

# MASON, GRIFFIN & PIERSON

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION  
COUNSELLORS AT LAW

## MEMORANDUM

To: Princeton Mayor & Council

From: Trishka W. Cecil, Municipal Attorney 

Date: September 4, 2014

Re: Resolution requesting the Princeton Planning Board to review the issue of converting front yard areas into off-street parking

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If you recall, two meetings ago the Mayor and Council discussed the issue of variances that have been granted to allow individuals to park in their front yards, including by converting the front yard itself into off-street parking. Members of Council were concerned about the negative planning implications should such variances begin to proliferate, especially in neighborhoods with small lots and limited opportunity for off-street parking. The Mayor and Council requested that staff work with designated Council members to prepare a resolution formally expressing the Council's concerns and requesting the Planning Board's input.

To that end, attached hereto please find a proposed resolution requesting that the Planning Board review the issue of converting front yard areas into off-street parking and consider amending the Princeton Master Plan if appropriate.<sup>1</sup> The resolution has been included on the agenda for your consideration at the September 8, 2014 Mayor and Council meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (609) 436-1211 or [trishka@mgplaw.com](mailto:trishka@mgplaw.com) if you have any questions or would like additional information.

### Enclosure

cc: Linda McDermott  
Robert Bruschi  
Kathryn Monzo  
Robert Kiser  
Lee Solow  
Gerald Muller, Esq.  
Karen Cayci, Esq.

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<sup>1</sup>Although the zoning ordinances of the former Borough and former Township, which remain in effect, prohibit parking in front yards, the Master Plan does not contain anything specifically commenting on the issue or guiding the Zoning Board when considering whether to grant variances to allow front yard parking.

COUNTY OF MERCER

PRINCETON

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**Resolution No. 14-\_\_\_\_\_**

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE PRINCETON PLANNING BOARD TO REVIEW THE ISSUE OF CONVERTING FRONT YARD AREAS INTO OFF-STREET PARKING**

**WHEREAS**, it has come to the attention of Princeton Mayor and Council that a number of properties have received zoning variances from the Zoning Board of Adjustment to permit parking in front yard areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council are concerned that parking in front yard areas can degrade streetscapes and provide a less attractive front yard area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council are also concerned that houses that have been granted a variance to create parking in their front yards can create a less pedestrian friendly community; and

**WHEREAS**, allowing parking in front yard areas, by increasing the sales value of the properties, may negatively impact the availability of affordable homes in Princeton for residents who do not own a car; and

**WHEREAS**, front yard parking can increase impervious surfaces and often results in the removal of trees and shrubs; and

**WHEREAS**, increasing the availability of off-street parking correlates with increased vehicle trips and decreased use of mass transit, which in the long run is a regressive policy;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and Council of Princeton, Mercer County, New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Mayor and Council find that in general, parking in front yard areas is out of character for the Princeton Community.
2. The Mayor and Council therefore request that the Princeton Planning Board review the issue of converting front yard areas into parking spaces and consider amending the Princeton Community Master Plan to discourage conversions of front yards into parking lots, if warranted.
3. The Mayor and Council further request that the Planning Board consider including a representative(s) from the Zoning Board to participate in any study that the Planning Board conducts regarding parking in the front yard.
4. The Clerk shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to the members of the Princeton Planning Board and the Princeton Zoning Board, as well as to the attorneys for said boards.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Linda S. McDermott, Clerk of Princeton, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was considered and adopted by the Princeton Council at a regular meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014.

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Linda S. McDermott, Clerk  
Princeton