



October 21, 2021

Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager
Members of the Select Board, Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Adam and Members of the Select Board,

We are writing to request that the Select Board make the appearance of the Town a top priority. The appearance of our town and the beautification of business districts is vital for supporting new economic investment.

Studies have shown a direct correlation between the appearance of a business district and its economic performance. A thriving mainstreet provides many benefits including:

- Making Arlington a sought after location to open a business
- Making Arlington a place where people want to visit and return
- Commercial tax revenue for future Town initiatives
- Keeping Arlington a desirable place to live

There is not currently a committee focused on the appearance of the Town. We understand there is a proposal to merge several current Town committees that focus on tourism and economic development. We request that either beautification be a top priority of the newly merged committees or a new committee be formed that focuses on beautification.

The mission of a committee or sub-committee focused on beautification would be to assist the Town in identifying and pursuing initiatives that promote the beautification of the Town. The goal would be to create and promote civic pride and to boost local economic development. The Committee would identify areas in need of improvement and would create programs, recruit volunteers and secure the funding resources to achieve its goals. For maximum success, the Committee would work collaboratively with business groups, government, and residents.

Suggested projects include:

- Identify funds for and hire an outside expert to help the Town develop a 10-year beautification vision for the Town to support a viable mainstreet
- Access funds by applying for grants that only municipalities are eligible for
- Installing and maintaining hanging baskets in all three centers of business (East, Center, and Heights)
- Installing American flags in all three centers of business (East, Center, and Heights)

- Retrofitting light poles in business centers to allow for electricity (for tree lights, etc)
- Planning ahead for Revolution2025 when national dignitaries and national attention will be on this area
- Promoting our inclusion in the Battle Road Scenic Byway along with Lexington, Concord, and Lincoln

The Chamber recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to create and promote a new tourism website, www.visitarlingtonma.org. In addition, we have published a 52-page glossy magazine, Visit Arlington, which was supported by more than \$30,000 of advertising from local businesses. Our intent with these initiatives is to bring more local visitors, and therefore business, to Arlington. However, it is important that those visitors are delighted by what they see and experience when they come here to shop, dine, see a show, or visit one of our historic or cultural sites.

We recognize that the Town has recently undertaken several projects that greatly enhance the aesthetics of Arlington Center. Arlington has a lot of existing potential yet it struggles to be a local destination. In the aftermath of the pandemic, businesses have closed and empty storefronts persist. In order to maintain and improve our business districts, it's imperative that the Town, as well as it's residents, businesses and institutions, make beautification a top priority.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Locke
Executive Director