

27 Jason Street
Arlington, MA 02476

June 24, 2018

Messrs. Joseph A. Curro, Daniel J. Dunn, Kevin F. Greeley, John V. Hurd,
and Ms. Diane Mahon
Board of Selectmen
Arlington Town Hall
730 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Members of the Select Board,

After following discussions of the recent proposal for a “beer garden” in the Whittemore Park it is clear that there are many aspects of it that are unsatisfactory while at the same time there is some rapturous enthusiasm. I am sure that you would not wish any action you take to be viewed as a Top-down Trumpian edict forcing the cordoning off of this tiny public green space – the only one in our Town Center – for every summer weekend banning from it our most precious Town resource – our young adults (school and college students on vacation and young soldiers or sailors on leave after active duty– I have had some of those in my family) unless accompanied by someone over 21. Our parks are precious and few. It is surprising that the Parks and Recreation Commission has not raised appropriate objections to this use of our most centrally located pocket park (none of them have responded to my enquiries). There are statutory responsibilities here. The park use for a one-weekend private profit-making entity could be entirely appropriate but not all summer weekends especially when some thousands of young people (members of the public) are barred from this public area.

Accordingly I would like to suggest that the Board consider establishing the **Select Board Beer Garden** at the Town Hall parking lot. This would enable access to plenty of toilets and the 252 seats that we town meeting members use would be available for the use of the anticipated 250 patrons. This location would resolve the oft-mentioned problems of toilets and seating. The paved parking lot location is also much more appropriate for beer gardens since heavy use would destroy the grass at Whittemore Park. Water fountains are available at Town Hall (and, as an aside, should be

provided in Arlington Center). In addition unlike the Whittemore Park proposal with its depressing security checks and personnel requirements the Select Board Beer Garden would not be quite so jarring for our rejected young people since the area is screened from the Avenue by plantings at the very pretty Dallin – ornamented flagpole. For young people the event would be less in-your-face than at the Town Center. I realize that your first priority may not be the young people of Arlington since they cannot vote but they are a priority for many of us. I realize that you desire to attract bikers from the Minuteman Bikeway to the proposed venue. This could be achieved for the Select Board Town Hall Beer Garden by appropriate signage on the path but I question the wisdom of this desire since I am quite sure that if I were to get on my bike after a couple of beers my grandchildren would notice that I rode in a slightly wobbly manner and could be a hazard to others. For more on effects of mild alcohol consumption see -

https://www.webmd.com/balance/ss/slideshow-hangover-myths?ecd=wnl_spr_062318&ctr=wnl-spr-062318_nsl-ld-stry_1&mb=mYg16O3PLgAiq%40oJRJQkihXFE73IOX1cBmTxO6NgYWc%3d

If a beer garden were to occur at Whittemore Park then recovering alcoholics would be wise to avoid the Town Center.

If a beer garden is to come to Arlington it must be carefully planned to ensure a joyous venue such as exists in many European towns – not just a top-down haphazard effort to “make Arlington great again” by officials milking exploitable aspects of the Town and leading lights in the Chamber of Commerce whose interests are obviously commercial not necessarily in the best interests of the community. Many of the most ardent supporters of the Town Manager/Planning Department/Selectpersons’ proposed Whittemore beer garden are individuals or groups who are dependent on these officials for appointments or licenses and so might not want to criticize the idea. European towns have many public pocket parks, town squares large and small with wonderful community attributes including sometimes beer gardens. I have experienced many including in Holland, France, the British Isles, Ireland, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, and Italy. Their

success is not due to cordoning off of entire public parks for private profit-making every summer weekend but depends on cultural and family cohesion and values and protection of public areas for enjoyment of all.

One of my sons makes craft beer. That is not his day job but we all enjoy his product and he enjoys the fun gatherings with his beer. Let us not strangle the baby in its crib with poor location choice (Whittemore Park) for this innovative idea for Arlington. And let us not cut down any more trees until at least all those already cut down are replaced.

Respectfully yours,

Patricia Barron Worden, Ph.D.