

#8

From: Berkowitz, William R <William_Berkowitz@uml.edu>

To: SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>; jhurd@town.arlington.ma.us <jhurd@town.arlington.ma.us>; DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us <DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us>; dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us <dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>; jcurro@town.arlington.ma.us <jcurro@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: Tree preservation in Whittemore Park

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 12:18 pm

Dear Colleagues,

... Please add my voice to the many who are opposing the removal of large healthy shade trees in Whittemore Park.

More generally, I am concerned about the extent of actual and planned tree cutting in and around the Center -- at Whittemore Park, Broadway Plaza, the old cemetery, and the new high school, in addition to those trees lost or compromised through gas leaks.

Tree preservation is important. And at this point, Arlington might benefit from the creation of an overall Master Tree Plan, both to enhance preservation townwide and balance it with development needs.

Thanks very much for your consideration.

~ Bill

Bill Berkowitz

Bill_Berkowitz@uml.edu

From: Jacob or Nancy Bloom <jandnbloom@gmail.com>

To: Jhurd <Jhurd@town.arlington.ma.us>; Dmahon <Dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>; SDecourcey <SDecourcey@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: Regarding Whittemore park trees

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 3:32 pm

Dear all,

I am writing as an Arlington resident who cannot come to the Select Board meeting tonight. I am very concerned about the possibility of tearing down three healthy large trees in Whittemore Park. As I understand the proposal, the Planning Department wishes to appeal the denial to cut down these shade trees. As I understand it, the tree warden received letters recommending that the trees NOT be torn down. They are healthy and absorb a GREAT DEAL of pollution - which is a major concern with our climate crisis. Also, they provide shade in the park which is so important in the summer. If we want to use that park, we want to be comfortable.

It would make more sense to redesign the path so as to be ADA compliant, without tearing down the trees - and I have not yet heard that that was not possible. Yes, it might be less efficient and perhaps more expensive to design, but many of us wouldn't see the new young trees grow to maturity before we pass away. Our children and grandchildren deserve for the town to strongly consider the pollution mitigation these mature trees provide for us.

Thank you for your attention,

Nancy Bloom
169 Sylvia Street

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jandnbloom@gmail.com
<http://jacobbloom.net/>

From: Tamara <tlcj8@rcn.com>

To: JCurro <JCurro@town.arlington.ma.us>; SDeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>; DDunn <DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us>; JHurd <JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us>; DMahon <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: WHITTEMORE PARK TREES

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 11:07 am

Dear Select Board Members,

We are writing to strongly protest the planned removal of the mature shade trees from Whittemore Park.

Whittemore Park is one of the few places left in downtown Arlington where it is still possible to escape the heat and enjoy the green space and shade during the increasingly long months of very hot weather we now experience in our area.

Massachusetts Ave has already lost so many trees to gas leaks and construction that this is very nearly all we have left. Business districts need to feel welcoming, and we need to do all we can to help our struggling business owners by encouraging people to actually walk around and shop in the stores.

By making downtown Arlington feel more like a destination where people might want to spend time browsing, shopping and eating, places like Whittemore Park go a long way toward making that happen. This benefits all the residents of Arlington.

For these reasons we sincerely believe that ADA compliant sidewalks can safely be built without causing the destruction of the trees in Whittemore Park.

Thank you so much for your time.

Anthony Jones
Tamara Chenoweth-Jones

From: Laura Kiesel <lakiesel@gmail.com>
To: Marie Krepelka <mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 02/24/2020 11:45 AM
Subject: whittemore trees and disability

Agenda Item #8

Hello Marie,

This is for consideration for tonight's Select Board. Thank you! I tried to send earlier this morning but got a failure notice. I hope it makes the cut-off.

Dear Select Board members,

I am writing you today because I've been informed there will be discussion at tonight's Select Board meeting regarding renovation of Whittemore Park and the removal of one or several healthy shade trees, partially due to changes to achieve ADA compliance. As I understand it, there are alternative suggestions to achieve ADA compliance while keeping those trees intact. As a disabled individual who supports disability accommodations, I am in full support of any alternative solution that will allow ADA compliance while still enabling tree conservation.

To clarify, my understanding of these issues: I work as both a volunteer and paid consultant for the Boston Center for Independent Living, the Boston metro area's foremost disability advocacy group. As a journalist and health blogger, I write for national publications on living with disability. However, my graduate degree is in the environmental sciences. I have worked for environmental nonprofits, as well as for the Town of Wellesley, as their Environmental Education Coordinator. In recent years, I've turned much of my focus on the intersection of environmental conservation/sustainability and health. I have a rare connective tissue disease--Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. One of my many symptoms includes the inability to properly regulate my body temperature, and in the warmer weather, I am prone to heat intolerance. Summer is my least favorite season. I grew up in an inner city neighborhood in NYC where there was a scarcity of trees and so spent most of my summers feeling very ill.

As an apartment dweller, I do not have the privilege of easy access to a yard to enjoy tree cover and fresher air. I need to experience that by leaving my apt to traverse the surrounding neighborhood. I am fortunate to live in close proximity to Spy Pond. I am fortunate too, to live in a town that overall values and maintains its trees. When I go for walks during more warmer seasons, I can find more shade cover while walking and the trees help create beneficially cooler micro-climates. This is even more crucial for those of us of lower income who do not have access to or can't afford air conditioning (or running it often).

This is something to consider as well as the Town mills over densifying the area, but also diversifying its population. It's easier for homeowners with yards and central A/C to speak about urbanizing an area when they can insulate themselves from the adverse health impacts that often occur with density and urbanization. Those of us who need to live in apts, without yards or AC, without vacations to national parks and greener spaces, do not have such luxury. We need to rely on our immediate surrounding environment for those benefits. And if they don't exist there, we suffer. I know this intimately and painfully, as someone who has had to be rushed to the hospital in summer, and watched family members get ill and pets die in the heat because of lack of relief.

As [one peer review paper](#) on the subject of temperature-related illness noted: "Higher rates of heat-related morbidity and mortality occur in city dwellers who reside on the top floors of apartment buildings or who do not have access to air conditioning. The 'urban heat island effect' refers to patterns of city development, such as replacing trees with concrete surfaces, that cause urban areas to retain heat throughout the evening in comparison to suburban and rural area." Another article you may want to consider is this from Yale Climate Connections:

<https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/09/how-extreme-weather-threatens-people-with-disabilities/>

As it notes: "Climate change disproportionately **threatens the health** of vulnerable groups. According to the **2016 Climate and Health Assessment**, vulnerable groups include: 'those with low income, some communities of color, immigrant groups....older adults....persons with disabilities, and persons with preexisting or chronic medical conditions.'"

I hope you will take these factors into consideration when making your final decision. We can improve our Town so it is both ADA-compliant and conserves the trees disabled and other vulnerable groups need for their health and to keep our climate in check. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Kiesel

P.S. Here is the full link to the peer review paper:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1566070216300017>

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From: Claire Odom <artfulgram@gmail.com>

To: mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us

Date: 02/23/2020 06:28 PM

Subject: Save the Whittemore Trees

Agenda Item # 8

Dear Select Board:

I understand that three large trees could be destroyed with the redesign of Whittemore Park and that five trees have already been cut down. I urge you, the Select Board, to vote no on cutting down more trees at the Whittemore Park.

Trees, living organisms, provide much for our community. Trees prevent soil erosion, produce oxygen we breathe and clear carbon dioxide. They give shade, cool the air and greatly enhance the beauty of the park. One mature tree can absorb as much carbon dioxide in a year as a car produces while driving 26,000 miles. Over the course of its life, a single tree could absorb a ton of carbon dioxide.

Small replacement trees would not give much shade for 40-50 years or the many environmental benefits of the larger existing trees.

I urge you to consider an alternative design for the ADA-compliant walk that would not include cutting down more trees.

I thank you for all you do.

Best regards,

Claire Odom

River Street, Arlington MA

From: Robert Murray <rpmurray54@gmail.com>
To: freidy@town.arlington.ma.us, amaher@town.arlington.ma.us, lcosta@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 02/24/2020 01:11 PM
Subject: Whittemore Park

Agenda Item #8

I am writing to the Board of Selectmen to express my strong objections to the removal of the three healthy trees from Whittemore Park.

It's outrageous that these beautiful trees might be removed to accommodate a walkway, which could be re-routed. The people behind this are trying to ruin this Town. This must stop.

Robert P. Murray, Esquire
45 Jason St, Arlington, MA 02476

From: june rutkowski <junemrutkowski@gmail.com>

To: Select Board Member Joseph Curro <JCurro@town.arlington.ma.us>; SDeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>; DDunn <DDunn@town.arlington.ma.us>; DMahon <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>; JHurd <JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us>

Cc: mkrepelka <mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: Removal of trees in Whittemore Park

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 4:46 pm

Dear Members of the Select Board,

We are writing to object to the Planning Department's appeal to the denial made in January to their plan to removed 3 large, healthy shade trees from Whittemore Park.

We understand that trees sometimes must be removed for legitimate reasons, but that is not the case with these 3 trees in Whittemore Park.

The Planning Department's desire to improve circulation in the park is a good thing, but it's not necessary to remove those trees in order to achieve that goal.

We are desperately in need of large shade trees in our town, as healthy ones are taken down all too often on private property. We should not remove healthy trees for reasons related to design, ease or convenience. A good landscape architect will incorporate existing, healthy trees into their design.

Having a shady spot to sit in sunny Arlington Center is essential for creating a positive atmosphere where people can gather, rest and enjoy their town. Would you want to visit the beer garden; or sit with an ice cream, a book, or a grandchild; or attend an event in Whittemore Park in the blistering sun?

The shade those trees cast is also important for health; especially for the elderly.

We implore you to listen to those of us who are calling for those trees to remain where they are. People need trees. Arlington needs trees.

Respectfully,
June Rutkowski, Geoff and Eleanor Freed
128 Alpine Terrace

From: Joan U. Smeltzer <j.u.smeltzer@gmail.com>

To: Dmahon <Dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: I oppose removal of 3 more Whittemore shade trees - Select Board tonight

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 5:52 pm

From: **Joan U. Smeltzer** <j.u.smeltzer@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 6:59 AM

Dear Diane,

I have another commitment tonight - so I can't be present at tonight's meeting.

However, I strongly support **preserving** the Whittemore Park trees. It's ludicrous to remove these healthy trees for a path that can easily be built to go around the trees. In a park, it's an aesthetic advantage to have a meandering lane under a shady canopy. There are **Multiple** other reasons not to destroy mature healthy trees - as your Board knows well...or ought to!

Sincerely,

Joan U. Smeltzer

15 Freeman St.

Arlington, MA 0247

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Thought for the day ~ per Mark Twain

It's easier to fool people, than to convince them they have been fooled...

(Actual verbatim - "How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!")

From: Joan U. Smeltzer <j.u.smeltzer@gmail.com>

To: JO ANNE PRESTON <ja-preston@comcast.net>; arlingtonlist <arlington@arlingtonlist.org>

Subject: Re: [arlington] tonight removal of 3 more Whittemore shade trees at Select Board

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 7:00 am

Hi Jo Anne,

I have another commitment tonight - so I can't be present at tonight's meeting.

However, I strongly support preserving the Whittemore Park trees. It's ludicrous to remove these healthy trees so that a path that can be built in a straight line. In a park, it's an advantage to have a meandering lane under a shady canopy.

Can I direct my viewpoint to the Select Board via email or a phone call?
Thanks for bringing attention to this appeal.
Joan

On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 5:30 AM JO ANNE PRESTON <ja-preston@comcast.net> wrote:

- >
- > Tonight at the Select Board meeting (town hall, 7:15) the Planning
- > Department will appeal the denial made at the late January tree hearing to
- > cut down three large, healthy shade trees in Whittemore Park.
- > The decision was made after the tree warden received 23 letters asking
- > that the trees not be removed and heard the testimony of 18 people who
- > attended the hearing. The rationale for cutting down the trees was that
- > they were in the way of a proposed new walkway which is ADA compliant as
- > is required of all new walkways.
- > However, the planning department itself states that the walkway was not
- > suppose to be functional (allowing residents to cut through the park from
- > the the Russell parking lot to the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Mystic
- > Street) but to "improve circulation in the park." Hence, the ADA
- > compliant walkway can be anywhere in the park, not in the way of three
- > healthy shade trees.
- >
- > I argue that design should follow function. The three trees absorb
- > pollution and collectively over 1, 500 pounds of atmospheric carbon a year
- > at one of heaviest traffic areas in town. Moreover, these large, leafy
- > shade trees cool the park for the benefit of residents using it and
- > furnish relief from the newly discovered "hot spot" next to the park. The
- > very young "replacement trees" will take 40 to 50 years to do the same.
- >
- > Since the trees need to stay where they are to continue to absorb carbon
- > and render shade and the path can be anywhere in the park to "improve
- > circulation" I am requesting that the designers make small changes in their
- > plan to preserve the trees at the Select Board tonight.

- >
- > If you would like the tree to be preserved in the interest of slowing down
- > climate change and cooling the area, you can attend the Select Board
- > meeting tonight at 7:15 (it is early on the agenda after all the
- > re-appointments). There will be time for residents to speak when the
- > planning department make its appeal of the tree hearing denial. The Select
- > Board needs to hear from everyone who would like the trees to be preserved.
- > Jo Anne
- >
- >
- > _____
- > To post a message to the list, send it to arlington@arlingtonlist.org
- > Search the archives: <https://www.arlingtonlist.org/archives/search>
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- > Questions? <https://www.arlingtonlist.org/faq/>
- > Email the list manager at arlington-owner@arlingtonlist.org
- > Please help keep the list organized by tagging your message see
- > <https://arlingtonlist.org/rules/keywords> for details
- >

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Thought for the day ~ per Mark Twain
*It's easier to fool people, than to convince them they have been fooled...
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(Actual verbatim - "How easy it is to make people believe a lie, and how hard it is to undo that work again!")

To post a message to the list, send it to arlington@arlingtonlist.org
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Questions? <https://www.arlingtonlist.org/faq/>
Email the list manager at arlington-owner@arlingtonlist.org
Please help keep the list organized by tagging your message see
<https://arlingtonlist.org/rules/keywords> for details

From: Jane Whitmore <jane.p.whitmore@gmail.com>

To: DMahon <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: Keep Trees in Arlington

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 10:57 am

I'm writing to you since I am unable to attend tonight's SelectBoard meeting in person. Please do all you can to prevent cutting down trees. Even if it means some inconvenience for wheelchairs.

It matters that we keep all the healthy trees that we have. Trees are a big reason Arlington is special. The plan to cut trees to benefit a very few persons at a cost to everybody, including those in wheelchairs, and to our environment, is a poor plan. Just like the practice of letting builders ignore environmental rules for the promise of a few affordable apartments is wrong, so is this plan wrong to cut trees that make such a big difference to the whole town.

In Arlington we have gone through a great deal to promote cycling...much deliberation and losing a lane for cars on Mass Ave, with the increased traffic in side streets and slower bus travel that this has brought. If we cut down trees and thus work to make our streets burning hot, we work against those efforts to promote cycling.

We need the shade and help with carbon that trees provide. Last summer we had a lot of very hot days over 100 degrees...and that is likely to happen more and more. It's pretty dumb to rid ourselves of the trees that help combat the effects of climate change. We like Arlington because it is not a big city with few trees. Let's keep it that way.

Thanks for your attention to this.

Jane Whitmore
65 Magnolia St
Arlington

From: Montserrat Zuckerman <mzuckerman51@gmail.com>

To: DMahon <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>

Subject: Proposal to cut down trees

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 11:46 am

Dear Diane,

I saw the proposal a while ago where several trees in the plaza by the Starbucks will be replaced by planters. I urge you to send the plan back so changes can be made that will preserve the plaza's mature trees. Furthermore, I feel strongly that any proposal to cut down trees in Arlington should be reexamined carefully with the goal of preventing their removal.

Sincerely,
Montserrat Zuckerman
4 Gay St.
Arlington, MA
781.648.4347

Montserrat Zuckerman
Translations InterAmerica Inc.
Arlington, MA
781.648.4347

February 24, 2020

RE: Tree Requests for Select Board Protection of Whittemore Park healthy trees

I have recently learned of a plan to cut down trees in Whittemore Park. As a resident of Arlington, who lives nearby and who appreciates the park, I am concerned about this. I am also a Friend of Arlington Trees and a volunteer with the Arlington Commission on Disability. I understand there is an issue about ADA compliance. As a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, I have been able to navigate my way through the park and enjoy it! Of course, I am grateful for improvements to accessibility, but am in support of finding alternatives to make an accessible path that would work around the trees. We need to preserve trees, not only for the environment, but for the benefit of the people of Arlington. If the trees were removed, shade cover would be lost. I believe some of the trees proposed for removal are some of the largest trees in the park. Replacing them with young, much smaller trees would not be adequate. It would take decades for the new trees to grow and provide similar shade cover to what the trees provide currently. Our climate is experiencing the hottest temperatures on record. This includes Arlington. We need the heat relief these trees provide now. We simply cannot wait for trees to grow tall.

If the trees were removed, not only would this take away from the beauty of the park, it would increase the heat of the park. Elderly residents and people with disabilities often have difficulties with temperature regulation. They would be more sensitive to effects of the increased temperature, and could suffer heat complications, some of which could be life-threatening. Instead of an oasis and protection from the heat, the park could instead become a place that would be too dangerous to go. Indeed, it would become too risky for me.

Whittemore Park is a treasure, a wonderful place in our town center for the community to gather and enjoy nature. I look forward to a revitalization of the park to enhance its beauty and benefits. I am sure there can be a way forward to modify the current plan for the project. This does not need to be an either/or proposition. There are many residents concerned about this issue. Let's work together to find a way to save the trees and preserve their benefits for the people of Arlington. This is a problem we can solve!

Thank you for your consideration,

Ellen Leigh

Arlington Resident

Precinct #9