



March 17, 2021

Town of Arlington  
Select Board  
Arlington Town Hall  
730 Massachusetts Ave.  
Arlington, MA 02474

Dear Select Board,

On behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to support the proposed Arlington Outdoor Performance Regulations as drafted and submitted by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture (ACAC). I believe the proposed regulations are comprehensive and thoughtful in their compliance with the State's current reopening guidelines.

In my position at the Chamber, as well as a Commissioner of the ACAC and a member of the Economic Recovery Task Force, I am reminded daily of the loss of revenue that has been experienced by artists and performers. The Chamber supports business and their business is art and performance. They need to be allowed to safely get back to business. The return of outdoor performance will benefit all segments of the Arlington community and provide a welcome sense of a return to normalcy.

DPCD and ACAC have put tremendous effort into translating the State's regulations to a framework that is easy to understand and should be easy to enforce. I urge you approve their proposal and allow these folks to get back to work.

Sincerely,

Beth Locke  
Executive Director  
Arlington Chamber of Commerce

March 18, 2021



Select Board  
Arlington Town Hall  
730 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington MA 02476

Dear Select Board Members,

I am writing on behalf of Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA) to help illuminate the COVID-related challenges of program planning in light of the framework proposed by the Economic Development Recovery Taskforce, Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture (ACAC), and Department of Planning & Community Development (DPCD).

Porchfest is a good example of the kind of community celebration that people are hungry for right now. This town-wide event is presented annually in June by ACA. Planning and outreach typically begin 4-6 months in advance. The community's enthusiasm for Porchfest runs deep and wide. Typically, we have an estimated audience totaling 6,000-8,000 participants – including 200 musical acts on 120 porches located across town.

The popularity of Porchfest has much to do with the fact that ACA serves more as a facilitator than presenter. ACA defines the shape of the event; connects volunteer porch hosts to interested bands; provides a map/timeline of performances; and promotes the event. The rest is up to the hosts, bands, and audiences. ACA provides the opportunity, but citizens manage the details and logistics of the performances themselves.

In a recent Porchfest survey by ACA of previous porch hosts, musicians, and audiences – responses ranged from “wait until 2022 when things are back to normal” to “we should conduct the event as usual and trust participants to follow the rules” – and everything in between. But the overriding preference is for a live in-person event in a COVID-safe setting (as opposed to something virtual).

A full-scale Porchfest event in 2021 seems impractical, and the prospect of a scaled-down event is problematic. COVID-related protocols and restrictions, thrust ACA into the role of hands-on presenter -- choosing some limited number of locations and bands, managing performances, and coralling audiences. It's at odds with the community spirit of the event and threatens to frustrate everyone involved. Also, ACA doesn't currently have the resources or bandwidth for the hands-on management such an event would require.

To keep the spirit of the event alive and on everyone's radar screen, ACA has considered the possibility of presenting “A Taste of Porchfest” in spring or fall in partnership with local restaurants which would play the management role traditionally held by porch hosts. ACA would play its normal role of facilitator – laying some ground rules, connecting restaurant hosts to area musicians, and promoting the event to audiences.

The overall scope of “A Taste of Porchfest” would be organically limited by the relatively small number of local restaurants that would be able to accommodate performances. Outdoor and indoor performances would be scaled to suit the venues and meet state/town guidelines. Audiences would be limited by the mandated capacity of the individual restaurants who already have social distancing protocols and controls in place. Perhaps smaller restaurants in close proximity would collaborate to host a performance in a nearby parklet or like-space. An added

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bonus is that the partnership would drive business to local restaurants where audiences could enjoy food, drink, and music.

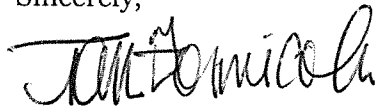
Apart from Porchfest, ACA is also weighing its prospects in 2021 of presenting:

- a free outdoor public performance by Boston's Queen of the Blues Toni Lynn Washington and her band as a sort of post-COVID celebration; and
- our annual open studios event – indoors at ACA, Town Hall, and the First Parish UU Church in November

Like many arts & culture organizations in the community, ACA needs concrete information in order to answer important questions about how we can responsibly balance community needs and expectations in the face of COVID-related transitions that will continue to roll-out through 2021 and beyond.

A clear and evolving understanding of what's possible and on what timeline is essential to planning as organizations like ours try to regain footing and put the crisis behind us. Thank you in advance for your support and feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Formicola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" being more prominent and the last name "Formicola" following in a similar style.

Tom Formicola  
Executive Director  
he/him/his

Robert E. Bowes  
26 Lake View  
Arlington, MA 02476

March 17, 2021

Select Board  
Town of Arlington  
Town Hall  
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Select Board,


I am writing in support of the outdoor performance recommendations of The Arlington Business Recovery Task Force.

As a member of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce Advisory Committee, Board Member of the Arlington Tourism and Economic Development Committee and member of the Arlington Business Recovery Task Force, it is clear to me that the initiatives outlined in this recommendation are timely, thorough, well-conceived and well presented.

The Arlington business community, performing arts groups and all our residents look forward with great expectations to a 2021 which is significantly better and different than 2020. Our citizens have a clearer understanding of what it takes to conduct ourselves in a safe manner and are more than willing to abide by fair and reasonable guidelines.

Many groups, committees and organizations are working tirelessly to enhance the quality of life in Arlington during the pandemic and restoring some of the many benefits provided by the performing arts community is one giant step in the right direction.

Sincerely,



Bob Bowes

March 15, 2021

Dear Select Board:

I am writing to you in great support of the proposed *Economic Development Recovery Task Force Recommendations for Outdoor Performances in Arlington*. I am a current member of the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force, a Member of the Arlington Center's Whittemore Park Revitalization Planning team, and the Co-Founder of Support Arlington Center—a citizens' group dedicated to keeping Arlington Center thriving with diverse, successful small businesses.

COVID has been extremely difficult for small businesses in Arlington—they are working tirelessly and thinking creatively to stay alive. Residents and visitors of Arlington have been supporting the businesses by buying take-out meals, participating in outdoor dining, and purchasing goods at local shops. The arts and performances however have greatly suffered due to the pandemic—this is mostly due to the limitations and restrictions of opening to the public. While the community has supported the limited offerings of Zoom/virtual performance venues, it is not the same as physically seeing a live performance in a safe environment among neighbors and friends. The arts has been stifled due to COVID, and the community in Arlington is here to bring it back and participate in all its offerings.

The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC) have worked hard to create a clear plan laying out how performances can happen in Arlington in a safe environment. Their document clearly details how Arlington can revive its venues with appropriate capacity numbers. They have outlined the public health guidelines for performers and guests, and have suggestions for signage and communications.

Arlington needs to bring back individual artists, arts organizations, venues and performances to the public community.

Thank you for considering the proposal provided by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC), and thank for supporting our cherished town of Arlington.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alyssa K. Clossey".

Alyssa K. Clossey

Co-Founder, Support Arlington Center

Member, Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force

Member, Arlington Center's Whittemore Park Revitalization Planning team

Dear Select Board,

As the owner of Morningside Studio and the director of the Arlington Jazz Festival, I very much support the idea of live music outdoors in Arlington. I would like to get my students performing as well as organizing an outdoor jazz concert with professional musicians. Last summer I was able to do a couple of concerts in Lexington that the town agreed to. Safety measures were in place and the audience was very respectful of the rules. Numerous other towns also went through with their gazebo/town green concerts with restrictions in place.

Dan Fox

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