

Mika Cheng & Dan Flynn  
18 Ivaloo Street  
Somerville MA 02143

March 5, 2023

Zoning Board of Appeals  
City Hall  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: DRA for 18 Ivaloo Street Back Deck Replacement

To the Zoning Board of Appeals,

We are applying for hardship variance and zoning relief for replacement and expansion of our backyard deck at our home at 18 Ivaloo St. The plan expands the size of the deck to allow for safe entry and egress, functional furniture area and stairs, appropriate sized landings and stairs that meet code. We reviewed our plan, lot conditions, and zoning codes with the Planners for our Ward, and have designed and revised our plan based on their advice.

We are applying for a hardship variance and zoning relief from a setback requirement for our plan, as illustrated in our attached drawings.

**East side (non-driveway side) setback:** Variance requested from requirements for 3' setback from lot line. Our house is 0.4' from the lot line and our existing deck is set back 4' from the lot line; our proposed deck will have a 1' setback from the lot line. This will allow us to build a functional furniture area of the deck (our current deck is too small for furniture and smaller than ZBA minimum requirements).

Variance Findings: To approve a variance, we understand the ZBA must make the following three findings for each variance request. Below is our explanation of why we feel we meet those findings.

1. **Special circumstances relating to the shape of our lot:** A challenge in developing our deck plan has been our unusual lot dimensions; we have a very narrow, sloping lot. The Planners shared city data with us as context for our lot dimensions, noting:

Number of Detached Houses in the NR District = 8,669

- Average lot width = 44.7'
- Median lot width = 42'
- Mode lot width = 40'

With a width of 25.7', our house at 18 Ivaloo St. is 19 feet narrower (42% narrower) than the average Detached NR lot.

2. **Literal enforcement of the zoning code causes hardship** and conflict between building code

and zoning code. Our deck is in need of repair/replacement, but if we rebuilt it as is, we would not be able to establish building code-compliant stairs and landings, or have a functional furniture area. We are requesting zoning code relief in order to allow a design that will be building code compliant and more functional.

3. **Requested relief can be granted without causing detriment to the public good** and without nullifying or substantially derogating from the intent and purpose of the NR District in Zoning Ordinance. Our proposed deck will expand outdoor recreation space and be typical of other decks in our neighborhood, including those in our immediate block.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mika Cheng and Dan Flynn

## Dimensional tables

Somerville's Zoning Ordinance provides guidance for setbacks and dimensional tables for porches so we have used the format from those guidelines as a guide.

Porch Component			
Dimension	Zoning Req.	Existing	Proposed
Width	12' min	10' 10½"	18'
Projection	6' min	7' 3½"	10' 2"
Clearance	8' min	N/A (currently has no roof)	8'
Furniture area	6 x 6' min	6' x 3'	9' x 10'
Setback Encroachment			
- Front	100%	N/A	N/A
- Side (Driveway side)	0'	0'	0'
- Side (Non-driveway, east side)	0'	House: 2.6' Porch: 0'	House: 2.6' Porch: 2'
- Rear	0'	0'	0'

Setbacks and building separation with respect to the existing and proposed porch are below. The existing setbacks to the house itself on the Non-driveway (East) side is only 0.4' from the lot line, and that remains unchanged in the proposed deck plan.