

From: Ashley Morton <ashley.m.comtois@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 9, 2023 4:27 PM
To: Richard Jones <RJones@CityofNewburyport.com>
Cc: Zach Comtois <zachcomtoismusic@gmail.com>
Subject: Letter Concerning Comm 142

Hi Richard,

We've composed a letter (below) in reference to Comm142 and would appreciate if you would forward this communication to the whole council ahead of Monday's meeting. Please let us know if you need sent in another format.

*Thanks so much!
Ashley & Zach*

To the City of Newburyport and the Public Works and Safety Committee,

We are writing as residents of 32 Water Street in objection to the outdoor dining request in Comm142.

While we love that summer has arrived and this means outdoor dining along State Street, etc. we are strongly opposed to Port Vida using their second parking lot for outdoor dining. We speak from experience, having lived here when the previous establishment (Brick and Ash) ran outdoor dining in the same location. Although we appreciate that the current restaurant has been more respectful as far as noise/interaction around our property than Brick and Ash, and would very much like to continue to have a pleasant relationship between our building and management, there are several factors that come with outside dining that simply cannot be managed or changed, even with the restaurant's best intentions.

Specifically:

- Noise/Privacy Concerns
- Trash/Concerns for vermin attraction directly next to our building with outdoor food
- Safety Concerns (the constant crossing of restaurant employees over our driveway)

The parking lot is directly next to a residential building as well as working offices -- not just shops. Ashley personally works from home every day -- the last time the parking lot was used for outdoor dining she was unable to keep the window open (particularly frustrating on a hot, summer day when the advantage to being in the area is the lovely breeze off the water!) because, between the everyday action of a large amount of people talking and eating, in addition to music, was incredibly disruptive, even with the window completely closed.

Besides being located outside of an office window, the parking lot is also outside of one of our bedroom windows -- we already deal with the late-night noise of people getting into/out of their cars and trash being taken out as we are attempting to sleep, but to have an entire restaurant set-up right outside feels like an even bigger lack of privacy and noise that is impossible to avoid. We feel it's fair to say that it is one thing to purchase property knowing a restaurant is behind your parking lot, we understood this when we moved in, but it is another to have a busy dining experience directly outdoors and underneath -- if not almost level with -- your window every day and night.

Our last experience with the outdoor dining also showed us the stress of having waitstaff constantly crossing over the driveway -- it led to several unsafe situations and what felt like a lack of concern and awareness for what is essentially being treated as an active crosswalk with people and vehicles coming and going throughout the day.

We have a small yard next to the parking lot, and we (as well as other owners in the building) had found ourselves picking up trash that wind had blown onto our property/into our yard most days, or having those eating at the restaurant using our yard for their pets to relieve themselves.

We will only add that we appreciate that a restaurant in the area may see it as a requirement to have an outdoor dining option in the summer to be competitive with other establishments, but want to note that Port Vida already *has* an outdoor dining option on their deck. They do not need to use the parking lot in order to offer this experience to their customers.

We hope this note is taken as it is meant, simply a strong request to not sign-off on the use of the parking lot for anything beyond what it was designed for: parking. We love living here, and the hustle and bustle of the downtown, but we do believe this extends beyond what one should expect from living in this location, and certainly affects the day-to-day quality of life for those living and working in the building.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this through and consider this,
Ashley Morton Comtois & Zach Comtois