



TOWN OF ARLINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board

From: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development

Date: October 27, 2020

RE: Warrant Article 20 for 2020 Special Town Meeting

The following memo intends to provide additional information in response to comments received at the October 22, 2020 public hearing relative to Warrant Article 20. This information is provided as an addendum to the October 20, 2020 memo from my Department which provided background information relative to this Article.

This amendment provides an additional option for the Zoning Board of Appeals or Redevelopment Board to reduce parking requirements related to businesses only in the B3 or B5 zones by amending Section 6.1.5. The current options in this section of the Zoning Bylaw include parking reduction options in a broader number of zoning districts -- R5, R6, R7, Business, and Industrial Zones to be precise. The options relate to providing shared parking options or off-site parking options and requiring applicants to comply with an approved Transportation Demand Management plan.

The proposed wording of the amendment would provide these Boards with an option they do not currently have. They would first determine if the creation of new parking is impracticable and there is adequate nearby on-street parking or municipal parking, and then be able to reduce the parking required to less than 25 percent or eliminate the amount of on-site parking required altogether.

The wording and intent of the amendment is for businesses, not residential developments. Existing residential developments in B3 and B5 may not have additional needs for overnight parking. While we cannot adequately determine if there will or will not be future requests for overnight parking, we can note that these types of requests are by their nature, discretionary requests and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Select Board. It is challenging to determine how many new requests for overnight parking there could be in the future specifically as a result of this amendment and particularly because this amendment does not impact residential development which triggers such a request. In reviewing Select Board meetings, there has been only one request for overnight parking in Arlington over the past year.

Finally, future businesses that may receive relief via this amendment would be served by existing on-street and municipal parking, including handicap placard (HP) parking spaces that are on-street or in municipal lots; this does not rule out the creation of more HP spaces should that need arise. Better parking management can address competition and turnover issues in the B3/B5 zoning districts, and Arlington Center already has meters to ensure people are using on-street and municipal parking efficiently. There are currently many ways to access B3/B5 districts that should be encouraged and made easier so that car parking is available for those who cannot reach these districts through any other mode of transport.