantial Justice “Substantial justice will be done”

If the variance were granted, then many other owners of large apartment buildings would request similar variances. Substantial justice is preserving the character of the City and enforcing the zoning ordinances as they are written—presumably 10.1113.20 was in effect when the Applicant purchased the building it now seeks to avoid.

D. Property values: “The values of the surrounding properties will not be diminished”

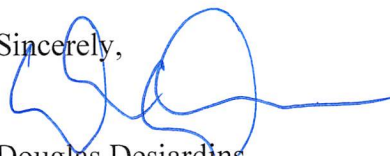
It is inaccurate for the Applicant to say “[t]he essential character of the subject property will not change.” If this variance is permitted, the large front yards in front of the 3 buildings at 184 Madison will be turned into a parking lot. Instead of seeing open green spaces that neighborhood kids use to play and folks use to picnic—we will see cars and asphalt. Property values will be diminished by these eyesores.

E. Unnecessary hardship: “Literal enforcement of the provisions of the Ordinance would result in an unnecessary hardship”

The Applicant has not shown any shortage of parking for the residents of 184 Madison. The Applicant in short has not proven any hardship. From our observations of 184 Madison there appears to be plenty of parking for all of the residents.

In closing, we respectfully request that the Board reject the request for a variance by the Applicant and preserve the beautiful quality of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Douglas Desjardins



Stephanie Desjardins

July 21, 2025

Tamrah and Jeremy Rouleau
159 Madison St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Members of the Portsmouth Zoning Board
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear Members of the Zoning Board,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the variance request filed for the property located at 184 Madison Street. As a resident of 159 Madison St, directly across from this lot, I believe this variance would negatively impact both property values and the safety of residents, particularly that of children, due to increased traffic in front of the building.

I urge the Board to deny this variance for several compelling reasons:

****1. Failure to Meet Hardship Standards:**** The applicant has not shown the "unnecessary hardship" or "practical difficulties" required for a variance. The claimed hardship seems to stem from personal circumstances rather than any unique characteristics of the property. After residing across the street for eight years, I can attest there is often ample parking available as demonstrated by our collected data over a week, which reflects sufficient open lot spaces daily. Furthermore, the very few cars parked streetside are never a nuisance or impacting residences or adjacent properties in a negative way.

Date/Time	Open Lot Spaces	Vehicles on Streetside	
Sunday, July 13th @8pm	26	1	
Monday, July 14th @ 7pm	30	3	1 neighbor/ non resident of 184
Tuesday, July 15th @ 7pm	26	3	1 neighbor/ non resident of 184
Wednesday, July 16th @ 7pm	24	0	
Thursday, July 17th @ 7pm	24	2	1 neighbor/ non resident of 184
Friday, July 18th @ 8pm	27	2	1 neighbor/ non resident of 184
Saturday, July 19th @ 8pm	26	3	1 neighbor/ non resident of 184
Sunday, July 20th @ 8am	26	5	3 out of state 1 Neighbor non resident of 184
Sunday, July 20th @ 8pm	28		1 neighbor/ non resident of 184

****2. Detrimental Impact on Property Values and Neighborhood Character:**** Granting this variance would likely lead to decreased property values in our area. The addition of parking spaces between the principal building and Madison Street disrupts the established aesthetic of our community and introduces visual clutter. Furthermore, such changes may lead to increased traffic, which poses risks to the safety of residents and children who frequent our streets.

****3. Reduction in Safety:**** The anticipated increase in traffic from the additional parking spaces would inherently reduce the safety of our community. Children play in the area, and an uptick in vehicles poses a significant risk to their well-being. Maintaining the current zoning regulations is essential to keeping our neighborhood safe and livable.

****4. Lack of Evidence and Justification:**** The applicant has not provided adequate evidence to justify the need for this variance. The reasoning provided does not convincingly demonstrate that the variance is essential for the residents of 184 Madison Street, nor does it address the broader implications for our community.

I strongly urge the Board to consider the potential negative impact this variance could have on our neighborhood's character, property values, and overall safety. It is crucial that we prioritize the well-being of all Portsmouth residents and ensure a safe environment for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this important matter.

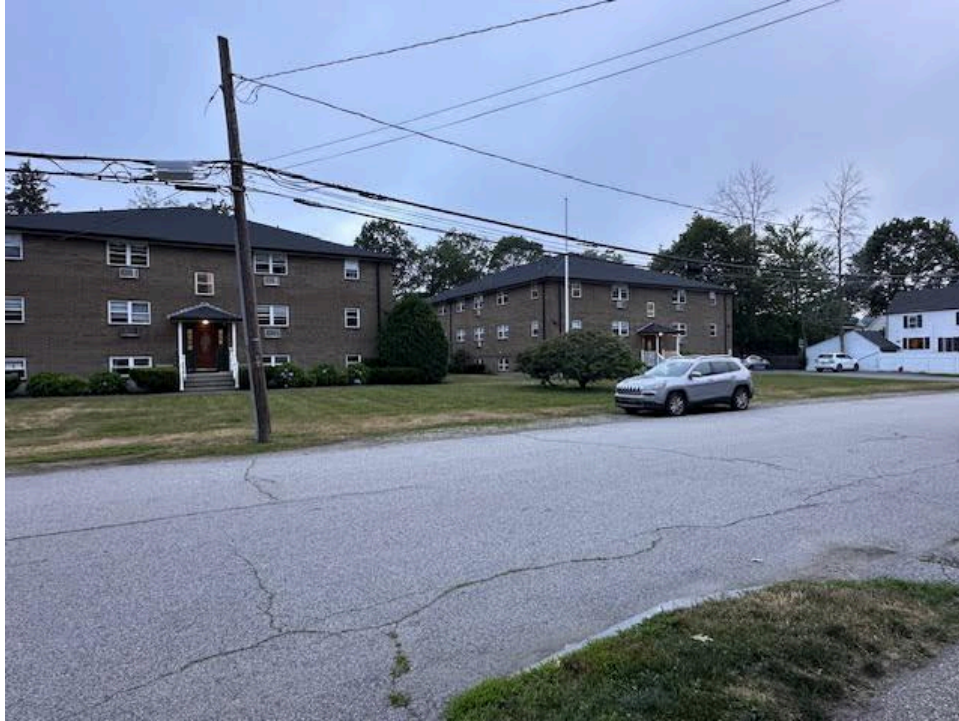
Sincerely,

Tamrah and Jeremy Rouleau
Owners, 159 Madison St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Tamrah.Rouleau@comcast.net
603-767-9508

JRouleau58@comcast.net
603-767-8110

Sample Photos of Street Side Parking
Sunday, July 13 6pm - Street side parking



Monday, July 14 7pm - Street side parking (Van is neighbor at 169 Madison St)



Sunday, July 20 8am - Street Side Parking ((Van is neighbor at 169 Madison St and 3 out of state vehicles).



Some of the open spaces in existing lots
July 14th





July 18



Additional space out back of the building that could be utilized for additional parking not currently used.



To: Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment
Re: Variance Request for 184 Madison Street, 7/22/2025 Meeting

From: Rick Condon, 141 Madison Street.

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to oppose the variance application for 184 Madison Street. I have included both the applicant's justification and my reason for opposing the application. After reviewing the criteria to approve the application, I feel the applicant has not met the minimum requirements to approve the variance.

A. Public Interest

Applicant's claim:

Residents who cannot find on-site parking are forced to park on Madison Street, which increases congestion. Allowing more on-site parking will reduce over-flow onto the street, improving the look of the neighborhood and making travel safer.

Response:

I do not agree that the applicant has demonstrated a parking problem for 184-188 Madison Street. Most evenings there are between 20-27 open parking spaces in the current parking lot. As of 7/20/2025, The Madison Street Residence's web site states there are 6, 2-bedroom units available. The additional parking requirement for these occupied units would be 12 spaces and they are covered by the existing vacant spaces.

I also disagree the additional onsite parking will increase the "look" of the neighborhood. The addition of these parking spaces will reduce green space and create the appearance of a commercial parking lot in a residential neighborhood.

B. Spirit of the Ordinance

Applicant's claim:

The intent of the ordinance is to preserve a consistent aesthetic, with landscaping and green space in front of buildings. The applicant claims that adding parking spaces on a single property will condense any visual obstructions and prevent more cars from being parked on Madison Street, which would otherwise obstruct the view of multiple buildings.

Response:

This statement is confusing. The applicant states the tenants will be able to park on-street vehicles in the reduced green space thus enhancing the view from the street. This assumes that no other vehicles park on the street after the new spots are created. In fact, some of the vehicles are associated with other homes on Madison Street and will continue to park on the street. Additionally, vehicles associated with the apartments that park on Madison Street are often guests of the tenants and presumably do not have a parking permit to park onsite. A review of the vehicles on the street on 7/19/2025 revealed license plates from NY, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.

C. Substantial Justice

Applicant's claim:

Residents will benefit from being able to park closer to their homes, with no expected loss to the general public outweighing the direct benefit to these residents.

Response:

Currently the applicant has not demonstrated that the residents in 184-188 Madison Street are routinely parking on the street. This is noted through direct observation of the numerous open parking spaces in the existing onsite parking. The minimal benefit, if any, to the tenants would certainly not outweigh the potential loss in market values of the residential homes or the diminished appearance of the neighborhood.

D. Property Values

Applicant's claim:

The essential character of the property will not change, and the applicant claims there will be no negative effect on surrounding property values. Reducing on-street parking may even benefit property values.

Response:

Twenty-two additional paved parking spaces on the existing green space will significantly change the character of the neighborhood and the surrounding area. The statement that property values “may benefit” in the neighborhood is hard to believe. The additional parking will only emphasize the commercial appearance of the property in a residential neighborhood.

E. Unnecessary Hardship

Applicant's claim:

There is no other feasible location on the subject property for additional parking due to the buildings being set far back from the street. The applicant claims this unique situation creates unnecessary hardship if parking cannot be added for residents.

Response:

I do not believe the applicant has demonstrated that parking is a hardship regarding the property. As a resident on Madison Street since 1996, I have observed the apartments for 29 years. The vacancy rate in the apartments is typically low. The existing parking lot and the current number of parking spaces have been more than sufficient to accommodate the tenant parking for decades.

Conclusion:

This variance request does not appear to meet the intent of the adjustment process. It is contrary to the public interest regarding the neighborhood through diminished property values and decreased curb appeal by emphasizing a commercial property.

It does not provide substantial justice to the neighborhood. The sole benefactor of the proposal is the applicant with little to no benefit for the surrounding residents.

Property values will likely decrease because of the lost green space and curb appeal and the applicant cannot demonstrate the additional parking spaces will significantly reduce the existing on street parking.

The applicant also fails to demonstrate hardship. The current parking lot can more than accommodate the parking requirements for the existing building as demonstrated through years of onsite parking.

To: Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment
Re: Variance request for 184 Madison St (July 22, 2025 meeting)
From: Alden Quimby
Address: 85 Madison St
Date: July 19, 2025

Dear Members of the Zoning Board,

I am writing to express my opposition to the variance request for 184 Madison St seeking to pave over grass yards for additional parking. As a direct abutter and concerned resident, I believe this proposal fails to meet multiple criteria required for a variance.

A. Public interest

The proposed paving is contrary to the public interest. Replacing green space with impervious pavement will increase water runoff, which in turn raises the risk of localized flooding. Our neighborhood has already experienced issues with drainage after heavy rains. Removing grassy areas that currently help absorb stormwater will only exacerbate the problem, creating a public burden and potential safety hazard.

Increased pavement also contributes to the "urban heat island" effect. On hot summer days, blacktop raises local temperatures significantly, reducing neighborhood comfort, increasing cooling costs for nearby homes, and putting vulnerable populations at greater risk. This is especially concerning given Portsmouth's growing commitment to environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Lastly, one of the proposed paved areas is located beneath the canopy of a massive, mature oak tree. This risks the long term stability of an effectively irreplaceable tree. Its shade, stormwater absorption, and contribution to the neighborhood's beauty are invaluable. See the following image:



B. Spirit of the ordinance

The spirit of the ordinance emphasizes maintaining green buffers and landscaped separation between residential buildings and the street. Paving over grass yards fundamentally alters the character and appearance of the property and its surroundings. This is not in keeping with the visual or environmental intentions of the ordinance.

C. Substantial justice

Any minor benefits to residents do not outweigh the broader harm to neighbors and the community. The increase in impervious surface and diminished green space harms the shared environment and neighborhood character.

D. Property values

Views from neighboring homes will shift from open green space to rows of parked cars. This visual and environmental degradation has the potential to lower property values, especially for adjacent single-family homes like mine. Even if the change does not lower appraised values immediately, it may reduce buyer appeal and marketability over time.

E. Unnecessary hardship

The applicant has not proven unnecessary hardship. In fact, I have lived across the street for 5 years and have never once seen their existing parking lots full. This is hard to understate. There are always dozens of open spots, at all times, day or night, on every day of the week. Please see example images below from last week.



To grant this variance would be to approve a permanent environmental and aesthetic loss for the sake of a minor and unproven convenience. It would undermine the intent of Portsmouth's zoning laws, which aim to protect neighborhood character, promote sustainability, and ensure a balanced consideration of all stakeholders. I respectfully ask the Board to deny the variance request.

Thank you,

Alden Quimby
85 Madison St

To: Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment
Re: Variance Request for 184 Madison Street, 7/22/2025 Meeting

Dear Board Members,

We are writing to oppose the variance application for 184 Madison Street. Below, we have included both the applicant's justification and our response for each required criterion. We believe the request does not meet the standards for approval:

A. Public Interest

Applicant's claim:

Residents who cannot find on-street parking are forced to park on Madison Street, which increases congestion. Allowing more on-site parking will reduce overflow onto the street, improving the look of the neighborhood and making travel safer.

Our response:

Allowing additional off-street parking in the front would eliminate green space and add more pavement and parked cars. This change would erode the visual appeal and established character of the neighborhood. The proposed "improvement" serves only the building's owner, not the broader public. For over 50 years, there has not been a public parking problem at these apartments, and there is no clear benefit to the community. Having cars parked on the street also adds to the intrinsic value of the city by acting as traffic calming. Parked cars on the street help to slow vehicles down and improve the safety of the pedestrians. Madison Street already has a problem with people speeding down the street.

B. Spirit of the Ordinance

Applicant's claim:

The intent of the ordinance is to preserve a consistent aesthetic, with landscaping and green space in front of buildings. The applicant claims that adding parking spaces on a single property will condense any visual obstructions and prevent more cars from being parked on Madison Street, which would otherwise obstruct the view of multiple buildings.

Our response:

The spirit of the ordinance is to **maintain green space and attractive streetscapes**. Adding more parking in front contradicts this, increasing visible pavement and reducing the green buffer that gives our neighborhood its inviting feel. These buildings already stand out as inconsistent with the area, and this variance would worsen that impact.

C. Substantial Justice

Applicant's claim:

Residents will benefit from being able to park closer to their homes, with no expected loss to the general public outweighing the direct benefit to these residents.

Our response:

The only party who would benefit from this variance is the property owner, most likely by ability to charge higher rent rates. Neighbors and the rest of the community lose out through reduced curb appeal and potential loss of property value. There is no broader community benefit, so granting this variance does not serve substantial justice.

D. Property Values

Applicant's claim:

The essential character of the property will not change, and the applicant claims there will be no negative effect on surrounding property values. Reducing on-street parking may even benefit property values.

Our response:

Adding more parking and reducing green space will change the character of the buildings and it will not improve property values. If anything, more visible parking and less green space makes the neighborhood less attractive to current and future homeowners. If an area is less desirable, it will decrease property values. This is a residential area not a shopping mall.

E. Unnecessary Hardship

Applicant's claim:

There is no other feasible location on the subject property for additional parking due to the buildings being set far back from the street. The applicant claims this unique situation creates an unnecessary hardship if parking cannot be added for residents.

Our response:

The applicant already has 72 units and their stated 87 parking spaces—which is a high ratio for a residential property. This does not account for the possibility of adding more spaces on the existing concrete and paved footprint, as shown in the attached photos (see Figures 1–3). For over 50 years, parking has not been a significant issue at this property, and it remains clear this is

not a true hardship. The owners have not demonstrated any unique or unreasonable burden from current zoning that would justify a variance. Most if not all homes in the area have less of a ratio of 1.21 spaces/unit in the surrounding area. Some houses in the immediate have no off-street parking at all. The 1.21/unit is already generous and has served the owners well for over 50 years.

Figures (estimated):

- **Figure 1:** Add parking parallel to the building on existing pavement. (5-6 spaces)
- **Figure 2:** Add parking parallel to the building on existing pavement (5-6 spaces)
- **Figure 3:** Add lines to existing asphalt (10 spaces).

Summary

This variance request does not meet the required criteria. It does not serve the public interest, uphold the intent of the ordinance, or provide a clear benefit to the neighborhood. There is no demonstrated hardship, and approving this request would further harm the character and property values in our community.

Thank you for considering our perspective.

Sincerely,
Sean & Stacie Morin
67 Madison Street



Figure 1-Parking Parallel to building



Figure 2-Parking Parallel to building



Figure 3-Paint Lines to existing Pavement

To: Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment
Re: Variance Request for 184 Madison Street, 7/22/2025 Meeting

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to oppose the variance application for 184 Madison Street. I do not believe the applicant petitioners request for a variance meets the standard for approval:

A. Public Interest –

The applicant/petitioner claims that residents are unable to find on-site parking, thereby being forced to park on Madison St. Further, that allowing for more on-site parking will reduce overflow onto the street, improving the look of the neighborhood and making travel safer.

I submit that not only will allowing for additional off-street parking in the front of each of the three apartment buildings eliminate green space, it will add more pavement and parked cars. This proposed change will create a commercial strip mall effect and would erode the visual appeal and established residential character of the neighborhood. The proposed “improvement” serves only the building’s owner, not the broader public or existing Madison, Lovell and Austin Street residents and homeowners. These apartments have been on site for over 50 years and public parking has not and continues to not be an issue at these apartments. Most importantly, this variance offers no clear benefit to the adjacent homeowners or community. Cars parked on the street add to the intrinsic value of the city by acting as free/built in traffic calming measure without the need for expending additional tax payer dollars to implement such measures. As it is people use Madison as a through street and speed. This has been an ongoing concern of ours. Having cars parked on the street helps to slow vehicles down and improve the safety of the pedestrians and children living on and utilizing Madison and adjacent streets.

B. Spirit of the Ordinance

The applicant/petitioner claims among other things, that granting this variance will create and preserve a consistent aesthetic providing green space while creating more spaces for parking. The applicant claims that adding parking spaces on a single property will condense any visual obstructions and prevent more cars from being parked on Madison Street, which would otherwise obstruct the view of multiple buildings.

I submit that the applicant/petitioners request contradicts the purpose and spirit of the existing ordinance. Granting this variance request will call for the removal of long standing and healthy trees and grass/green space. Trees that add to the health and well being of the residents and the aesthetic of a residential neighborhood. Trees that provide shade and respite from an already large heat island, improve air quality, enhance stormwater management and most importantly, the green space provides for an improved quality of life as many Madison St and adjoining residents use this green space for

recreational activities and gathering spaces to visit with neighbors. As it is, the green space is not large and using a majority of it for parking is a complete disregard for the intended purpose of a green space ordinance/requirement. As mentioned above, allowing for this variance would drastically change the visual character of the residential neighborhood making it look commercial with zero redeeming aesthetic.

C. Substantial Justice

The applicant/petitioner claims that Residents will benefit from being able to park closer to their homes, with no expected loss to the general public outweighing the direct benefit to these residents.

I submit that the only party who would benefit from this variance is the property owner, most likely by further increasing their ability to charge higher rents. Existing parking is directly adjacent to the buildings as it is and already close, abundant and convenient. Most often there are empty spaces all hours of the day and parking is sufficient and plentiful as is. To argue that parking closer is a necessity in an already narrow space is a hollow argument that makes it further obvious that the applicant/petitioner is out of touch with what makes an improvement an asset to a residential street.

D. Property Values

The applicant/petitioner claims that the essential character of the property will not change, and that there will be no negative effect on surrounding property values. Reducing on-street parking may even benefit property values.

I submit that Applicant/Petitioners argument that granting this variance will provide a small benefit to surrounding property values is further out of touch with reality. Neighbors and the rest of the community lose out with the addition of this proposed parking through reduced curb appeal and potential loss of property value. This request will directly and negatively affect Madison St and adjacent streets in that it diminishes the neighborhood feel, property values that the existing plan, green space and trees provide. If anything, more visible concrete and parking and the removal of trees and green space will make the neighborhood less attractive to current and future homeowners. The less desirable an area is, the more likely it is that there will be a decrease in property values. This is a residential area not a strip/shopping mall and it is imperative to preserve the current aesthetic for the collective good of those residents living on and adjacent to Madison streets as well as within the Portsmouth community.

E. Unnecessary Hardship

The applicant/petitioner claims that there is no other feasible location on the subject property for additional parking due to the buildings being set far back from the street. The applicant claims this unique situation creates an unnecessary hardship if parking cannot be added for residents.

I submit that the applicant/petitioner already has 87 parking spaces for 72 residential units — which is a high ratio for a residential property. This does not account for the clear possibility of adding more spaces on the existing concrete and paved footprint, as shown in the attached photos (see Figures 1–3). For over 50 years, parking has not been a significant issue at this property, and it remains clear this is not a true hardship. The owners have not demonstrated any unique or unreasonable burden from current zoning that would justify their request for this variance. Most if not all homes in the area have less of a ratio of 1.21 spaces/unit in the surrounding area. Some houses in the immediate have no off-street parking at all. The 1.21/unit is already generous and has served the owners well for over 50 years.

Figures (estimated):

- **Figure 1:** Add parking parallel to the building on existing pavement. (5-6 spaces)
- **Figure 2** Add parking parallel to the building on existing pavement (5-6 spaces)
- **Figure 3:** Add lines to existing asphalt (10 spaces)

In conclusion, it is obvious that the applicant/petitioner's variance request does not meet the required criteria. Not only does it not serve the public interest, uphold the intent of the ordinance, or provide a clear benefit to the neighborhood, but the applicant/petitioner has demonstrated no true hardship. Approving this request would further harm the character, aesthetic and property values on Madison St and adjoining streets as well as within the Portsmouth community.

Sincerely,
Tatiana Czaplicki Young
71 Madison Street



Figure 1-Parking Parrallel to building



Figure 2-Parking Parallel to building



Figure 3-Paint Lines to existing Pavement

July 14, 2025

Zoning Board of Adjustment
c/o Stefanie Casella
1 Junkins Ave
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Re: Variance Application of Shannon & Stephen Parsons
160 Essex Avenue

Dear Members of the Board:

We are submitting this letter in support of the application of Shannon and Stephen Parsons of 160 Essex Avenue. We live directly across the street at 151 Essex Avenue, so their proposed addition will be directly in our line of sight from our home. We have reviewed the application with the Parsons and we feel that the design is aesthetically pleasing and in keeping with other recent renovations in the neighborhood. Essex Ave and the surrounding streets are characterized by many nonconforming, undersized lots and nonconforming structures. Many homes are small, single level ranches – the Parsons' and ours included. Relief has been granted to other properties in the area for families wanting to increase their living space in order to live more comfortably in their homes. In this case, the requested variances to allow the Parsons to expand are reasonable given the special conditions which exist and, we feel, will only serve to increase the value of our property and surrounding properties.

Sincerely,

Darcy Peyser & Miles Campbell
151 Essex Ave