



**Waterside Social**  
256 S Broadway St  
Lake Orion, MI

**To the Village of Lake Orion Village Board of Zoning Appeals,**

Mario Ortega requested a summary of our last few months regarding the approval and construction of the pergola and outdoor service bar at Waterside Social. Please find the summary below and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

**Summary of Events**

On March 18th, we met with David Goodloe and Gage Belko at the Village offices to discuss preliminary plans for an outdoor bar and pergola at Waterside Social. Over the next two months, we had numerous phone calls and meetings with both David and Gage to refine the plans. On June 17th, we had an in-person meeting at Waterside with both David and Gage. At that meeting, Gage confirmed that we could construct the pergola and bar as long as the structure was not attached to the existing building, in compliance with local ordinances. He noted that a 5' variance would be needed for the bar, but the pergola did not require a variance if unattached. We worked closely with David and the Township to design a free-standing structure—at an increased cost—to comply with ordinances and submitted the proper paperwork.

Gage was out in July, and Mario Ortega took over our project in August. On August 26th, we received a stop-work order from the Village. I contacted the Village immediately and left messages. On September 10th, I received a response stating that we would need to resubmit our variance request to include the pergola. We hired an architect to provide the requested updated drawings. Mario Ortega then added us to the agenda for the November BZA

meeting, where the variance request was tabled.

### **Business Hardship and Impact**

Without approval of this variance, Waterside Social is at serious risk of closure. Our outdoor patio accounts for roughly 50% of our revenue, and we have invested thousands of dollars in umbrellas and canopies that were destroyed by wind—demonstrating that our outdoor space cannot function safely or comfortably without proper coverage. Covering the patio with the pergola is not a luxury—it is essential for the survival of our business. The west-facing patio is exposed to relentless sun and wind, making it nearly unusable for much of the year if not properly covered. Patrons have repeatedly expressed their desire for shade and rain protection, and the loss of this space would be devastating both financially and for the community experience we provide.

### **Commitment to the Village and Lake Orion**

Chris, Lisa, and I have been long-time business owners in the Village and have a proven record of creating an elevated entertainment and dining experience for Lake Orion residents and visitors. We have worked closely with the Village over the years, even building and funding stairs next to Wine Social to improve and provide safer pedestrian access to the lower-level parking lot. We are deeply committed to this community, and Waterside Social has quickly become a valued and much-loved local waterfront destination.

### **Request**

We respectfully urge the Village to approve the pergola variance so that we can continue to operate and contribute to Lake Orion's economy and quality of life—"where living is a vacation." Denying this request places our business—and the community experience it provides—at grave risk and is a serious hardship for our business. Thank you very much for your time, understanding, and consideration.

Regards,  
Doug Jones