

To the Bristol Zoning Committee,

2025 FEB 25 AM 8: 59

Gardening, caring for our environment and attending to the worrisome decline in pollinator populations have always been priorities for me. In 2020, I graduated from URI's Master Gardener Program. I have also taken several courses with The Tree Council of RI.

In 2000, I created a vibrant, pollinator garden at 26 Brookwood Rd in Bristol. I had soil shipped in and with a landscaper who specialized in native plants, I brought in shrubs, trees, grasses, and flowering plants which increased the pollinator population. At that time I also had a 3 foot fence around a vegetable garden. Unfortunately as the deer population increased, many of my plants were destroyed. These had been food sources and playgrounds for many hummingbirds and bees and butterflies. I tried spray to ward off deer and constructed small, metal, one foot fence like structure to surround the plants. My efforts were unsuccessful. The deer also easily jumped over my three foot fence and destroyed my vegetable garden.

Last October 2025, I decided to have a fence built in the same footprint as the three foot fence, in an attempt to keep out as many deer as possible. I realize deer can sometimes jump up to seven feet, however many sources I consulted suggested that six feet is sufficient. A friend in Barrington had an open frame fence, the exact fence which I desired. It has kept out deer.

The following is my fence contractor's description of the my fence:

**"This is a custom-built open-frame, decorative and protective garden enclosure that is aesthetically pleasing with straight lines and see through black welded wire. It is constructed with open wire panels to maintain visibility and neighborhood character. It is not privacy fencing, not a solid wall panel, not opaque. It is designed for plant protection and architectural continuity."**

**I had the plans drawn up. I had photos of my friend's garden with the same fence I was to build submitted to the town. I had photos of my yard including the distance from the street... submitted. At that point I requested and was granted a permit through the town of Bristol.**

The fence was finally built in November, a date determined by the contractor's availability. There are wooden beams every 5 ½ to 7 feet. Most of the structure is made of a black welded wire 2"x4" and 1'x1' which one can easily see through. I intentionally did not build a bulky stockade fence.

This past Dec 31, 2025, I retired from a thirty plus year career as an ob/gyn. Part of my retirement plan was to care for my garden and the ecosystem I had created. I planned to transfer many of the pollinator plants that deer had destroyed to within the fence boundaries. I was planning to grow vegetables with the hope to donate food to friends and to the Food Bank. (As a Master Gardener, I had worked with the Mount Hope gardening crew and had organized and delivered some of their food to the food bank. ) My plan was to bring in new, raised beds for vegetables and transfer pollinators.

In December, I received notification that my neighbor was unhappy with the fence. He looked up zoning laws and realized my fence was not within the proper 30 feet from the property line. Thus far, other neighbors have not complained to me. My fence was “blocking his view and lowering the value of his property.”

So far I have spent well over \$10,000 to build this fence. My neighbor has offered to cover the cost if I lower the entire fence, (including the 13 feet which is legally permitted within zoning laws) or take down several trees, or move a trellis with a shrub growing on it or move my garden to the front yard (where the sun is limited). This is all to better his view. I declined.

I am going before the zoning committee with this costly problem. Please take into account that **this is a pollinator garden, the fence is not solid and it can benefit the community.**

I will lower the fence height if this is absolutely necessary. There are two gates to the garden. Because of their structure, I can't just reduce their height. The entire gate structure would have to be rebuilt which would cost me a considerable amount of money.

If necessary I am hoping the committee would allow me to at least keep the six foot structure to include the gates.. Please note, several neighboring houses have six foot fences near the street.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Colleen Cavanaugh and King To