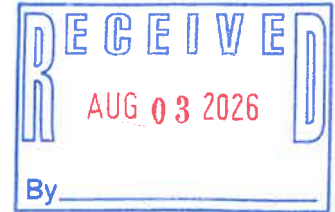


John and Debora Mayer
68 Cabot St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801

HAND DELIVERED

August 3, 2026

Site Plan Review Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth
City Hall, 3rd Floor
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801



RE: August 4, 2026 TAC meeting agenda - 238 Austin St Subdivision Application

Dear Chairman Stith and Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

The project under review abuts our property; our home for the last 28 years. Needless to say, we are very familiar with the site and its history. We welcome thoughtful development in our neighborhood, and encourage the TAC and the Planning Board to work with the applicant (and our neighbors) to achieve a positive design that will benefit our entire neighborhood and the Portsmouth community. Following are our comments regarding this proposed development:

1. **The proposed design** of the two replacement houses are out of scale and character with the neighborhood. We ask that the design of these buildings be modified to better-fit the site and the neighborhood.

- We are not convinced that the developer must demolish the house on Austin St. or the barn on Coffins Court. Retaining, reusing, and upgrading these buildings is entirely possible. In so doing – the applicant can fully achieve their plan and do much to promote and enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood.
- We ask that the developer include qualities of the neighborhood and features of existing structures in their design – including reducing the scale of the proposed houses, adjusting their location, using traditional materials and finishes, and changing the placement of windows to better reflect the location and site.

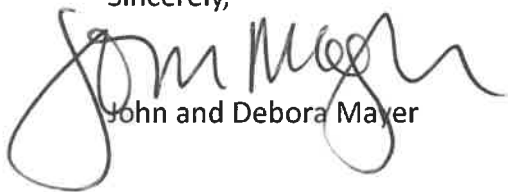
2. Listed below are **safety and functional concerns** with the proposed development project:

Coffins Court - in particular – is an extremely narrow and sub-standard passage way. Does the developer have experience working in such a limiting and densely packed urban area? How will they guarantee there will be no damage done to our home or other existing residences?

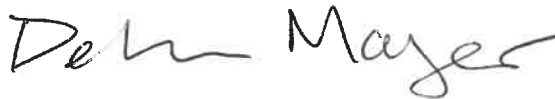
- **Damage to our home.** Over the 28 years we have lived in our house, it has been hit by vehicles, and our concrete sidewalk along Coffins Court has been damaged by commercial vehicles turning onto the alley. How will construction equipment access and use this alleyway without causing any additional damage to our home (or the homes of our neighbors)?
- **The condition of Coffins Court.** After many years of waiting, the roadway has recently been resurfaced. How will you ensure the new roadway will not be damaged by this project? And if it is – how do you ensure the developer will be fully responsible for repair and maintenance?
- **On-site parking.** For the Coffins Court plan, the location of the garage is not realistic. Making a 90 degree turn off Coffins Court into this garage will not be easy. Accessing this space will most likely require driving on the property of neighbors. Backing out of the garage (and the adjacent parking space) will put our fence and stone wall at risk. Can the location and size of the garage be adjusted to ensure ease of use?
- **Snow removal.** There is little space for managing accumulating snow. How will snow removal from this site not impact us, our neighbors, or public use of Coffins Court?
- **Privacy.** the planned location of windows will encroach on the privacy of neighbors. The project design has no plan for privacy screening, fences or other buffers. Can the developer adjust window locations to protect our privacy and the quality of life of all neighbors?
- **Tree Removal.** Removing mature trees will harm our neighborhood, impact the environment, and is in conflict with city-wide efforts to save and promote the urban canopy. We ask your help in preserving the mature trees on site, and that the developer provide a landscaping plan for the site.

We thank you for our opportunity to comment on this project. We sincerely hope our observations will be taken seriously by the TAC, the Planning Board and the applicant.

Sincerely,



John and Debora Mayer



Meeting: April 7, 2026
Technical Advisory Committee
RE: 64 Bridge St (pages 307 to 338)
April 2, 2026

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee,

64 Bridge St seems to show only one parking space at the rear of the building. Per the Downtown Overlay District (DOD) Other Non-residential uses need no parking. Residential Uses need the same as section 10.1112.3. Hotels and Motels require 0.75 per room, 1 per 100 sf of lounge or restaurant area and 1 per 25 sf of banquet facility.

This project is being called an Inn. However, they show a restaurant and bar as well as catering on the first floor (pg 318 of packet- Plan A1.1). On page 322 of the packet (Plan A1.5) a bar, a large sitting area usually called a lounge and two bathrooms are shown on the rooftop.

By definition this is not an Inn, it is a Hotel of less than 125 rooms. According to zoning regulations, parking for guest parking of 12.5 or more as well as a loading zone will be needed for this hotel.

Inn

A **building** offering lodging for transient boarders with up to 15 sleeping rooms. An **inn** may have a **caretaker residence** but does not have to be occupied by the owner, and shall not serve food to the public. (See also: **bed and breakfast, hotel, motel.**)

Hotel

A **building** in which the primary **use** is transient lodging accommodations offered to the public on a daily rate for compensation and where ingress and egress to the sleeping rooms is made primarily through an inside lobby or **office**, supervised by a **person** in charge at all hours. Such facilities may include, where allowed, such **accessory uses** as **restaurants, bars, taverns, nightclubs**, function rooms, places of public assembly or recreational facilities, but shall not include casino gambling, keno or other forms of gambling. (See also: **motel.**)

When looking at the page 323, Plan A3.1 its hard to say what buildings are being shown for Massing

This is 44 Bridge St to the left of 64 Bridge St..





These are the two houses across Hanover St to the right of 64 Bridge St

The question is: Does the building fit into all the zoning requirements? There doesn't seem to be a comparison of what is allowed vs what is being proposed.

This is a lot of activity 10' from a residential neighborhood with serious parking issues. A real Inn with first floor or underground parking might be a better fit for this location for which a variance would be needed to eliminate first floor commercial.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Bratter
Property Owner
159 McDonough St

From: [Joseph Konopka](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: 64 Bridge Street
Date: Thursday, April 9, 2026 4:09:02 PM

You don't often get email from joseph_konopka@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Technical Advisor Committttee:

We are writing in response to the proposed development of a new structure at 64 Bridge Street, which is adjacent to our property at 53 Tanner Street.

While we are not opposed to thoughtful development, we do have several concerns regarding the current proposal and its potential impact on our property and quality of life.

First, the proposed height of the structure is a concern. A building of this scale would significantly impact the existing sightlines from the rear of our property and may diminish its overall value. We would strongly encourage consideration of a reduced height, ideally limited to two stories.

We are also concerned about the proximity of the structure to our property line. Given the apparent mass and scale of the building, we would appreciate clarification on setback distances and how the design accounts for neighboring properties.

Additionally, we have concerns regarding the potential impact on existing trees along the property line, particularly those with branches extending between properties. We would like to understand how tree preservation and root systems will be protected during and after construction. The tree is situated in our property, so if it dies due to construction on this property, who is responsible for removing the tree and replacing it?

Finally, we would appreciate further detail on the intended use of the property. If the space is to be used for events such as gatherings or celebrations, we are concerned about potential noise levels and frequency of use, particularly during evenings and weekends.

We respectfully ask that these considerations be taken into account as the project is reviewed. We are open to development that is thoughtfully scaled and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Konopka, MD

From: [JAMI BARNES](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: TAC Meeting 7/7-Abutter concern
Date: Monday, July 6, 2026 9:50:40 AM

You don't often get email from jamihbarnes@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

I am writing to express my concerns about the plans to subdivide 20 Central Avenue. We reside at 22 Central Avenue and share property lines. We already have a wet basement(as do other abutters) due to water drainage and runoff. The previous owner of 20 Central Ave told us that the lot was not buildable as it was too wet. We are very concerned as to how this issue will be addressed or mediated. We would also like to know how this lot will house 2 other residences. I have a business attached to my home and am concerned how this will impact us. My husband and I will be attending the meeting tomorrow but wanted our comments in the record. Thank you-Jami Barnes

Jami Barnes
Independent cabi Stylist

603.608.8319
jamibarnes.cabionline.com

View the current Collection at jamibarnes.cabionline.com for the latest styling tips, trends, and outfit idea.



August 4, 2026

Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Re: Letter of Concern — Subdivision Application, 238 Austin Street (Tax Map 135, Lot 61)

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee:

We are an immediate abutter, located at 74 Cabot Street, to the proposed new subdivided lot to have frontage on Coffins Court and we are writing to respectfully express concerns about the subdivision application submitted by Alea LLC (represented by Ross Engineering, LLC) for 238 Austin Street (Tax Map 135, Lot 61), scheduled for TAC review on August 4, 2026. we request the Committee to consider the following technical issues when formulating its recommendation to the Planning Board.

Points of Concern:

Coffins Court access width is inadequate to support the proposed development. The applicant's Street Plan (Sheet 8, LU-25-177) accurately identifies Coffins Court as a "12-foot wide passageway" although we cannot verify the deeded transfer as described by the applicant ("recorded October 8, 1884 (RCRD 446-143)"). This 12-foot wide public lane was historically owned as a private lane between former owners (Coffins) of our parcel and another abutting Union Street at the other terminus. It lies less than a foot from our 74 Cabot Street Foundation; its has no sidewalks or buffers between the road and many of the other adjacent properties. Despite its relative length and width it is used as access to 7 properties; notwithstanding also acts as a common pedestrian and vehicular cut-through for many others. When blocked for one reason or another, it requires one to back out into Cabot and Union Streets, often blindly due to the on-street parking and lack of site line no-parking limits. Simply put, Coffins Court cannot safely accommodate additional residential traffic and even more so, the construction activity required to demolish, build and access to a new three-story residential dwelling.

The minimal turning radius for vehicles entering or exiting the proposed garage and or outside parking space, both of which are oriented perpendicular to Coffins Court, is completely absent or ignored in the Applicants proposal. The outside parking space is within 2 feet of both the property line fence and proposed garage, which itself is only 5 feet off Coffins Court. We urge the TAC to recommend to the Planning Board, as a result of the narrow nature of Coffins Court, when combined with the applicant's proposal, that the subdivision be denied unless significant alterations are made to the proposal.

- Coffins Court is a newly reconstructed public street and as such it should remain undisturbed per the City's Street Excavation Procedures (revised September 2025).** For over 12 years neighbors and residents on Coffins Court have cried out for the City to make necessary improvements to the pavement and underlying foundation of Coffins Court. Finally, in 2025 at a significant cost exceeding \$1M if not \$2M, the work was done. Up until that time, the pavement was subject to subsurface drainage problems that repeatedly caused slumping and pavement failures, water entry from runoff or snowmelt entering basements, generally the worst condition one sees in a public street. City Public Works officials acknowledged the challenges and difficulties associated with fixing the street but nonetheless completed the work and the design has greatly improved water runoff and seepage issues. Despite the City Excavation Procedures moratorium on disturbing this new surface, it makes no sense to allow the exception for services to a new lot when the work and utilities could be provided through the lot also owned by the Applicant. The TAC should recommend to the Planning Board that it not allow for the “new services to a new lot” exception and keep the recently rebuilt Coffins Court whole and intact. We have all witnessed, new pavement cuts for services to take place and the subsequent repair to the road surfaces constantly slump, crack or fail. Should the City go forth and allow for Coffins Court to be disturbed, The TAC should recommend a performance bond be held in escrow for up to 10 years following the road cut to address failure issues at the cost of the Applicant.
- There are inadequate residential utilities to serve a new subdivided lot.** While the city, during the Coffins Court reconstruction, added a sewerline cleanout and tie to the property line associated with the proposed new lot on Coffins Court, it did not add a water line. This is assumed to be because of inadequate water service to accommodate an additional lot because of the 2” line that lies below Coffins Court. I was personally told by City Engineers that we could not connect to the line once exposed during the reconstruction for that very reason. The 2” Water line would not handle an additional residence. If the Applicant wishes to access water from Coffins Court, the TAC should require a new larger diameter water line be installed from Cabot Street and cover all costs associated with excavation, installation, neighboring water service hook ups and then complete underlayment compaction and pavement of Coffins Court. Similarly, electricity to the proposed lot is inadequate, requiring a larger transformer and service line, taller and perhaps relocated utility pole(s). Again, The TAC should recommend because of numerous limitations on utilities to this lot that either the subdivision be denied, or the applicants proposal be significantly improved to address these clear shortcomings.
- As proposed by the Applicant, elevation drawings of the Coffins Court residential structure mis-represent the grade of the land.** The road and grade of the property is approximately 5 feet lower than as depicted on the drawings. The drawing depicts a practically level grade when it is far from such. Not only might this affect the building height restriction but may represent a stability problem for lot as the backfill slope is at almost a 100% grade (rising 5 feet within the 5 foot setback) OR the applicant plans neglect

to show the true height including an exposed basement foundation. Neither of these are reflected in the drawings and should be corrected or addressed prior TAC's final recommendation and or Planning Board consideration.

- **A demolition health and safety plan must be required and enforced.** The existing barn on the Coffins Court lot has been unoccupied and animal-inhabited for an extended period. Past demolition in this neighborhood has resulted in documented rodent displacement and airborne biological hazards affecting adjacent residents. Given the confined nature of Coffins Court, the TAC should require a demolition management plan addressing rodent abatement, lead and soil testing and if necessary, abatement prior to disturbance, dust and particulate suppression, protection of neighboring foundations, and a designated access route that does not require blocking the court. Demolition should be conducted to minimize any impacts to the neighborhood, access to the neighborhood and utility outages.
- **A landscaping and building design plan should be required to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board to minimize the intrusive impacts on neighbors, due to the construction of a new residence where one was never present or allowed (other than a potential 750 sq ft. max ADU).** This residential zone has a stated limit of up to 15 dwelling units per acre. Currently, surrounding this proposed subdivision and residential construction there are 27 dwelling units per acre. The neighborhood is max's out. Some consideration is due to limit impacts to the existing residents, and for the TAC to recommend the Planning Board to impose concrete mitigation is the lot subdivision is approved.

We ask that the TAC ensure these technical site planning and public safety concerns are fully addressed before forwarding a recommendation to the Planning Board. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

John Ragonese and Lynda Schmidt
74 Cabot Street
Portsmouth, NH

From: [Paula Lewinski](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Cc: [Peter L. Britz](#); [Peter M. Stith](#); [Jen L. Crockett](#); [Kimberli Kienia](#)
Subject: A letter of concern from an abutter of 238 Austin St/Coffins Court
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 3:30:31 PM

You don't often get email from pjlewinski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear Technical Advisory Board,

I'm writing to you to express concerns over the:

The request of Alea LLC (Owner), for property located at 238 Austin Street requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval to subdivide one lot into two lots and demolition of the existing structures to construct a single-family dwelling on each lot. Said property is located on Assessor Map 135 Lot 61 and lies within the General Residence C (GRC) District. (LU-25-177)

My husband and I own the property on the corner of Union Street and Coffins Court (187 Union Street). Because Coffins Court is so narrow, our home has been struck by snow plows several times over the last few years; due to this and our review of the suggested work, we have many concerns about the project as proposed.

- Wide construction vehicles coming and going on Coffins Court will pose a danger to both the newly paved road surface and the surrounding homes.
- The potential undermining of adjacent home foundations and properties that might result from both demolition and excavation of this project.
- When each the Union Street and Coffins Court sewer separation projects were undertaken, the contractor was required to offer pre-construction photographic documentation of our home's interiors (walls, doorways, windows) in order to establish a baseline condition in case of any seismic damage to our 19th century homes. Additionally, the contractor was required to monitor and limit the seismic activity. We are expecting the same measures be taken during demolition and construction phases of these projects.
- Because Coffins Court is used for both pedestrian and automobile traffic, we are concerned this project will cause prolonged disruptions to the safe and convenient use of the thoroughfare to all abutting residents, and more importantly, to allow Coffins Court residents access to their homes during construction.

In its current state, the barn property that abuts Coffins Court creates no foot or automobile traffic; requires no ongoing utility company visits; does not contribute to the sewer system; does not require routine visits by US Postal or overnight package delivery services, and does not demand any special snow removal considerations. When an active residence replaces a dormant outbuilding, such as the barn on this property, the emergence of all of the previously mentioned, non-existent capacity demands will be dramatic and impactful. The proposed project essentially changes the nature of this abutting property and will therefore negatively

impact the community with increased capacity demands that currently do not exist.

It's highly likely there are rodents and/or other animals inhabiting the barn. What measures will the contractor be expected to make to mitigate those animals moving along to our homes? Currently, we all enjoy rodent-free homes.

Thank you for considering my concerns,

Paula Lewinski
187 Union Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

From: [Joe Lewinski](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#); [Peter L. Britz](#); [Peter M. Stith](#); [Jen L. Crockett](#); [Kimberli Kienia](#)
Subject: Portsmouth Technical Advisory Committee - Re: 238 Austin Street
Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 4:10:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lewinski@icanon.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To: Planning@portsmouthnh.gov

Cc: plbritz@portsmouthnh.gov, pmstith@portsmouthnh.gov, jlcrockett@portsmouthnh.gov, kkienia@portsmouthnh.gov

Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear Technical Advisory Board,

I'm writing to you to express concerns over the:

The request of Alea LLC (Owner), for property located at 238 Austin Street requesting Preliminary and Final Subdivision approval to subdivide one lot into two lots and demolition of the existing structures to construct a single-family dwelling on each lot. Said property is located on Assessor Map 135 Lot 61 and lies within the General Residence C (GRC) District. (LU-25-177)

My wife and I own the property on the corner of Coffins Court and Union Street (# 187 Union Street).

We are concerned by this project, overall, and the subdivision on Coffins Court, for several reasons. I've outlined them below.

1. Coffins Court is narrow and currently over subscribed with respect to capacity for pedestrian, bicycle and automobile traffic for residents and the existing residences. There is a reason the USPS delivers mail on foot when visiting the Coffins Court residences. Amazon has not yet read the memo of the risks it's vehicles and revolving door of drivers pose to all adjacent homes; but I digress. Adding a prolonged demolition and construction vehicle presence will have negative impact to abutting residents.
2. The barn is a passive structure on the property that makes no capacity demands given its proximity to Coffins Court. Adding a full suite of above ground utilities will require new site-line disruptions and detract from the esthetic of the passageway that is already crowded with wires and cables. Since there are no water and sewer connections present, the installation of both would require excavating a newly resurfaced roadway. This undertaking will be disruptive to residents who routinely drive on and park vehicles directly off of Coffins Court. It is not clear whether the water supply or wastewater output utilities installed during the Union Street Sewer Separation Project of 2023-2024 have the required capacity to support a new three story residence.
3. It has not been demonstrated if there is a plan for adequate snow removal and storage for the driveway, driveway apron and walkway portions of the proposed residence abutting Coffins court. This area is an overcrowded winter mess as it stands. Is snow accumulation, removal and storage that will not negatively impact existing residents being considered?
4. We are concerned that any demolition will cause rodent and pest migrations to adjacent properties. Prevention for this type of impact should be a requirement given the visible presence of wildlife that currently occupy the barn.
5. The airborne debris from a demolition of the barn will likely create health and safety issues to residents as well as physical defacement of neighboring homes and properties requiring professional cleaning after project completion. Considerations for eliminating or minimizing the former and addressing the latter should be requirements for any contractor permitted to undertake this project.

Thank you in advance for considering these concerns,

Joe Lewinski
187 Union Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801
215-519-4815

August 4, 2026

Technical Advisory Committee
City of Portsmouth Planning & Sustainability Department
1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Re: Letter of Concern - Subdivision Application, 238 Austin Street (Tax Map 135, Lot 61)

Dear Members of the Technical Advisory Committee:

I am a neighbor writing to respectfully express concerns about the subdivision application submitted by Alea LLC (represented by Ross Engineering, LLC) for 238 Austin Street (Tax Map 135, Lot 61), scheduled for TAC review on August 4, 2026. I ask the Committee to consider the following technical issues when formulating its recommendation to the Planning Board.

Points of Concern:

- **Coffins Court access width is inadequate to support the proposed development.** The applicant's Street Plan (Sheet 8, LU-25-177) identifies Coffins Court as a "12-foot wide passageway" per deed recorded October 8, 1884 (RCRD 446-143). At 12 feet wide, with no sidewalks or buffers between the road and abutting property lines, Coffins Court cannot safely accommodate additional residential traffic or the construction activity required to build and occupy a new three-story residential dwelling. City subdivision regulations require streets be adequate to serve the proposed development. The undersized Coffins Court "passageway" does not appear to meet this minimum standard.
- **The proposed Coffins Court garage and driveway lack adequate turning radius for practical use.** The proposed house includes an attached two-car garage with its access opening directly onto Coffins Court (Site Plan, Sheet 5). A standard passenger vehicle requires approximately 18 to 24 feet of clear backup distance to exit a perpendicular garage bay. Coffins Court is 12 feet wide. A vehicle exiting the garage would be unable to complete the maneuver without either crossing into the opposite property line or executing a multi-point turn in a 12-foot passageway. The TAC's Transportation Engineer should determine whether this driveway configuration is safely operable.
- **Utility infrastructure adequacy has not been fully demonstrated for the Coffins Court lot.** TAC's July 2, 2026 comments stated that electrical service on Coffins Court "is limited to the secondary power lines already in place" and that "upgrades to power are not possible." As of the applicant's July 22, 2026 response, this remains unresolved. It is also unclear if the Union Street Separation Project updated the water and sewer lines on Coffins Court that would accommodate additional residences. I believe only the wastewater was addressed because updating the water and sewer lines was complex and put the project over budget. Finally, the applicant has requested a waiver from Subdivision Regulations Section VI.6

(Drainage Improvements) relying on reduced impervious coverage rather than a full drainage analysis. However, both rain and snowmelt cause a river of water to run down Coffins Court suggesting this a bigger issue than the applicant discloses. Each of these items should be confirmed before the application advances.

- **The proposed utility connections require excavating a street that is currently under a four-year pavement moratorium.** Coffins Court was repaved in the summer of 2025 to meet EPA stormwater requirements approximately one year ago. The City's Street Excavation Procedures (revised September 2025) state explicitly: "No newly constructed or reconstructed pavement or sidewalk less than four (4) years old will be impacted, except in the case of an emergency." The proposed sewer and water connections to the Coffins Court lot appear to require excavating in the court's newly paved surface. The application does not acknowledge the moratorium, seek the required exception, or address the associated restoration requirements including mandatory cold-planing and penalty fees of up to 5 times the standard excavation permit cost for pavement less than 12 months old. The TAC should require this matter to be resolved before approving the application.
- **A Construction Management and Mitigation Plan (CMMP) has not been submitted, as required under Section 2.15.3 of the City's Site Plan Review Regulations.** Section 2.15.3 authorizes the Planning Board to require a CMMP as a condition of approval and specifies that no site work may commence until the Plan has been accepted by the City. Given that the Coffins Court lot is accessible only via a 12-foot historic passageway that was just repaved, a CMMP is plainly warranted. The application is currently silent on: access routes for demolition equipment and heavy machinery; protection of the road surface and neighboring foundations from excavation and vibration; staging locations for dumpsters, materials, and crew vehicles; and noise management. The TAC should recommend the Planning Board require a CMMP as a condition of any approval.
- **A demolition health and safety plan is absent.** The existing barn on the Coffins Court lot has been unoccupied and animal-inhabited for an extended period. Past demolition in this neighborhood has resulted in documented rodent displacement and airborne biological hazards affecting adjacent residents. Given the confined nature of Coffins Court, the TAC should require a demolition management plan addressing rodent abatement, dust and particulate suppression, protection of neighboring foundations, and a designated access route that does not require blocking the court.

I ask that the Committee ensure these technical site planning and public safety concerns are fully addressed before forwarding a recommendation to the Planning Board. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Mike Lucas

45 Coffins Ct, Portsmouth, NH

From: [Stephan Cleaves](#)
To: [Planning - Info - Shr](#)
Subject: Abutter: TAC Meeting on July 7, 2026
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 11:31:06 AM

You don't often get email from srcleaves@mac.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To the Site Plan Review Technical Advisory Committee, c/o Planning Department:

We are the owners of 165 Union Street (Karen Van Gundy and Stephan Cleaves) and a direct abutter to 238 Austin Street. We write regarding the application of Alea LLC for preliminary and final subdivision of 238 Austin Street (Assessor Map 135, Lot 61) into two lots, with demolition of the existing structures and construction of a single-family dwelling on each, on the TAC agenda for July 7, 2026.

We are not opposed to the subdivision. Our comment concerns a single, specific site condition: an established stand of Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) on 238 Austin Street that is actively encroaching onto our property across the shared boundary. Japanese knotweed is listed as a prohibited invasive species by the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food. It spreads readily from small rhizome and stem fragments, and ground-disturbing activity — demolition, excavation, grading, and soil relocation — is among the most effective ways to fragment and disperse it. Without controls, the site work proposed here is likely to worsen the infestation on our property and on other abutting lots.

We respectfully request that any recommendation of approval include, as a condition, an invasive species management and soil-handling plan addressing the knotweed, incorporated into the project's Construction Management and Mitigation Plan or equivalent conditions of approval. We ask that such a plan provide for:

1. Treatment of the existing knotweed stand beginning in advance of any soil disturbance — noting that effective treatment is typically seasonal (e.g., fall foliar application) and may span more than one growing season, so it should be scheduled ahead of, not during, construction;
2. Containment and handling protocols during demolition, excavation, and grading to prevent dispersal of rhizome and stem fragments;
3. No relocation of knotweed-contaminated soil onto or across the shared boundary with 165 Union Street; and
4. Disposal of contaminated material in a manner that does not further spread the species.

We have been in contact with Doug Cygan, Invasive Species Coordinator at the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food, regarding this infestation, and can provide documentation and photographs on request.

Thank you for considering these comments and entering them into the record of the July 7 meeting.

Respectfully,
Karen Van Gundy and Stephan Cleaves
165 Union Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801
603-319-7768 / srcleaves@mac.com