

Statement in Support of Boston Gas Company’s Application to Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals for Special Permit for Take Station Re-Build Project at 307 Washington Street, Arlington, Massachusetts

Boston Gas Company (“BGC”) seeks a special permit from the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals (the “Board”) in connection with the re-building of its existing natural gas distribution take station known as Station #900 (the “Take Station”), which is currently located at the property known as 305 Washington Street in Arlington¹ and to be relocated to and re-built at the adjoining property known as 307 Washington Street (the “Property”) as described herein.

I. Background, Existing Conditions and Project Need.

The existing Take Station is located at 305 Washington Street within a below-grade vault and telecommunications equipment within a 20’ x 13’ building. The Take Station has been in operation since the 1950s.

The adjoining Property at 307 Washington Street is owned by BGC and contains approximately 1.9 acres of land² that is mostly undeveloped. The Property is located entirely within the Residence 1 (“R1”) zoning district and no overlay districts, and is surrounded by a mix of residential properties.

The Take Station’s primary function is to serve as the point where the local gas utility receives high-pressure gas from an interstate transmission pipeline and processes it for safe delivery to customers. The existing Take Station has been in service since the 1950’s is in need of replacement, as part of BGC’s planned replacement program. Therefore, the Project is necessary for BGC to continue to provide reliable gas service to the Town.

II. Project Description.

The Project improvements primarily include the installation and/or construction of the following components at the Property (collectively, the “Project Facilities”): (a) above-grade regulator station building containing various equipment (e.g., heating, SCADA, odorant equipment, pressure monitoring and protection, regulator controls, outlet valves); (b) new fencing with new access gate and driveway; (c) tree removal shown on the tree clearing plan; (d) landscaping; (e) re-grading and other site improvements related thereto; (f) removal of existing equipment.

III. Applicability of Special Permit.

A special permit is required for “Essential Services” uses in the R1 zoning district pursuant to the Table of Use Regulations in Section 5.4.3 of the Zoning Bylaw. The Planning

¹ 305 Washington Street has a tax identification of 100-1-6 and is owned by Tennessee Gas Company (“TGC”). BGC occupies a portion of 305 Washington Street by virtue of an operation and maintenance agreement with TGC.

² The Property lot consists of a single parcel of land having a tax identification of 100-1-6.C. A small portion of the proposed access drive and site improvements will be located at 305 Washington Street.

Director has confirmed that, except for the special permit, no other zoning-related permits or approvals are required for the Project.

However, in addition to the permits and approvals being expressly sought herein, BGC seeks any and all such other relief and waivers as may be deemed necessary by the Board. All rights are reserved with respect to the applicability of the permits and approvals being sought herein.

IV. Reasons for Approval of Special Permit.

The requested special permit should be granted by the Board based on the findings set forth in Section 3.3.3 of the Zoning Bylaw as set forth below. All such findings are more specifically satisfied for the reasons stated herein:

- A. The use requested is listed as a special permit use in the use regulations for the applicable district or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.

A special permit is required for “Essential Services” use in the R1 zoning district pursuant to the Table of Use Regulations in Section 5.4.3 of the Zoning Bylaw.

- B. The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

The nature and purpose of the Project use is for the public good and benefit. The Project is necessary to improve capacity and reliability of gas distribution in the Town, which will contribute to and promote the health, welfare, safety, economic growth and vitality and social welfare of the community.

- C. The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.

The Project will not result in a nuisance or hazard to vehicles or pedestrians within or off the Property. The Project will not create any line-of-sight hazards along streets. Because the Take Station will continue to be an unmanned facility and closed to the public, the Project will not result in increases in traffic volumes or negative impacts on adjacent streets and ways. Traffic generated by the Take Station will continue to be limited to service vehicles visiting the site to perform routine inspections, testing and equipment maintenance, as necessary, therefore, minimum parking and loading spaces are not applicable. However, unstriped parking areas for utility vehicles and trucks within the driveway will be provided.

- D. The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety or the general welfare.

The Property will not require public water or sewer and there will be a separate standalone bathroom building utilizing a Humus/Compostable toilet in accordance with 315 CMR 15.289. Downstream properties, water courses, channels and conduits will not be affected by stormwater runoff as a result of the Project.

E. Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in this Bylaw are fulfilled.

There are no special regulations under the Zoning Bylaw that apply to the proposed use.

F. The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health or welfare.

The Project Facilities will have no greater impact on, adversely affect or be detrimental to adjoining premises or zones or the neighborhood. The Project Facilities will be set back a significant distance from streets and abutting properties, and will be screened by privacy fence slats, existing vegetation and the proposed landscape buffers. The Project will not be detrimental to the health or welfare of the neighborhood. The Project will not result in any emission of odorous gasses or noise, and any emissions from the Take Station will be effectively confined to the premises. There will be no deleterious effect on neighboring properties as a result of the proposed lighting for the Project. The proposed lighting will not result in any increase in impacts with respect to light or glare that would be noticeable by any abutting properties. This outdoor lighting will be mounted at heights that are sufficient and adequate for security and safety purposes and will be installed and directed in a downwards angle towards the equipment and facilities, and away from neighboring properties, and, therefore, compatible, and in harmony with, the surrounding properties. All proposed new lighting will be located a significant distance from the nearest public way.

G. The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.

The proposed use will not cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood. The size, type, design, color, height, materials and location of the Project Facilities are consistent with industry and company standards, designs and practices applicable to unmanned gas take station facilities, and will adequately provide for all proposed and appropriate operations of the essential services use.

H. The adverse effects of the proposed use will not outweigh its beneficial impacts to the Town or neighborhood, in view of the characteristics of the site and of the proposal in relation to that site.

Based on the location and limited, size, scope and nature of the Project, the Project Facilities will have no greater impact on, adversely affect or be detrimental to adjoining premises or zones or the neighborhood. The Property is largely undeveloped, but the abutting property has been used as a take station since 1997, and granting the requested relief will promote the highest and best use of the Property. Given that the Take Station will continue to be an unmanned facility, there will be no increase in congestion in the streets and will avoid undue concentration of population.

The Project is necessary to improve capacity and reliability of gas distribution in the Town, which will contribute to and promote the health, welfare, safety, economic growth and vitality and social welfare of the community. The nature and purpose of the Project use is for the

public good and benefit. The Project is consistent with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Bylaw, and will not interfere with or negatively impact the resources protected thereby.