

April 10, 2019

Re: Parking Amendments

Dear Members of the Durham Planning Board,

As a latecomer to your discussions on parking, it is a bit difficult to understand what items in the ordinance have been moved versus which ones have been removed and/or replaced. One item that jumps out at me as a concern is **175-111 General Requirements, A-Parking Spaces**.

**Maximum Spaces.** There shall be no more than 3 parking spaces for a dwelling unit located in the Residence A and Residence B Districts, not including the parking spaces situated on a single-lane driveway or within a garage or required parking for an accessory dwelling unit/apartment or home occupation. More than 3 parking spaces may be established if approved as a special exception subject to the general special exception criteria contained in Section 175-26 and a finding that the proposed parking spaces are serving the on-site dwelling(s) only.

If I understand this correctly, this would permit a homeowner to park 6 or more cars in the driveway and/or yard (depending on the size of the driveway and garage) without having to go to the ZBA for a Special Exception. Doesn't this seem in excess of what is needed by the single-family homeowner? What is the purpose of this loosening of the regulations if not to encourage the rental of parking spaces to students in the in-town neighborhoods? Given the Town's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases, this change in the ordinance would seem to result in enabling more students to bring their cars to college because it creates the potential to open up many more parking spaces for students. The end result might be the antithesis of our town's interest in reducing greenhouse gases.

Additionally, how does the incentive to rent parking spaces to students align with the Town Council's commitment to keeping our neighborhoods family-friendly?

Just in the last day, as I mentioned this public hearing two residents, I have heard two tales of woe about current abuses of the existing parking regulations. One had to do with a student rental (no more than 3 unrelated) that consistently has 3 cars in the driveway and 3 cars on the lawn. At this time of year, what used to be lawn is now a yard full of mud. The other story was about an owner-occupied rental that has many more cars in the driveway and yard than currently permitted to the constant distress of the abutter.

Why do we want to encourage packing our neighborhood driveways and lawns with cars? I thought we are trying to get students out of the neighborhoods? Are we now drawing students back into the neighborhoods and making them less user friendly for children and families?

If a homeowner has a valid need for more parking, such as each parent having a car and one or two teens with cars, why not allow the family to go down to the Town Hall, show that the additional cars are registered in the family name and obtain a permit? This would seem like a simple solution to meeting the needs of households without creating havoc in the neighborhoods.

I hope you will think seriously about the unintended consequences of this particular amendment.  
Sincerely,

Beth Olshansky