

late Sept. 2019

I am writing you regarding Cousin Emma's Bed & Breakfast. I met the proprietor, Suzanne Lewis Brown, last Christmas when I booked a "teas, tales, and tours." I took my daughter as well as some other friends, including Eleanor from the Mount Airy Visitors Center, after seeing a flier for Cousin Emma's in the Visitors Center. As it turns out, Mrs. Suzanne went to school with my Dad, Jimmy. She was born and raised in Mount Airy and is a graduate of Mount Airy High School. Since the first of this year, she and I have become good friends, as my 12-year-old son, James, started mowing her yard this spring.

I am asking you, as a concerned citizen, to please reconsider her request for permission to pave a half circle driveway in front of her house located in the local historic district at 501 S. Main Street. Although she is still able to maintain her beautifully restored historic property, she really needs to be able to park her car safely in front of her house due to her limited mobility issues. She has had five surgeries in the past three years and mobility, balance, and easy access to and from her home are of the utmost importance, as she continues to operate her bed and breakfast. I also am aware that it has been suggested that Suzanne build a handicap ramp, which for many people with mobility issues would be a solution, but as she has documented in previous correspondence, this is not suitable for her condition, and would actually be more dangerous for her.

Her car actually got stuck in the front yard early this spring for 11 days. Several people, including my husband, tried unsuccessfully to free her car from the mud. Now, with winter coming on, I fear this could happen again, and even worse, could suffer a serious fall. In addition, there was damage in the front yard which will need to be repaired when the driveway work is done. She already has estimates and is ready to begin the work, which she would like to complete in a timely manner, so as not to be closed for any more of the upcoming fall tourist season than absolutely necessary. She can provide any needed documents upon request.

Suzanne has saved one of our historic Mount Airy homes, which had fallen into considerate disrepair, and she would like to beautify it further with the addition of the driveway, which will not change or detract from the loveliness of the historic home. In the past five years she has started a new business attracting the tourists we desire and also local persons seeking special activities not offered elsewhere, and she is paying taxes on all of this, including occupancy tax, as well as property tax on other acreage she has owned for many years. As she did with the house repairs, she has already done, she expects to pay for anything involving the half circle paved driveway and second curb exit she so badly needs. She has contributed significantly to our local economy, and we should support her business by permitting the driveway her disability requires. Since opening Cousin Emma's B&B, in addition to hosting weddings, high teas, talking drum circles, pot-luck suppers, and monthly rook games, Mrs. Suzanne has entertained guests from

eighteen states, England, Japan, China, India, Australia, Canada, and Jamaica! She also provides special accommodations for wounded warriors.

I realize that she has brought this matter to the historic preservation before, and I am appealing to you to give it further consideration. At the time of the original hearing for this matter, Mrs. Suzanne was in the middle of an acute life-threatening illness, and I believe she deserves the opportunity for the matter to be reviewed again and given the attention it deserves.

Her business provides a truly unique activity for locals and visitors alike, and I would highly encourage you to visit her, especially since you are currently serving on the historic preservation board, or on the council of our beautiful town. You will find her a wealth of information on local history and lore. I love our community and I know each of you do as well, or you would not be serving in this capacity. I would ask that you consider the circumstances involved, realizing that any of us, or our loved ones could be in the same condition. Thank you for your consideration and please consider this matter at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Jennie L Lowry
415 Broad Street
Mount Airy, NC
336-793-6653

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