

May 9, 2026

City of Portsmouth, NH
Zoning Board of Adjustment
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

RE: Board of Adjustment Request for a Chicken Coop at 306 South Street

To Whom It May Concern:

We write to request permission for a flock of approximately eight laying hens in our backyard.

Overview of Proposed Work

Similar to the application approved on April 28, 2026 for 220 South Street, this request is to keep approximately eight chickens in our back yard primarily as household pets.

- A natural-wood chicken coop approximately 4'x8'x10' (width, length, height) will be added to keep the chickens housed and safe from local wildlife predators. It will use pressure treated 2x4s and 4x4s for the frame and legs. Flooring will be 1" hard pine boards. Walls will be studded with 2x3s. Gussets will be added to the four corners and legs for support. Rafter material will be 2x3s. The exterior walls are pine tongue and groove boards. Additionally, the roof will be built with roofing board, covered by a layer of tar paper. A drip edge will be secured to the bottom edge of roof. Quality shingles will be used to prevent rain and snow from entering the building, and it will be assembled with galvanized nails and screws. **See Appendix A for images.**
- The chickens will be controlled via fenced area around the coop that will keep them on our property and not allow them to wander onto neighboring properties or street.
- We will not keep any roosters.
- No hazardous, toxic, odorous, nor flammable materials will be used to construct the coop nor be stored on the premises at any time.
- Chickens will be kept as pets. Eggs will not sold to the public.
- There will be no excessive demand on municipal services as we plan on keeping a very small flock of approximately eight birds.
- The chicken coop does not require any heating or cooling.
- Using a deep-bedded litter system, the chicken coop will not emit offensive odors.
- All chicken waste will be composted naturally.

Brief Description of Existing Land Use

The area where the coop and chickens will be placed is currently part of our backyard.

10.232.23 Special exceptions shall meet all of the following standards

This request is for a special exception from (Article 4, Section 17.20) KEEPING OF FARM ANIMALS. This request is to keep chickens in our back yard primarily as household pets. We shall meet all of the following standards for this request.

10.232.20 Standards as provided by this Ordinance for the particular use permitted by special exception

We understand the standards as provided by this Ordinance for this particular request of keeping chickens permitted by special exception from (Article 4, Section 17.20) KEEPING OF FARM ANIMALS.

10.232.20 No hazard to the public or adjacent property on account of potential fire, explosion or release of toxic materials

The granting of this special exception to keep chickens will not result in any hazard to the public or adjacent property on account of potential fire, explosion or release of toxic materials. No hazardous, toxic, odorous, nor flammable materials will be used to construct the coop nor be stored on the premises at any time.

10.232.20 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

The granting of this special exception to keep chickens in our back yard will not result in 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;

A natural-wood chicken coop approximately 4'x8'x10' (width, length, height) will be added to keep the chickens housed and safe from local wildlife predators.

The coop will be located approximately more than 100' feet from the road, 10' from the north property line, 10' from the east property line, 85' from the south property line, and 43' from the west property line. **See Appendixes B and C.**

Presently there is a property on South Street that keeps farm animals, geese and sheep. There is also presently a property on South Street that keeps chickens, and another property on South Street has recently applied.

Our request is to place chickens and a coop in the back of the yard away from any streets. The setting is rural in character and far from immediate housing and foot traffic. The coop will be made completely of natural wood and the finishes be in keeping with the aesthetic character of the neighborhood and surrounding area.

10.232.20 No creation of a traffic safety hazard or a substantial increase in the level of traffic congestion in the vicinity

There will be no creation of a traffic safety hazard or a substantial increase in the level of traffic congestion in the vicinity. We will place the coop and chickens in our back yard more than 100' away from South Street, sidewalks or foot traffic. Eggs will not be available for the public to purchase and therefore not create any additional traffic to the property.

10.232.20 No excessive demand on municipal services, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, waste disposal, police and fire protection and schools

The granting of this special exception to keep chickens in our back yard will have no excessive demand on municipal services, including, but not limited to, water, sewer, waste disposal, police and fire protection and schools. We will keep a small flock of approximately 6 – 8 laying hens that will drink water similar to that of a household pet. The bedding used will be natural pine woodchips in a deep bedding system that will result in producing manure twice a year that will be used in our backyard garden beds creating a closed loop ecosystem that will not produce city waste.

10.232.20 No significant increase of stormwater runoff onto adjacent property or streets

The granting of this special exception to keep chickens in our back yard will create no significant increase of stormwater runoff onto adjacent property or streets. The coop and chickens will be in our grassy back yard in a rural location far from the neighboring houses, driveways, sidewalks and streets.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Matt & Lara Prescott
Prescott Family Revocable Trust
306 South Street, Portsmouth NH
(240) 620-4432; matthewaprescott@gmail.com

Appendix A: Images of coop

**Bethlehem Chicken Coop
(4 x 4 sections) Total 8 Feet**



**Bethlehem Chicken Coop
2 (4 x 4 sections) Interior View**



**Bethlehem Chicken Coop
View of Back of Coop**



**Bethlehem Chicken Coop
Venting Window, Laying Boxes, Side Door**



Appendix B: Location of coop



Appendix C: Site Photo

