

Good afternoon

I am writing today to deny the above bill be passed by this committee nor presented to the full legislative body.

The town of East Greenwich is currently in litigation with several establishments that have used the emergency COVID bills to bypass zoning. East Greenwich has been fortunate enough to be a destination unto itself. We have had several bars/restaurants that have not been good tenants of East Greenwich since the emergency zoning bypass was allowed. With the legislature giving businesses extra latitude, We have had (to be definitive); businesses that have not complied with capacity, safety of structures, parking, loudness and safety and/or drunkenness of patrons. Without proper zoning codes and the ability to enforce (or even know what is occurring), we are putting our residents and other patrons at risk. In one case, a business placed their (legislative permitted addition) next to an apartment building and put kerosene heaters right next to the apartments. This was covered by the tent (that was allowed by the state) and was not seen until we sent our building official over to investigate illegal electrical lines running on the ground. We also have a business that doubled its physical business while not increasing their waitstaff to monitor their patrons for drunkenness. This is a potential drunk driving fatality in the making. The legislature is not funding extra security or monies for towns like ours that have bars/restaurants and so it falls on our limited budgets to enforce something that the legislature has now made nearly impossible to regulate with our limited staff.

I would ask that this body remember that our ability to zone properly and enforce our rules is not a one size fits all proposition. What may work for one town, may not work for another. Our town is asking for the consideration and denial of this legislation.

Thank you
Renu Englehart
Member East Greenwich
Town Council