

August 13, 2009

Mayor and City Councilors:

The Belfast Planning Board discussed the Council's proposal to amend the current parking standards at its meetings of July 29 and August 12. The Board has several concerns regarding the Council's approach.

The Board is concerned that the parking standard being considered by the Council is not based on any review of the actual amount of parking that may be needed by a restaurant. The Board is also troubled that the Council immediately chose to pursue amendments to the code after hearing one individual's concern regarding how the parking standards may have affected their proposal to reopen a Belfast restaurant. We are apprehensive about the Council's acting on a singular case, which affects all future restaurant applications.

The Planning Board gives these issues great thought and deliberation. Guided by the City Planner's knowledge and experience, we rely on the recommendations of other professionals, the standards used throughout the State and our own collective experience. We take into account the viability for the intended use and we factor public safety into our deliberations. Our approach is to be fair and even-handed to all applicants, incorporating adequate provisions for exceptions where special circumstances exist.

We ask that you determine the best process to use to involve the Planning Board in future decisions that affect City zoning.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Pickering, Chair
Paul Hamilton, Secretary
Biff Atlass, member
Larry Gleeson, member
Elizabeth Minor, member
William Affleck, alternate member
Diane Allmayer-Beck, alternate member