

Correspondence received by the
Concord Select Board
Week Ending – October 15, 2024

1. Rob Addelson – 17 Warner Street
2. Jennifer Braceras – Old Pickard Rd
3. Mark and Tanya Gailus – 62 Prescott Road
4. Joan Cole Densberger – 17 Concord Greene Unit 4
5. Joe Laurin – 134 Southfield Road

Robert Addelson
17 Warner St.
Concord, MA 01742
978-505-2608
robaddelson@gmail.com

October 7, 2024

Concord Select Board
22 Monument Square
PO Box 535
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Select Board Members:

I am a 30+ year resident of Concord and a 74-year-old retiree. I am fortunate to have been able to live in such a beautiful town and one in which I have built community. I am apprehensive that the projected significant increases in property taxes may force me, in the not too distant future, to consider having to move; a prospect that I hope does not come to pass.

The Select Board's decision in FY2024 to adopt the residential exemption provided me with meaningful property tax relief. I hope the Board will consider adopting the residential exemption again for FY2025.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Rob Addelson

Dear Members of the Concord Select Board,

I write as a resident of Concord and a former member of the [United States Commission on Civil Rights](#) regarding our town flag policy.

It is my understanding that Concord has issued a [moratorium](#) on flying "guest flags" until the Board approves a new policy. Currently, the Board has discretion to accept or reject flag requests from outside groups. In exercising this discretion, the Select Board must, of course, be mindful that accepting requests from some groups but not others puts the town at risk of being sued for discrimination by those who are turned away. As such, towns that opt to fly any non-governmental flag to celebrate a particular group are well advised to "accept all customers" and stand ready and willing to fly the flag of any group that requests one.

We are fortunate to live in a diverse and multi-cultural country and in a town that is deeply committed to inclusivity, equality, and free expression. But our town is not a billboard for every conceivable affinity group and cause. Because the possibilities for "guest flags" are endless and unpredictable, the town of Concord should fly only the three governmental flags that represent us all-- the U.S. flag, the Massachusetts flag, and the minuteman/Concord flag.

If, however, the Board decides to move forward with a "guest flag" policy of any sort, I hereby formally request that Concord raise the Israeli flag tomorrow, and for the rest of this month, in solidarity with the Jewish state and its people who suffered a barbaric and unprovoked terrorist attack during the high holy days last October.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer C. Bracerias

978.828.7275 (cell)

Dear Members of the Select Board,

There are a couple recent concerns regarding public shade tree removals:

1) Public hearings for public shade tree removal requests used to be regularly posted on the Town's website calendar. This is no longer done in a consistent manner. Apparently it is not legally required. Can we please bring back the posting anyway?

Also: The law requires that at least one newspaper be notified. Apparently the newspaper used is the Concord Journal. Could the hearings also be announced in the Concord Bridge, which is read by more people in town?

2) A significant concern:

There has been more than one situation recently where a public shade tree removal hearing has been requested by property owners to accommodate a driveway or for a similar reason **after a new construction is underway**. This implicitly attempts to force the hand of the public and the Select Board to issue an approval.

This does not seem consistent with a sensible, logical, and respectful approach to requesting the removal of public shade trees.

It used to be that hearings would take place before any construction. Sometimes there would be compromises reached between the public and developer(s) about how many of the trees could possibly be saved.

We do not know if any laws were broken in these recent cases, but something definitely feels wrong.

Examples:

On 5/7/24 a 4"DBH Kousa Dogwood tree was removed from 283 Central Street, where, we were told, construction had already been underway. This hearing was not posted, and a member of the public who would have objected did not attend as a result.

Apparently the removed tree was replanted in this case by the Tree Warden to another location, but did not do well. (There is no legal requirement to replant trees approved for removal. It's at the discretion of the Tree Warden, and it is implemented by public funds.)

Another case on 9/10/24 was posted on the website. (Picture attached from around that time.) 183 Hubbard Street. The tree itself is actually on Thoreau St. We attended and objected to the removal of the tree. Again, the Tree Warden said they would try to replant the tree if removed- but again, there is no requirement to do so, nor any guarantee that the tree would survive.

This case might come to you for appeal. If so, we hope you will suggest the owners re-plan the layout of the proposed driveway in question, rather than allowing the removal of a public tree "after the fact" of the construction.

We were told by the Tree Warden last week that yet another similar situation may come up soon, i.e. for a tree removal request after the fact of the construction.

This pattern is new as far as we know, and it needs to be stopped. Either there is something wrong with our processes or someone has been misinforming prospective developers about their options.

Thank you for your attention, and best regards,

Mark and Tanya B. Gailus

62 Prescott Road

To the Town of Concord Select Board:

I am writing in follow-up to the Select Board meeting of September 30, 2024 on the matter of the property tax exemption for Concord homeowners over age 65. I had a schedule conflict and could not attend the meeting. However, I would like to offer some comments that I hope may be helpful to the board in its deliberations on this matter.

I am Secretary to the Board of Directors of the Concord Greene Homeowners Association. However, I am submitting these comments as a private citizen on my own behalf as I am a homeowner here in Concord and am over age 65.

I also wish to mention that I am an attorney and have dealt with indigent elderly clients as Court-appointed attorney when I was in private practice several years ago. I currently hold an academic appointment as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Health Law, Policy and Management at Boston University School of Public Health.

I voice my support of the proposed property tax exemption based on a number of factors, chief of which is that I believe that lessening the tax burden of our aging population is in line with Concord's tradition of taking into account the humanity and dignity of its people. For an aging person on a fixed income, facing the prospect of having to relocate is more than merely moving from their home. It is uprooting them from an entire social structure of support that can lead to negative outcomes for them in terms of health. Housing has been recognized in the professional public health studies as a social determinant of health. I have provided some resources below that discuss this point. Indeed, easing the tax burden for elderly individuals is not merely a monetary matter. Far more is at stake potentially for our elders here in Concord, many of whom have lived here for years. Even those with financial means face the prospect of current high inflation and other economic forces that substantially impact their fixed incomes and may lead to depletion of their savings or other resources that they may have.

I urge the Select Board to take a broader view of this than as solely a monetary measure. There is much more at stake. The proposed property tax exemption is a responsible measure toward attenuating the current economic pressures facing our elders and would increase the likelihood of their ability to age in place. Accordingly, I urge the Board to pass the measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cole Densberger

17 Concord Greene Unit 4

Dear Select Board,

As you consider proposals to remove Town parking meters, I would ask that you consider a suggestion I made late last year, as published in the Bridge (see below).

After this was published I received many notes and comments supporting this idea.

Many thanks,

Joe

Begin forwarded message:

From: joseph laurin <jlaurin978@gmail.com>

Date: December 31, 2023 at 11:01:43 AM EST

To: Letters <Letters@theconcordbridge.org>

Subject: Let's put our parking meters to good use

Our parking meters are going away but I'd like to suggest a positive use for some of them: let local charitable organizations "adopt" them to collect donations for their causes.

It might work like this: The Concord Museum has 1 or 2 bright blue meters around town dedicated to it, with a small sign that says "put your spare change to good use...". The Library has red meters that benefit them. The Scholarship Fund of Concord & Carlisle has green meters (disclaimer, I'm a Trustee of The SFCC). Etc.

The city of Denver maintained a few meters in this manner for a homeless fund after it decided to remove its parking meters, and I believe it was quite successful (there may be other, even better ideas from other communities we could learn from. Let's take a look).

Let's make some lemonade from our parking meter lemons.

Joe Laurin
Southfield Road