Dear P&Z,

I am writing to provide comments on the pending application PLPZ202100390 for the construction of an outdoor dining deck at 2 South Water Street. My comments are on behalf of the Byram Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee, of which I am a member. We are supportive of the proposed application. One of several goals of the BNA is to increase the vibrancy, attractiveness, level of pedestrian activity and general “village feel” of downtown Byram. An outdoor dining deck at a longstanding restaurant location in the heart of Byram clearly helps advance that goal.

At the same time, we would like to raise two related issues to be considered in your approval process. First, the lack of adequate parking is an unaddressed problem in downtown Byram. It’s an issue that is important to the long-term viability of businesses in our commercial corridor. While the proposed plan results in the loss of only three (3) parking spaces, it will likely increase the number of patrons at the restaurant at any given time. While some will be local patrons who may walk, others will drive. At this time, it is not clear whether the parking lot at 2 South Water Street will remain sufficient for the number of seats at the restaurant or whether patrons will use the limited supply of public parking spaces in the area, adversely affecting other local businesses. We ask that the Town and applicant monitor the parking at this location to help inform future planning for additional parking in downtown Byram.

Second, there is a sidewalk safety concern that must be addressed. The Mill and Water intersection is heavily used by pedestrians walking within downtown Byram and to and from Port Chester, including commuters headed to the Port Chester Train Station. The corner in front of 2 South Water is unusually narrow and has a disability access ramp that crosses the sidewalk almost to the building corner. There isn’t room for a pedestrian, never mind two pedestrians passing, to navigate the corner without stepping into the steep slope of the disability ramp. This hazard is exacerbated by an encroachment by the applicant and a poor history of prior owners/operators removing snow in a timely manner. In past winters the prior owners/operators did not clear the sidewalk in time for the morning commute. As a result, on icy days this sidewalk becomes a slippery slide leading to a very busy intersection. This creates a safety hazard that we would like for the property owner working with the Town to address. Please see the attached picture for reference.

No doubt, there are several potential remedies. We ask that the property owner and/or applicant pursue the following:

1. Remove any encroachments at the corner and refrain from future encroachments.
2. Clear the sidewalk early on days when it snows or there is ice. This is a main Thoroughfare for pedestrians commuting to train in Port Chester, potentially as early as 6 or 7 in the morning.
3. Work with the Town to evaluate redesigning the sidewalk and curb in this area. This could include widening the sidewalk at the corner to create additional non-sloped space to pass by, lowering the level of the sidewalk to lessen the grade of the ramp area, and changing the non-skid material on the ramp to make it less slippery.

Thank you for your consideration,

Walter Rojowsky

On behalf of the Byram Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee
Sloped steeply and slippery when not cleared of ice/snow

No room to pass without stepping on slope

Encroachment
Sloped steeply and slippery when not cleared of ice/snow

Encroachment

No room to pass without stepping on slope