

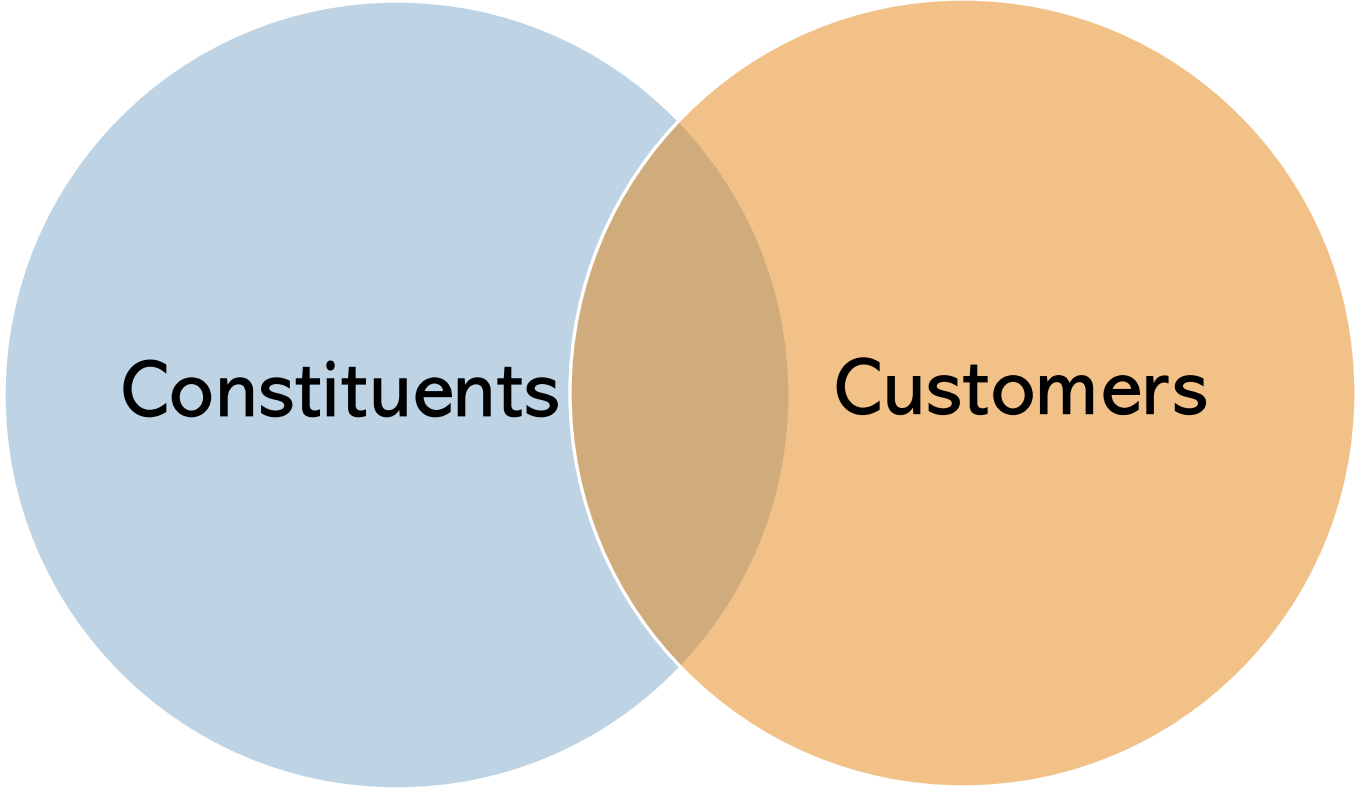
**YOU CAN'T
ALWAYS HAVE
IT YOUR WAY**

DELIVERING CONSISTENT CONSTITUENT SERVICES

What are the differences between a customer and a constituent?

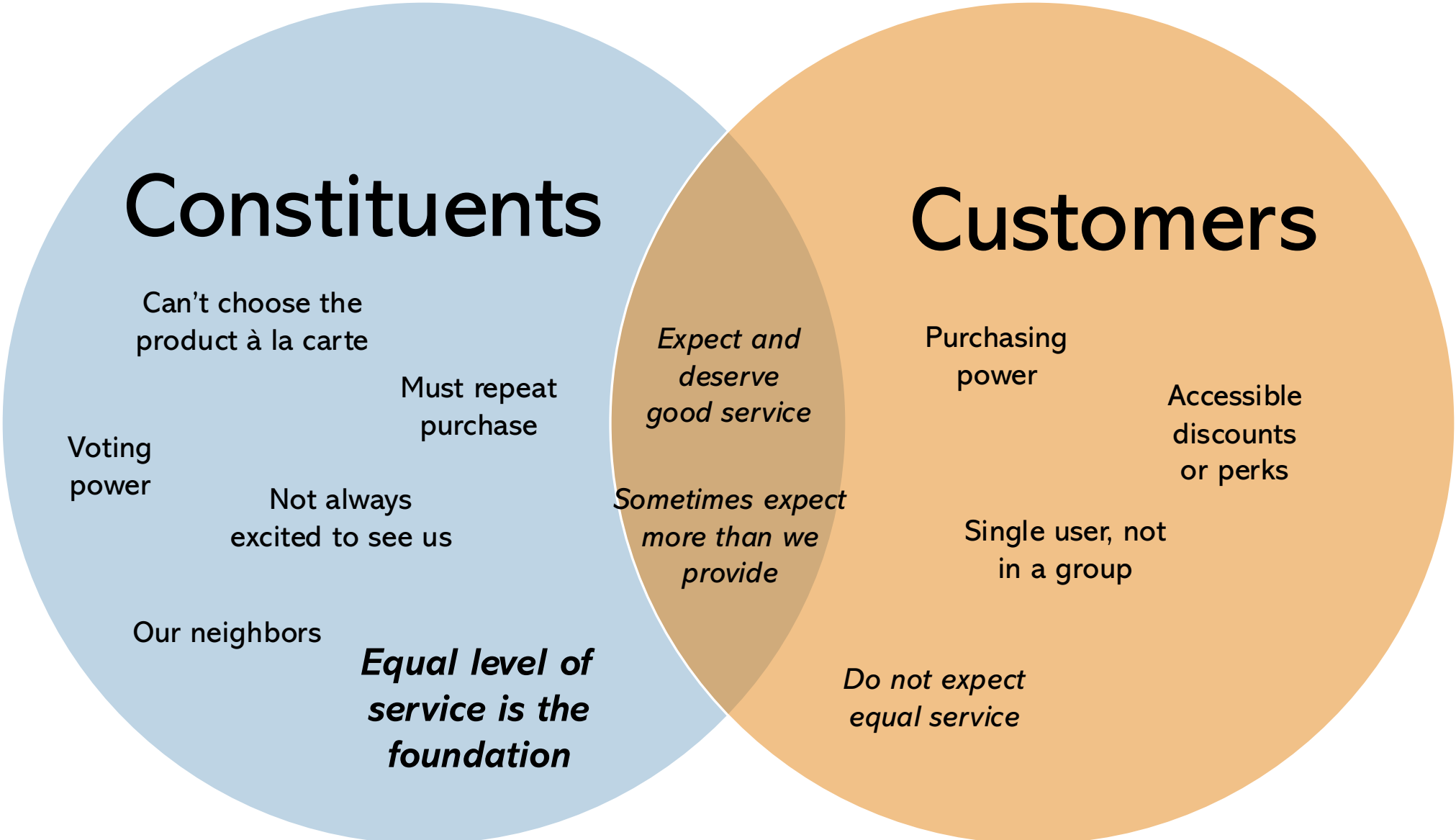
How can we set, meet, and exceed constituent expectations?

How can we empower our team members to communicate confidently, clearly, and kindly?



Constituents

Customers



Constituents

Can't choose the product à la carte

Must repeat purchase

Voting power

Not always excited to see us

Our neighbors

Equal level of service is the foundation

Customers

Purchasing power

Accessible discounts or perks

Single user, not in a group

Do not expect equal service

Expect and deserve good service

Sometimes expect more than we provide



Mailbox policy

Defining your scope sets expectations

Department services

Boards/Commissions

Community conversations



Sticking to your scope establishes trust



Write down your policy



Do what you said you would



Be consistent with everyone, distribute resources evenly



Realize consequences

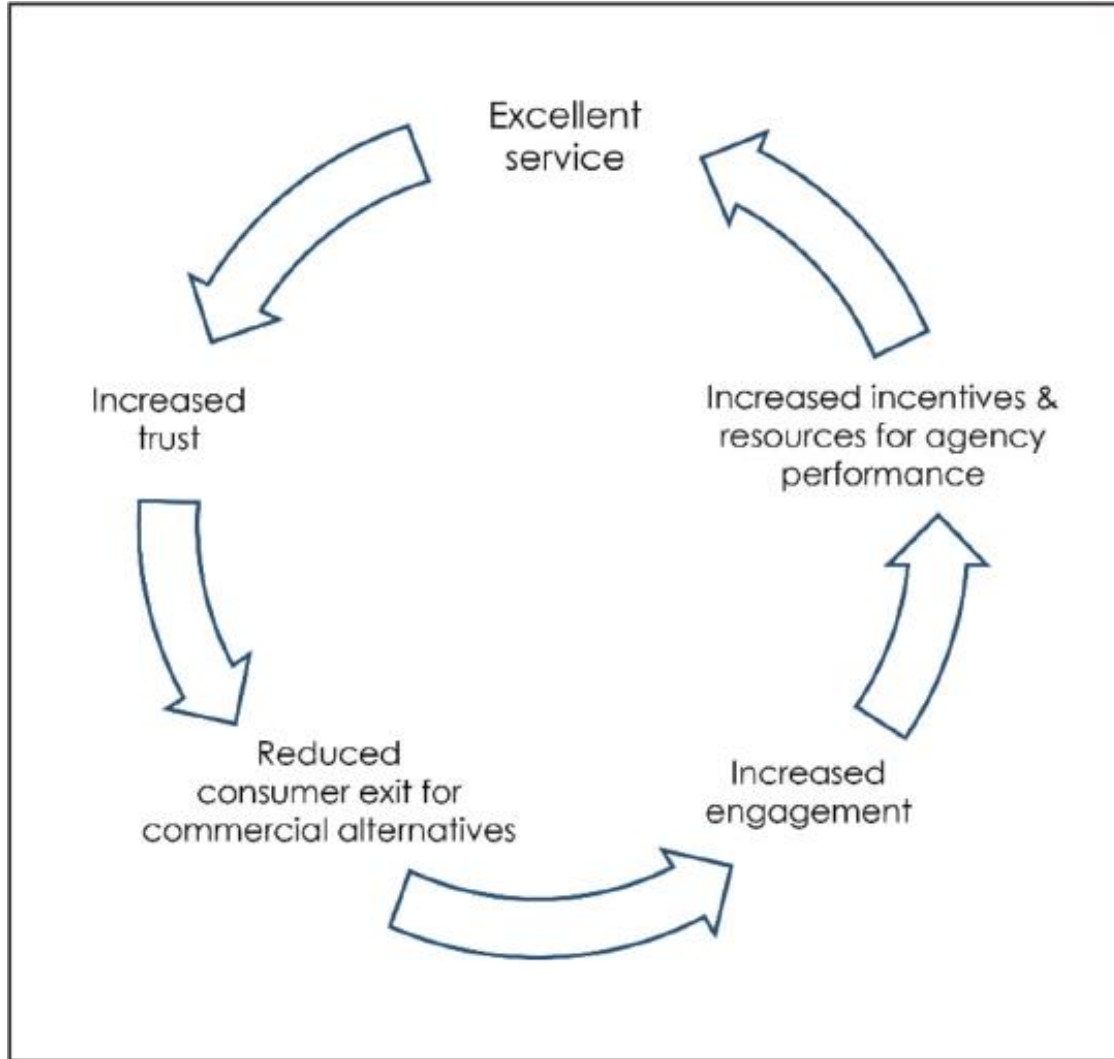


Sometimes say "No"



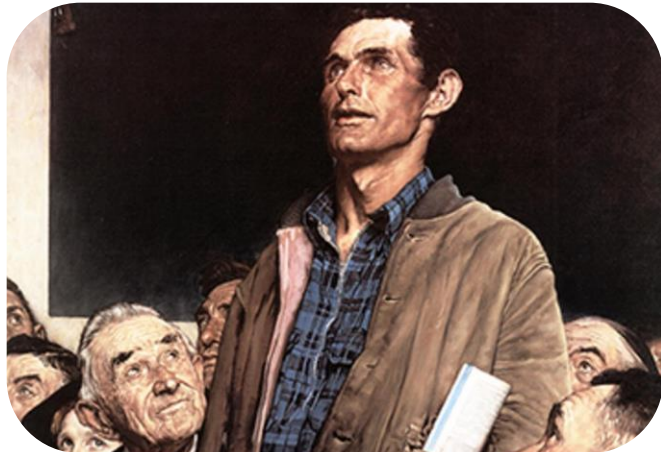
Be in alignment, Stay in alignment





Complaint-response builds trust

What does “fair” mean?



Being and feeling heard



Understanding the “why”
behind decisions



Getting what you want

Exceptions happen.

Why would we make a different call?

When can we *truly* not budge?

- Truly extraordinary circumstances
- Policy need: Senior discounts, bill abatements. *If exceptions become the policy, you need to make a policy.*

Policies protect:

- Life and safety
- Following the law
- Professional licenses and liability

Sticking to your scope *preserves* trust



Write down your policy



Do what you said you would



Be consistent with everyone, distribute resources evenly



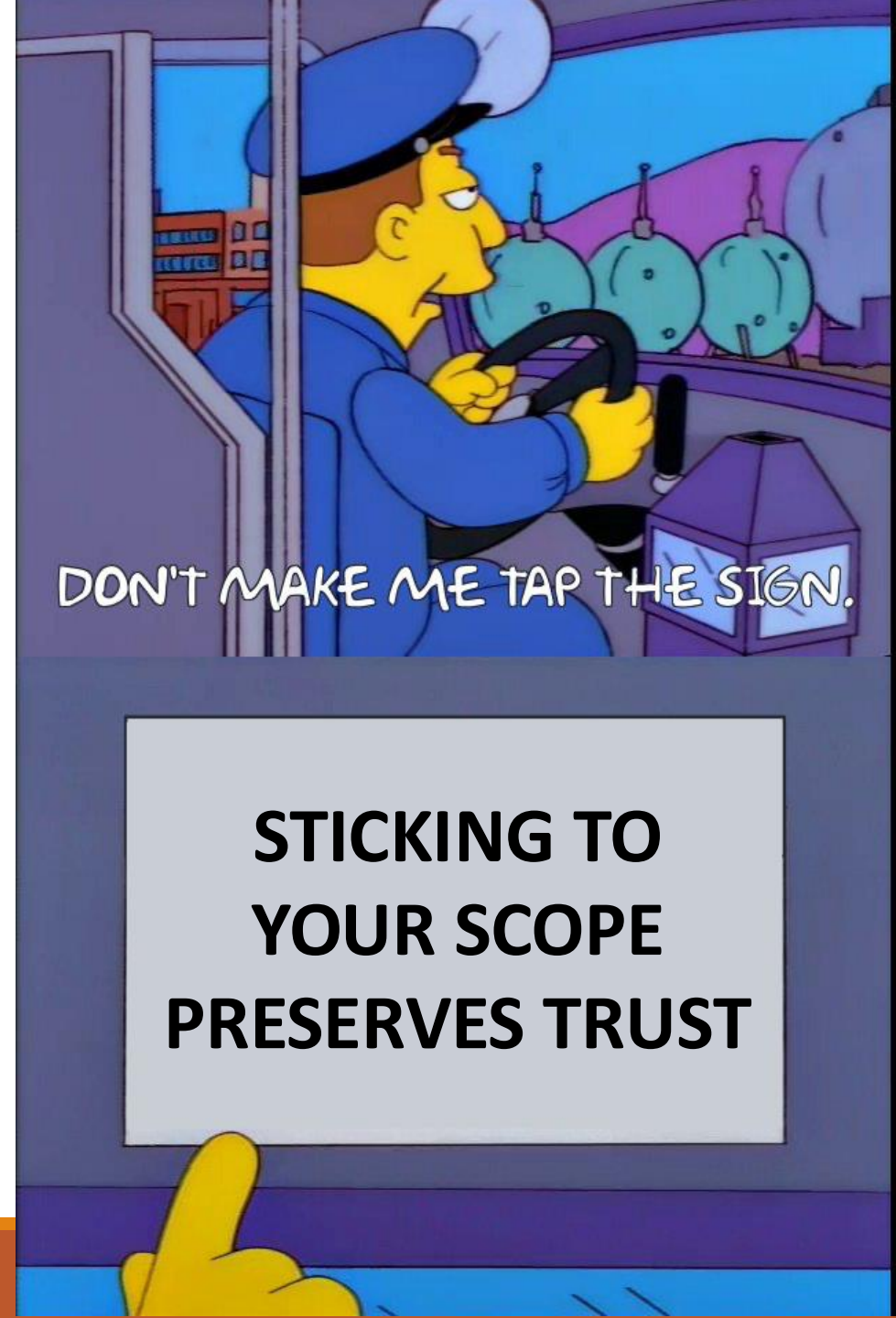
Realize consequences



Sometimes say "No"



Be in alignment, Stay in alignment



DON'T MAKE ME TAP THE SIGN.

**STICKING TO
YOUR SCOPE
PRESERVES TRUST**



Build the Model:

Before the Calls Come In

- Have Established Procedures
- Embed Training in Onboarding
- Create a Constituent Services Playbook
 - De-Silo Department Knowledge
 - Write Down the Decision Rule
- Train EVERY Department
 - De-escalation Training
- One Source of Truth for Policy Updates
 - Not "ask around"
- Consistency over Convenience

Support the Team:

Publicly, Not Just Privately

The Trap: If the only time constituents see management step in is to overturn a staff level decision, that's a lesson the everyone learns.

How to Make it Stick:

- When frontline got it right, say so to the constituent directly: *"I've reviewed this with [employee or department] and they applied our policy correctly."*
- Loop back with employees on how every escalation resolved. Even a simple *"I confirmed your answer"* builds the confidence.
- Make backing your team visible: cc them on the resolution email, name them positively to the constituent.



Keep in Mind...

- Support Staff
- Keep Communication Open
- Recognize Great Service





Salem, Massachusetts - City Government

May 23 at 4:04 PM · 🌐

...

Dear neighbors,

There have been a number of inquiries about the status of the Cannery restaurant on Bridge Street, so I wanted to clear up what's happened to this point and what can happen next, so they can get fully open.

In February, as the Cannery was getting their approvals to open for the coming season, the City's Plumbing Inspector informed them that their existing restroom was not compliant with the state plumbing code. They were informed that they would either need to make changes to the space to comply with that code or ask the state Plumbing Board for a variance. Only the state Plumbing Board can grant an appeal or a variance of the state plumbing code.

To be clear, the issue the inspector identified is with a state code, not a City code. It's a provision of the state plumbing code that pertains to the configuration of gender-neutral restrooms and it is not a provision with which I agree. Salem is proud to be a welcoming and inclusive place, and I hope the state will take action to update their plumbing code to make it less cumbersome for businesses to be able to allow for these types of facilities across Massachusetts.

In March, the Cannery owner informed the City that he would seek a variance from the state Plumbing Board. I provided a letter to the Board strongly endorsing the restaurant's request and reiterating the City's position on gender neutral restrooms. Ultimately, the Cannery opted not to apply for the variance, however, and instead to make the changes to the restroom to make it compliant.

Between March and mid-May the Cannery team did not submit any building permit application for the restrooms or any other applications to the City.

Then, on May 11th, the Cannery applied for a food permit to open for the weekend of May 15th. The restroom construction had not begun at that point – the building permit for it had not even been applied for – and so the Health Department was not able to approve the food permit. The Cannery indicated that they had already booked performers for that weekend and the weather was looking great, so, trying to be helpful, multiple City departments dropped their other work over those next two days to try to find a solution. As a result, the Cannery was issued a temporary food permit, normally given for special one-time events, for that one weekend, and at a reduced capacity, to comply with the more limited/compliant restroom facilities that existed.

The Cannery did not apply for another temporary food permit for the Memorial Day weekend.

So, where do we go from here?

This past week, the Cannery finally submitted their building permit for the restroom project, which will bring the space into compliance with the state plumbing code. The relevant departments will escalate the processing of that permit, to get it approved as quickly as possible.

Once that's done, we'll support them in their construction work however we can. Based on the minor scope of the work, we expect it to be the kind of project that can be completed in 1-2 weeks.

Furthermore, once construction gets underway on the restroom, the Cannery would be eligible to apply to the Health Department for another temporary food permit, with the same reduced capacity as last weekend. This would allow the restaurant to potentially be open during the construction.

Last, my offer to the Cannery team stands: if they want to revisit the variance request, I'm 100% ready to testify in support of their request once again, in person if necessary. Given the timeliness issues, however, I would entirely understand if they won't want to go that route at this point.

The requirement to meet codes applies uniformly across businesses. The standards that the Cannery needs to meet - whether local or state codes - are the same standards that other businesses need to meet, as well. I want City departments to be more solution-focused in helping businesses, too, though; if that's a place where we can continue to strengthen our practices, we must do so. That cannot, however, extend so far as allowing some to ignore certain regulations, while others are required to comply with them. That is not a solution.

I know that dealing with the City can be frustrating at times, but the truth is that the employees in our departments act the way they do in order to protect the public, to treat everyone consistently, and to comply with the legal requirements of their jobs.

I also know that in a time when everything moves at the speed of social media, it's easy for rumors and misinformation to escalate. I hope that any business owner (or any prospective business owner) who feels that they're encountering challenges with a City department will reach out - and reach out early - to me and my office, because we all want Salem to continue being a thriving, vibrant, safe, and successful community for everyone.

Dominick Pangallo

Mayor [See less](#)