



Dear Town Supervisor and Board Members,

The Greater Cornwall Chamber of Commerce is writing to request the Cornwall Town Board amend the current New York Supplementary Regulation 158-16: Accessory Parking Regulation. Specifically, we request changes to section B pertaining to the minimum off street parking requirement. For years towns and cities across America have been removing or revising these parking regulations because they negatively impact local businesses and small-scale developers. They are also harmful to Cornwall's tax base because they fill our neighborhoods with parking spaces instead of productive developments like restaurants, boutiques, and shops. Finally, minimum parking requirements worsen car dependence, and undermine walkable neighborhoods.

Under the current requirement, 1 parking space is needed for every 200 square feet of retail space. A restaurant must add 1 space for every 3 seats (or essentially each additional table). A standard parking space is about 180 square feet. The current minimum parking requirement has decreased the ability of at least two local restaurants and retail shops to expand. In addition, a new proposed project for the Lemon building, that has the potential to improve the quality of life in our community, may be impacted by these parking requirements. The residents of Cornwall deserve a walkable Main Street with flourishing businesses and places to meet neighbors and friends. Restaurants and shops should be encouraged to open and not be handcuffed by parking requirements that are outdated and go against the Town's own Comprehensive Plan.

In 2019, the Town Board approved a Comprehensive Plan that laid out a vision for Cornwall. "The Plan envisions an involved, diverse, successful community that supports the Town's residents, as it seeks to attract small businesses to a walkable and attractive Main Street."¹ In addition, the Plan calls for "enhancing walkability and cycling opportunities; prioritizing environmental sustainability and protecting open space."¹ Also in the plan, it indicates that "It appears many of the on-street parking spaces, particularly those located blocks from the municipal



parking lot, remain unused despite a perceived shortage of parking.”² Finally, the Town’s Comprehensive Plan specifically states, “simplify and expedite the local land use review process to encourage new business.”³

Our businesses have been struggling through the last year due to the pandemic. The Town Board should be evaluating every opportunity to help businesses get back on their feet and set them up for success. It is for the above reasons the Greater Cornwall Chamber of Commerce strongly recommend the Town Board immediately revise or eliminate the minimum parking requirements specifically for retail shops (22) and restaurants (26).

Sincerely,

Scott Teresi and Eileen Hartmann
Co-Chairs, Economic Development Committee
Rich Massimi, President
Greater Cornwall Chamber of Commerce

References:

1. *Adopted 2019 Cornwall, NY Comprehensive Plan. Page: 6*
2. *Adopted 2019 Cornwall, NY Comprehensive Plan. Page: 24*
3. *Adopted 2019 Cornwall, NY Comprehensive Plan. Page: 25-26*