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City Council Member Board  
16901 Michigan Ave. Suite 10  
Dearborn, Michigan 48126

January 20, 2016

Re: Appeal for alley parking exemption request/possible amendment for city ordinance sec. 18-356

Members of city council;

I am respectfully requesting to appear before the board and appeal a recent decision by Traffic /Safety Commission to deny a 24 hour parking permit for my work van to be parked in the alley behind my garage.

We have lived at this address since 1988, 15 years of which I have worked as a licensed electrician. For much of this time I have parked either a company van or a company step van in this exact spot without issue. This vehicle is absolutely critical to my livelihood and a highly valued compensation from my employer. It is a new 2015 van that is not unsightly in any way. Without the 24 hour availability of this vehicle I would no longer have transportation to and from Madison Heights, where I work. It is impossible to predict how often I get emergency calls or when. Having my work vehicle located miles away would hinder my response time to those who need these services.

Losing this vehicle will also cause me and my family financial hardship. We are not in a position to afford any additional vehicles and this company van also allows me to carry the necessary tools, equipment and bulky supplies required to perform my trade. Losing the van could potentially mean losing my job. The van is parked at the inside dead end of the alley directly behind my property and has never been in the way of alley maintenance nor has it ever prevented my neighbor from accessing his driveway.

We have always been very diligent on keeping the alley clear of leaves, cutting the grass and picking up trash that is dropped from time to time and packing down the snow. Although we live at the inside dead end of the alley, we maintain the entire alley as none of the other neighbors that boarder it take care of it. We care for it as we do our own property.

In 2004-5 my wife spoke with then Mayor Giudo who assured us that our vehicles both personal and work related would be allowed to park in the alley without offence. Well, that was obviously years ago yet we have never had an issue until recently.

We just want to continue living and working as usual. We've received several warnings and a couple of tickets prior to finding a very temporary place to relocate the work van and we don't see a permanent solution other than receiving the variance being requested by this letter.

Every officer that came out to mention the ordinance agreed it was outdated and many of the neighbors that signed my petition were also surprised how much effort the city was putting into removing my van which was not at issue with any of them. After being told by officers that came out that there were several complaints, we find it difficult to understand this since every one of our neighbors wasn't bothered by the van being in the alley and they understood its presence there.

We do however; have a neighbor that we believe may be the one reporting the complaints. He has a history of having issues with the neighbors around him for years and he is the neighbor we share the alley with. We have tried to be friendly and on many occasions were, as was he. In the past he and we have even considered buying the alley from the city and we have shared common ground on a few other issues as well. But over the years our relationships has been a bumpy road of sorts. On public service days, when we have to park our vehicles in the alley behind our property overnight, he has mentioned being temporarily inconvenienced, although he can still come and go with ease. We are certainly not sure of this and don't want to be the cause of any insult or slander but it just seems oddly coincidental and as a result did not ask his signature on the petition because we didn't want to take a chance and upset him further.

We were eventually referred to Sgt. Steve White who told us "to do what we had to do and if we had any trouble to see him", but we hate to continue to involve him as we are sure he has many more important things to do. We tried covering the van with a tarp to hide the work related writing but were still asked to remove it from the alley.

Since our house and garage were built in 1942, the dimensions of the garage door will not allow for me to park my work van inside.

Please look into my request and find it in your heart to allow the permanent exemption for parking my work van in the alley. I have included all the required documentation to support my request and look forward to attending a hearing or providing whatever is additionally required regarding this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Mario Bouchard