

Natick Select Board

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LOCATED AT

Town Hall

13 East Central Street

Natick, Massachusetts

01760

Town of Natick • Select Board Office

March 8, 2023

Gina Fiandaca
Secretary of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Re: MassPike Service Plaza Lease and Lighting

Dear Secretary Fiandaca:

On behalf of the Town of Natick, I am writing to request that when the Department of Transportation drafts and executes a new lease or other arrangement affecting the Natick service plaza on the Massachusetts Turnpike, that the longstanding concerns of abutters regarding light trespass are taken into account.

After many years of fruitless negotiation with McDonald's, the current lessee, in August 2011 Secretary Mullan caused the power to a light tower on the eastbound Natick service plaza to be disconnected, thereby resolving a ten-year struggle by the Town, abutters, and state legislators. This was possible because the terms of the 2001 lease allowed McDonald's to erect the light tower, but did not assure the lessee of electric supply.

We request assurance that when the current lease runs out in 2026, a successor agreement will not revisit needless and disruptive light trespass upon the adjoining residential neighborhood.

For some history, soon after execution of the 2001 agreement and subsequent erection and illumination of the 70-foot tall lights, residents appealed to the Commonwealth, but the terms of the lease were considered binding (*Having it their way? McDonald's digs in for legal fight on Pike signs*, Milford Daily News, August 17, 2002).

Some years later, the Town arranged a site visit to neighborhoods on either side of the Mass Pike and invited McDonald's and its representatives to a Board meeting. Through legal counsel, McDonalds

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declined to accept any remedy (March 24, 2009 letter from Attorney Steven Weil of Doherty, Ciechanowski, Dugan & Cannon, P.C.).

A legislative solution was considered, but would not have provided timely relief (*Bright McDonald's Sign Along Pike An Eyesore For Natick Residents*, July 12, 2011 / 11:43 PM / CBS Boston).

Finally, in August 2011, Secretary Mullan took action to resolve this issue at least for the term of the current lease (*State to turn off McDonald's, Gulf signs at service plaza in Natick*, MetroWest Daily News, August 24, 2011).

It seems likely that a new arrangement for operation of the service plazas will be proposed and carried out in the coming years. We seek your cooperation in establishing a new procurement process and/or lease agreement that will protect the interests of neighbors.

Thank you for your attention and response.

Sincerely,

Paul Joseph, Chair

cc: Senate President Karen Spilka
State Representative David Linsky

Attachments

- *Having it their way? McDonald's digs in for legal fight on Pike signs*, Milford Daily News, August 17, 2002
- March 24, 2009 letter from Attorney Steven Weil of Doherty, Ciechanowski, Dugan & Cannon, P.C.
- *Bright McDonald's Sign Along Pike An Eyesore For Natick Residents*, CBS Boston, July 12, 2011
- *State to turn off McDonald's, Gulf signs at service plaza in Natick*, MetroWest Daily News, August 24, 2011.