

April 9,2025

Dear Members of the Warner ZBA;

For the following reasons, I urge you to deny the variance requested by CATCH to expand the building footprint 10' feet into the required setback of the property.

The applicant argues that a variance should be granted because no significant harm arises by moving the proposed building closer to the road. I respectfully disagree.

The expansion into the setback is one of several design elements that, taken together and if permitted, allows the applicant to shoehorn workforce housing into a district that is zoned for commercial development.

Plainly stated, the housing proposal is too big for the lot.

The applicant states that not granting the request for a variance makes the project "unfeasible" and that there is no harm in granting the variance to the setback requirements because the Warner Planning Board can address the impacts of a diminished setback.

Allowing the variance, handicaps the Planning Board's options for addressing the very issues the Board will need to consider, including noise, traffic, parking ingress, egress and building design.

The ZBA should not limit the ability of the Warner Planning Board to address these issues by narrowing the set back. The variance should be denied.

The workforce housing proposal for Warner is precedent setting and allows a residential project in a commercial zone. The project should conform to the best of our zoning ordinances not the least.

The applicants argue that workforce housing is essential, desirable and necessary in Warner. I agree. That does not mean the project needs to meet the scale and design to accommodate regional and statewide workforce housing development goals.

CATCH has developed many smaller workforce housing projects than the one proposed here. Housing advocates may want to "meet the moment" with a big project that meets regional and statewide needs, this is not the site to do so.

The significant legal constraints of the existing easement, the sensitivity of the wetlands and the proximity of the river create a challenging site.

The changes that should be made to address the problem with the site are to reduce the number of units and size of the building foot print, not to allow a variance on the set back requirements.

I hope CATCH will work with the town to propose an appropriately sized housing project at this site that works for Warner. The current proposal does not.

Sincerely,
Alice Chamberlin

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