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**ARPA: Help for Restaurants**

(Update added on 4/19/22)

Restaurants are critical to the vitality of our villages and provide so many of us with good food and good cheer. As many of our Newton restaurants look to rebound from the loss of customers during the pandemic, we are focused on what we can do to help them survive and thrive.

Over the last year and a half, we expedited licensing and permitting of outdoor dining with *Newton Al Fresco*, creating brightly decorated communal picnic areas in parking lots. Through *Newton Al Fresco*, we also helped over fifteen restaurants create on-street dining with free jersey barriers painted by Newton artists (thank you Newton Community Pride). We designated 15 minute parking spaces for take-out customers. We also provided twenty small business grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to help our restauranteurs survive.

With the Delta variant still impacting business, we are taking two additional steps right now to help our restaurants.

I am asking our Licensing Commission to reduce the cost of our restaurant liquor license fees by 50% for calendar year 2022. Specifically, in the case of a single restaurant, the full restaurant alcohol license fee would be reduced for the year from \$3,250 to \$1,625.

This winter we need to temporarily remove on-street dining so we can effectively and safely do our snow plowing operations. (We'll be removing the painted jersey barriers just after New Year's day (unless there's a huge storm coming before then) and will bring them back in April.)

So, I am directing the use of up to \$50,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to assist restaurants with breaking down, storing and reassembling their on-street dining equipment (platforms, lighting, heaters, planters, tables, chairs, etc.). We will provide a one-time payment of \$2,500 to restaurants if needed.

We love our restaurants so let's keep supporting them over the winter.

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UPDATE (4/19/22): Total project costs to date for this program are \$12,829.64.