

From: zee1959@aol.com,
To: zee1959@aol.com,
Subject: To Whom It May Concern,
Date: Thu, Aug 18, 2022 10:41 am

To Whom It May Concern,

My family and I have resided in the town of South Windsor for the last 20 + years. I have raised our children through the education system in this town, have put them in the recreational activities, and have truly been blessed to have had the South Windsor community be our home.

Being an immigrant, calling South Windsor our chosen home is something that I feel is the American dream I achieved. The suburban lifestyle, the easy access to local businesses, the educated community is something that I am proud to call home.

The town of South Windsor has provided my wife and I comfort that we made the right choice to go through the sacrifices of leaving our home country.

All of these reasons contributed to the reason why my wife and I purchased Oakland Express on Oakland Road in South Windsor almost 10 years ago. Being a business owner of a few different properties, Oakland Express holds a special place in my heart because at the time of purchasing it, I knew I would be servicing the people of my town. Being a small business owner, your business is your pride. Being able to go run errands around town and having residents recognize me and my family is a special feeling, knowing that they have put a name to our faces. We have become a daily routine stop for many of our town residents for simple items such as their morning coffee or afternoon lotto stop.

Many of my customers are even as loyal to my family that they come from neighboring towns from where I owned previous businesses. I take pride in our genuine relationship with our customers.

Furthermore, in the last few years, our small convenience store has experienced some unforeseen obstacles. Covid-19 had a significant impact on our business as many customers found it more easily accessible to use the larger franchisees for their everyday needs, rather than stopping into our small business. Much of this reason may be because larger businesses were able to adapt new tactics such as pick up groceries as curbside delivery which may seem more convenient for many of our customers affected by COVID-19. Alongside with the loss of traffic due to COVID-19, inflation has also significantly impacted our small business and we have also been dealing with obstacles with being approved for gasoline despite our best efforts. Having a small convenience store means you are more than just one role, you are your own clerk, your own stocker, your own inventory checker and no one will take care of your business like yourself. It was during this time that I had the highest expectations of my town to be my side, however to my surprise, I am witnessing the opposite.

During Covid-19, due to the loss of traffic as well as the cost of supplies going up due to inflation, we had to get creative and think of other strategies to generate revenue. U-Haul was something that had come into mind as we have had several customers in the past ask us to become a U-Haul location. We have abided by all rules that the town has placed including not having more than 2 trailers on property at a time and making sure that at all times, the U-Hauls are parked in the furthest corner of the property. We are hardly generating a significant income from the location itself, and U-Haul is simply a means to bring more traffic into our location to get business back up and going. The town is making it very difficult to make any progress with this by demanding that we be allowed for the U-Hauls of our property, as we are following all regulations.

I request that the town of South Windsor to allow us to have UHaul rentals which will not only help the business to survive but the town residents will also be benefited.

Zaheer Sharaf