

Supporting Documents
Church Street Marketplace District Commission
April 19, 2023

Documents for agenda item IV:

THORN + ROOTS
92 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401
brandon@thornandroots.com

April 13th, 2023

Dear Church Street Marketplace Commission Members,

Subject: Request for Relocation of Rocks and Trees from THORN + ROOTS Outdoor Seating Space

We are writing on behalf of THORN + ROOTS, a local restaurant located at 92 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont. As members of the Burlington community, we value the opportunity to serve our patrons and contribute to the vibrant atmosphere of the Church Street Marketplace.

In light of the ongoing economic recovery and the impact of inflation on small businesses like ours, we would like to address an issue concerning our outdoor seating space. The current layout, featuring several trees and large rocks, significantly limits the number of tables we can accommodate. We are also one of the only storefronts on the street with this quality of objects obstructing our use of the space. At this time, we would be able to fit two tables with a total combined seating capacity of eight. As you are aware, each seat represents potential revenue for our establishment, which is crucial for our survival in these challenging times.

We understand that similar requests have been made in the past and were not approved by the Commission. We furthermore appreciate the natural beauty these elements bring to the area and understand the importance of preserving the character of the marketplace. However, considering the unprecedented challenges that businesses are currently facing, we kindly request that you reconsider our proposal. Relocating the rocks or adjusting their layout in our outdoor seating area will allow us to optimize our seating capacity in line with all other restaurants and retailers on the street, generate more revenue, and continue contributing positively to the Church Street Marketplace. We are committed to working with you to find a solution that benefits both the marketplace and our business.

We hope that, given the current economic circumstances, the Commission will approach this request with an open mind and a sense of cooperation. We would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you and explore potential solutions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

Brandon Acres and Allen Caruso
Owners
THORN + ROOTS



March 31, 2023

Kara Alnasrawi
Director, Business & Workforce Development
131 Church St. – Suite 209
Burlington, VT 05401

Re: Outdoor Patio Rock Removal Consideration

Hi Kara:

Thank you for the meeting at 90-96 Church Street building earlier this week and for helping to resolve the outdoor boundary issues. As you clearly saw from that meeting, every inch of space that helps retailers and restaurants sell their products is extremely important to them. Church Street retailers and food service operations have been unduly challenged for the past few years, and they are working very hard these days to maintain profitability. Support and timely action for assistance by Church Street Marketplace Commission is invaluable to helping them prosper.

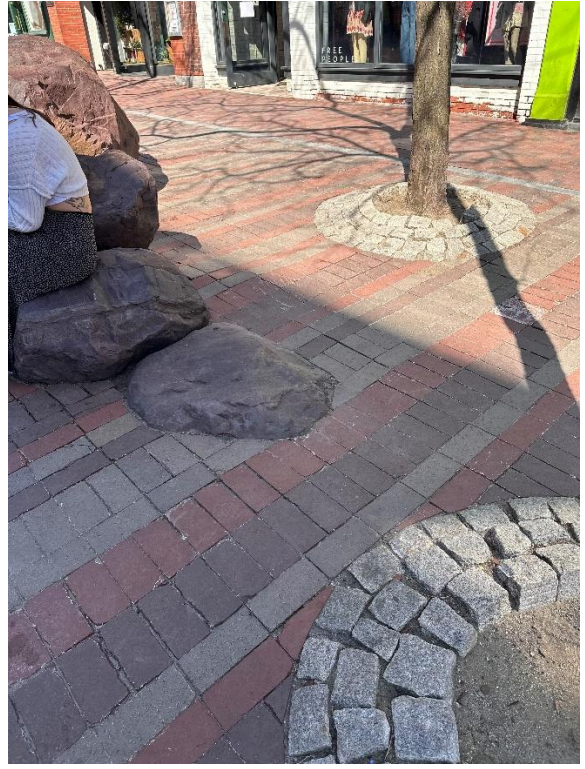
With regards to the Thorn and Roots patio, the amount of space in front of their storefront is substantially compromised by 3 trees and series of rocks that have been placed there. As a result, the restaurant is unable to put out tables and chairs that allows for adequate seating capacity desired by Church Street visitors. A suggestion was raised to remove the rocks, or at least the smaller ones in that space. It was unfortunate to hear your initial feedback was that the commission would likely reject this and may have already done so in the past, instead of exploring the merits of this as a new request, in the context of new and different times.

I understand the trees and the rocks are meant to provide an aesthetic enhancement to Church Street, or at least, that was what they were originally designed to do. But times and vision evolve, and to a large degree many of the rocks have become more of a liability than they are an aesthetic asset. Not only do they impede efficient use of valuable patio space, but as importantly, they invite individuals and groups to loiter beyond a reasonable time, resulting in a negative impact on retailers and contributing to the problem the city is having to manage and police Church Street.

This kind of improvement request to enhance merchant success is not new. Past Church Street Commissions have given Landlords permission to remove entire awnings in front of their buildings because they blocked sign visibility, and the support columns compromised the ability to put out patios. The removal of the former water fountain on the top of the street is another example as it was determined to be more of a liability than an asset.

As a current Landlord and a former restaurant owner on Church Street, I am requesting that you bring this up as an agenda item at the next Church Street Commission. Church Street needs to evolve and change, and the rocks are just one example. The most aesthetically pleasing sight to see in downtown Burlington are crowds of people, full of shopper and diners alike, filling up all the outdoor patios, and enjoying a clean and safe Church Street.

Thank you for your consideration.



Documents for agenda item V:



Language related to agenda item VI:

The language below was taken from the March 17, 2010, CSM Commission Meeting.

This language was formally adopted by the Commission at the April 21, 2010 meeting with the added clarification on 20 days per season.

-Cafes may expand no more than 30% or 8 feet across an adjoining retail store's frontage, whichever is less

-Cafes may not block the front door of an adjoining retail store.

-Policy is for a limited period of time during Church Street's high season, May 15 through October 15 only.

If restaurant has retail stores or empty storefronts on either side, cafe expansion is limited to one side or the other; not to both sides.

-Retailers have priority and are given the right to deny any cafe expansion in front of their store front. Since the retailer is losing exposure they should be able to be able to control the space in front of their store.

-Outdoor cafe expansions may not block the nine foot right of way except during the Discover Jazz Festival; the exception is being made for those restaurants providing entertainment during the festival, as they are giving up table space and revenue, in order to promote music and performances.

REQUIREMENTS:

-All Cafe Expansions must be approved by the adjacent retail business in writing (email or letter) and submitted to the Marketplace Commission

-Retailers has the option to receive from the restaurant a co-marketing program (at restaurant/bar expense) held during the cafe expansion, approved by affected retail business. This can include flyers, fashion shows, tent cards, mailings, etc.

-Expansion requires approval by the Marketplace Commission at least 60 days in advance of the event. For greater efficiency and predictability, restaurants may group all of their expansion dates for a calendar year into one request for approval from the Commission.

-Marketplace will provide meeting minutes to Local Control Subcommittee.