

To: City & Borough of Sitka Planning Commission
Re: Variance request from 318 Eliason Loop
From: Hal Spackman
Date: July 15, 2024

I was notified that the owners of 318 Eliason have requested a variance of reducing the set back/space from 14' to 8' between their lot and Eliason Loop road. I am opposed to granting of this variance because I believe it raises the potential for traffic/pedestrian/bicycle hazards for the following reasons:

1. 318 Eliason sits on a blind corner from two (2) directions. Vehicles, pedestrians or persons on bicycles (of which there are a number of children in the neighborhood) have restricted line of sight from both directions of travel on this corner. If the residents, or guests of residents of 318 Eliason, park their vehicles closer to the road, vehicles will be forced to drive around them, thus, creating a potential for collisions with vehicles, pedestrians, or bicycles coming around the blind corner.

This blind corner is difficult enough to navigate even without parked vehicles near the corner.

2. During winter icy, slick conditions, vehicles traveling downhill especially, often slide towards the opposite lane (particularly if there are washboards in the road). Anything that forces vehicles traveling downhill to move more towards the center creates potential traffic hazards from vehicles coming up the road.
3. Snow plow berms create a significant parking problem on Eliason Loop problem during winter, especially when the berms from the snow plows freeze. Vehicles near the street are often forced to park further out into the road due to the berms, exacerbating the hazard.
4. The C & B of Sitka recently granted a shortened setback for a lot on the downhill side of the corner where a vehicle and trailer are parked, somewhat precariously, on a steep side hill. What happens when winter snows and snow plow berms create a situation in which the person in the trailer has to park further out in the road? It will cause drivers to steer towards the center lane and create more visibility and safety issues as they travel through the blind corner.
5. Finally, does the need to make a "bigger" lot to build a bigger house outweigh the dangers reducing the setback will create? I would not want to be the City & Borough of Sitka trying to defend themselves should an accident happen on this corner when they are fully aware of the potential hazards created should this variance be granted.

I have attached photos of the corner to demonstrate my concern:

Note below photo shows zero visibility of vehicles coming around the corner.



Note zero visibility from other direction for vehicles traveling around the blind corner.



and note where vehicles may be parked if set back will be granted.