



To: ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov and mglidden@simsbury-ct.gov
From: kevinjkurian@gmail.com

Good evening everyone,

My name is Kevin Kurian and I'm a college student who went to Simsbury's public schools for 12 years as well as a representative of Holding the Door Open, a local group that's dedicated to racial equality within our town.

First, I want to thank the members of the Zoning Commission for holding this meeting so that town residents can share their thoughts on updating our accessory dwelling unit policy. It speaks well to your character as local leaders that you're giving residents a platform to speak on this issue. The very fact that we are having this meeting, and that towns have the choice to opt-out shows that this is not a state takeover of local zoning, but rather the recommendation of smart policy that will benefit our town's elderly community, environment, and residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities - as so many have mentioned via email and tonight.

In the interest of transparency, I'd like to preface my comment by saying that I was a volunteer for DesegregateCT and advocated for the legislation that is now Public Act 21-29. Because of this, I feel like I can offer a unique perspective on the policy specifics of what's being discussed today and why we should accept these moderate and common-sense reforms.

One of the most commendable points of these proposed changes is the increase in maximum size of ADUs - from 600 square feet or 25% of the primary dwelling unit to 1,000 square feet or 30% of the primary dwelling unit. Our current regulations have created an environment where people who need to live in ADUs in order to maintain an independent lifestyle while remaining close to caregivers, are made to cram into a 600 square foot living unit that's smaller than most studio apartments! These provisions will give more power to the homeowners to make decisions about what kind of unit best suits their property - that's personal liberty at its finest. By opting into these reforms, we will make sure that senior citizens and members of the I/DD community are housed with dignity and respect.

These ADU reforms will not radically change our zoning codes. Currently, attached ADUs are zoned as-of-right and merely require site plan approval. These reforms would treat detached ADUs - perhaps a converted garage - the same as attached ADUs. This seems like a reasonable reform. If a homeowner needs an ADU, for whatever reason, and they only have the capacity to create a detached unit, shouldn't they be treated the same as someone who has an attached ADU?

There are a lot of good-faith concerns about what this will do for parking in our town. First, it's essential to remember that this will not restrict parking supply, as Simsbury would still be able to require one parking spot per ADU. More importantly, perhaps, we should remember the fact that many elderly occupants of ADUs won't need a car, so we'll all still have the liberty to park where we'd like. The restriction that the town may not require more than one parking spot per ADU is a wise one. How many ADU occupants are even likely to have more than one car, or have the need of more than one parking spot?

It's essential to remember that these reforms explicitly say that the town should regulate the use of ADU short-term rentals as well as the height, landscaping, and architectural design of these units.

Sometimes, in discussions like these, the real question in discussion can get lost in the weeds. Today, I think we're talking about how these reforms can make our town more inclusive and accessible, for people of all ages and abilities. I strongly urge the Zoning Commission to support these common-sense reforms, and I stand opposed to any form of opt-out.