

Statement of Justification- Variance Request for 604 Beulah Rd.

Owners & Applicants: Mr. Vipul Masih & Mrs. Sonia Kannadan

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Property address: 604 Beulah Rd NE, Vienna, VA 22180

We recently moved to Northern Virginia from across the country and purchased a home in the Town of Vienna in Nov. 2018. First, we would like to apologize since we honestly did not know that there were regulations regarding extending our driveway within our property. We did not alter the sidewalks or cut any curbs, instead we extended the driveway to enable safety for others as well as for our family and sufficiently utilize our property which alleviated the hardship of backing into a busy street, Beulah Rd. At the time, we did not know that we were already almost at the max of 25% for lot coverage and so the addition put us over by 4%. We are requesting to keep the driveway addition because it provides access to the home.

Our house is located directly off Beulah road meaning we have to reverse onto Beulah to exit our home. Beulah connects Lee Hwy and Maple Ave and therefore has significant through traffic. The Vienna Police Department informed us that over the past 5 years, there has been 1892 citations and 155 accident reports within one mile of our home on Beulah Road. This means the traffic on Beulah Rd is very busy and the number of accidents show that there are more than average road hazards within one mile of our property. The part of Beulah Rd that we reside on is a narrow part where there are only two-lanes with no shoulder lanes or street parking. We also have the unique situation of being directly across the street from Holy Comforter Pre-school/ Church. This means that when we reverse out of our home, we are directly reversing into the

entrance and exit from the school. Holy Comforter currently has 99 children enrolled in their school with 27 staff members and the Church has about 400-500 attendees for weekend services. Wolf Trap Elementary School is located 1 block up the road from us. The bus stops for the middle and high school children are located on Beulah within our block as well. All this leads to children using the sidewalks through-out the day. We reside in an area where there are deer/ foxes that cross the street periodically as well and there are signs indicating this along the road. This road is also a snow emergency route. This means we are basically at a four-way intersection if you include our home without a stop sign to let us exit our home safely. This makes it very challenging to reverse onto incoming traffic and is a major safety concern. There are times when it is extremely difficult to back out without impeding the flow of traffic, and we are concerned that there are numerous blind spots where one can easily miss seeing something. This is especially true of visitors that come to our home who are unfamiliar with all the moving parts near our home. We feel it is safer to have a turn around on our property so we can merge straight in and be able to clearly see in all directions when exiting the home.

The other major issue with our house location is there is no street parking. We only have 2 garage spots and parking any other car would impede the other cars from getting out. In Vienna, most homes of our size have some way to park more than 2 cars. In fact, when surveying the homes within 1-2 blocks from us who also exit onto Beulah with no available street parking, we noted that 17 of the 19 homes had driveway extensions. All 9 homes to the left not only had driveway extensions, but they were large enough that at least 3 additional cars could park. On the right side to our home, 7 out of 9 homes had driveway extensions that could accommodate at least 3 cars. Of the remaining two, one had a very wide driveway that would permit other cars to park & possibly turn around and truly, just one had no real parking extension. Honestly, when we saw all of the neighbors' homes, we assumed it would be okay to extend ours to match what was around us.

We are new to this area and did not know the rules about zoning for the town of Vienna. While this is not an excuse, we just wanted to you to know we sincerely did not know till we had already created the extension. When we first came to see the property, we addressed the driveway issue with the real estate

agent immediately. We were told it was easy to create a parking extension and were told of the approximate cost. The previous owners had gotten quotes for the task as it was a common issue brought up by prospective buyers. It would supposedly be an easy fix for us in the future and looking around at the neighbor's homes, we believed this to be the case. We never knew about the rules about lot coverage at that time. We have attached an email from the seller's real estate agent (Bill Hoffman) that prospective buyers often brought up the driveway issue in the sale of the home. We believe that this addition is something that any homeowner would want and need. In fact, this was a major issue for the sale of this home and we believe the property value is enhanced by this addition which benefits our neighbors as well. Our neighbors stated that when these homes were built 10 years ago, there was not this much traffic in this area. Now with the tremendous growth in the area, the town is having to address this problem in numerous ways. In our situation, we have significant speeding with through traffic. Therefore, the needs of the home have changed over time and now the extension is necessary.

We took many items into consideration when figuring out the size of the parking pad and feel it is essential in order to get proper use of the space. We require a space that we can adequately turn our cars around no matter the weather with clear visibility. Our current driveway becomes very narrow as you pull out of the home with a metal fence on the sides. This makes it difficult to turn around without a proper pad on the side that you can pull into especially when you are driving an SUV or minivan that we use with our child. Also, any guests should be able to easily turn into the pad and park and exit our home safely. We chose to place the addition towards the fence so that beauty of the home could be maintained and there is a transformer located in the other direction. We designed the extension in order to conform with the additions in the neighborhood.

We do not have a reasonable way to remove a portion of our lot coverage in order to conform without destroying our existing home. We are not negatively affecting our neighbor's homes. We believe that the driveway addition actually increases the value of the property as it makes it more attractive to future buyers since it now resembles the convenience and safety of the other home's driveways.

We strongly feel that this driveway extension is essential to utilize this property and would be something every homeowner would want. We hope that we can keep this addition so we can enjoy our home and use it to it's full potential.