

**From:** Celia Wcislo <celia.wcislo@gmail.com>  
**To:** amaher@town.arlington.ma.us  
**Date:** 07/18/2022 06:39 PM  
**Subject:** Please add my comments:

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I object to the recommendation to ban all signs from the outside of City Hall! We have always had signs, and this is just wrong!

Cecilia Wcislo  
507 Appleton St, Arlington, MA 02476

**From:** xavid <xavid@xavid.us>  
**To:** ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us, SDeCourcey@town.arlington.ma.us, JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us, ehelmuth@town.arlington.ma.us, DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us  
**Cc:** amaher@town.arlington.ma.us  
**Date:** 07/18/2022 07:41 PM  
**Subject:** Support Diversity in Arlington by Rejecting Proposed Banner Policy

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I am dismayed to see that there is a proposal that would not only reject the strongly-supported proposal to restore the Black Lives Matter banner to town hall, but also forbid any future banners of this kind.

Arlington faces many challenges in increasing the racial diversity of our town and protecting our residents from discrimination, but they shouldn't have to worry about whether their Select Board or town government has their back or not. Passing this policy in the context of specific requests from Town Meeting and other town bodies to put up a Black Lives Matter banner creates an impression that the Select Board cares more about making racists and conspiracy theorists feel uncomfortable in Arlington than making Black neighbors feel welcome.

Arlington has taken strong steps like the creation of a Civilian Police Advisory Commission to improve the relationships between town government and our minority residents. The Select Board should be working to support and further those efforts, not undermine them.

Beyond the immediate impact on the Black Lives Matter banner, this policy would also ban memorials to police, firefighters, and veterans and other traditional uses for banners. This creates a question about whether the Select Board will actually hold itself to this policy in the future, or whether it will be effectively only applied at the Select Board's discretion.

To remain silent in the face of oppression is not being neutral. It is to choose the side of the oppressor. The Select Board can do better than this. If the Select Board is not willing to take a stand, it should empower Town Meeting to do so. But if the Board passes this proposal tonight, it will undermine the legitimacy of the Select Board's governance over many important day-to-day matters in Arlington and create further divides between town government and our residents.

Sincerely,  
Xavid Pretzer  
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 17

**From:** Lynette Culverhouse <lculverhouse@gmail.com>  
**To:** amaher@town.arlington.ma.us  
**Date:** 07/18/2022 08:20 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: statement on the banner policy

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Hi Ashley,  
Please attach this statement as correspondence received to the agenda.  
thanks  
Lynette

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Lynette Culverhouse <lculverhouse@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Mon, Jul 18, 2022 at 8:18 PM  
**Subject:** statement on the banner policy  
**To:** Len Diggins <ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us>, Stephen DeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>, John Hurd <JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us>, <DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us>, Eric Helmuth <eric@erichelmut.com>

I am disappointed at the proposed policy to not fly any banners at Town Hall. While I understand the fear that is surely driving this decision, I also know that the authoritarianism that is gripping our country fuels itself on fear. The gradual descent into fascism in the US is clear and the normalization of events and decisions that are truly shocking to those outside this country is reminiscent of the normalization of fascism in Germany. I would like to think that here in Arlington we could avoid falling into this trap that limits our freedom of expression and yields to fearmongering. Surely we, here, in our beloved town, can hold the high watch and resist the temptation to fall prey to the outside forces that would limit all our freedoms. Please take the time to think deeply about the implications of removing Arlington's right to freely express the values they hold dear and to bring healing to our divided town. Town meeting clearly expressed their desire to publicly display the BLM banner and to show that we are a welcoming town for all. With this policy we will no longer be free to fly the Pride banner. Please don't silence those who would actively seek to heal and unite. This is a moment for spiritual and moral introspection. I'd like to ask you to not vote to approve tonight and take whatever time it takes to expand the conversation in order to make a decision that is grounded in clarity, justice and inclusion.

Lynette Culverhouse  
Draper Ave  
Precinct 11



**From:** Elizabeth Dray <elizabethdray7@gmail.com>

**To:** Ashley Maher <amaher@town.arlington.ma.us>

**Date:** 07/18/2022 08:49 PM

**Subject:** please include the following email as "Correspondence Received" on the next Select Board Agenda.

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Hi Ashley,

I hope this email finds you well. Can you please include the following email as "Correspondence Received" on the next Select Board Agenda.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Dray

Dear Select Board Members,

The below is an expanded version of my comments at the July 18, 2022 Select Board meeting.

I'd like to provide a little history so that residents listening tonight understand my disappointment in the proposed Banner and Sign policy up for a vote tonight.

October 2018 onward has been a very difficult time for Arlington regarding how our town government dealt with systematic racism and racist individuals within our public institutions. It will be no surprise to the Board that I was not proud of how Arlington handled it.

But on June 8th, 2020, our Town officials, the Chief of Police, and our elected Town and State representatives proudly and publicly hung a Black Lives Matter banner on Arlington's Town Hall and adopted a Black Lives Matter proclamation. I brought my whole family to see it and I felt a little of that pride returning.

And then the banner came down and the SB and Town Manager made repeated and multiple false promises about what would happen to it and how the community would be involved in that decision making process. Then Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine promised to work with the Human Rights Commission, the DEI Coordinator and community stakeholders. Sadly, that outreach was never done,

In an email Adam Chapdelaine wrote that his "...recommendation will be to keep the banner up indefinitely." And I believed him. That was, until he specifically proposed that it come down and had no plan in place.

On December 2, 2020 the Special Town Meeting overwhelmingly passed a resolution asking the Select Board to return the BLM banner to Town Hall. Our elected legislators spoke and the Select Board ignored them.

Then on January 4, 2021 the Select Board discussed a memorandum written by then Select Board member Mr. Curro and Select Board member Mr. DeCoursey entitled "Recommendations for Black Lives Matter Banner and Other Displays". However, due to lack of support for all the recommendations contained in the memorandum, the Board simply decided by unanimous vote to receive it, effectively ignoring it and their promises to the community. Despite

Chairperson Hurd urging a quick resolution of the matter, "at the next meeting, if not tonight.", the SB never mentioned the BLM banner again. That is until residents of Arlington petitioned them on January 5, 2022 to put a discussion of the BLM on the agenda.

On January 24, 2022 the Select Board did not put discussion of the BLM banner on the agenda and instead discussed "Sign Policy". The Select Board deferred any decision making due to a pending legal case that has since been resolved in a manner that I understand would allow a town to hang any banner or flag as protected "government speech" if it had the town seal on the banner. At that meeting the SB asked two of its members who had just publicly stated that they didn't think any banner should fly on the Town Hall to write a policy about how and where banners and signs can be hung. Unsurprisingly the proposed policy that you will vote on prevents any banners from being hung on Town hall without exception.

And that is where we are tonight. Tonight you will vote on a policy to prevent any statement of Arlington's values on our center of government, the Town Hall. No BLM, no Pride, no public expression of what we value as a town on important social and human rights issues. No public commitment as a town to upholding human rights, to uncovering systematic oppression with an eye to its elimination, wherever it exists in our Town government. Sadly, Arlington is playing it safe in a time where our community members - those of us with uterus, POC, gender queer and immigrants, among others, are having our human rights challenged and stripped away at an astonishing rate. Arlington should be speaking out, leading. This is not the time to be silent.

I feel like this is a really disappointing and sad ending for Arlington.

I urge you to not vote yes tonight and to go back to the community, to do the outreach that you promised over 2 years ago. We don't need to hide. We are better than this policy.

Elizabeth Dray  
Town Meeting Member Precinct 10

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*she/her/hers*

*Living on the ancestral lands of the Massachusett Tribe, the tribe of Indigenous peoples from whom the Colony, Province, and Commonwealth have taken their names. I pay my respects to the ancestral bloodline of the Massachusett Tribe and their descendants who still inhabit historic Massachusett territories today.*

**From:** Rebecca Gruber <rgruber@alumni.upenn.edu>  
**To:** Stephen DeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>, Lenard Diggins <ldiggins@gmail.com>, Eric Helmuth <EHelmuth@town.arlington.ma.us>, John Hurd <JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us>, DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us  
**Cc:** Ashley Maher <amaher@town.arlington.ma.us>  
**Date:** 07/25/2022 01:48 PM  
**Subject:** Town Hall Banner Policy

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Dear Honorable Select Board Members,

I am writing to you to urge you to think creatively about our policy for displaying banners on our town hall.

I listened carefully to the discussion at last week's Select Board meeting about the proposed policy. I understand that given the recent Supreme Court ruling it might be easiest and least complicated to ban all banners from Town Hall (and I presume to be equal that would include banning all types of displays, including lighting displays).

However, I believe that our town is working hard to be a place of welcome for all. Displaying messages, e.g., banners, lights, on our town hall that indicate and support this value serves as a reminder of our aspirations to our residents and others who come to our town.

In a recent conversation about this with a Black friend of mine, he said that he would feel more welcome and safer seeing a Black Lives Matter banner displayed on our Town Hall.

At a recent Human Rights Commission meeting, I heard about a transgender employee of a local business, who has experienced two incidents of bullying while at work. I understand that the employee received support and action from the AHRC and the APD, but would this person have felt even more supported by the greater Arlington populace if there were a rainbow banner or lights displayed on Town Hall.

Arlington has values; I think we should not be afraid to display them on the building that most embodies our Town governance, Town Hall. I hope the Select Board will do the difficult and brave work to develop a policy that allows us to put our values on display.

Thank you for your efforts and dedication on behalf of our Town. Please include my letter with your correspondence received.

Best,  
Rebecca Gruber  
215 Pleasant Street  
TMM P10