


## Town of Needham Select Board

<b>Policy Number:</b>	SB-LIC-016
<b>Policy:</b>	Outdoor Dining Licenses
<b>Date Approved:</b>	10/12/2021
<b>Date Revised:</b>	
<b>Approved:</b>	 _____ Chair, Select Board

### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process and application criteria for licensing local businesses to use public rights-of-way, public parking lots, on-street parking spaces, sidewalks and/or other Town-owned property for outdoor dining. The Select Board will consider these guiding principles for outdoor dining:

- Create quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and sense of connection to Needham and with each other.
- Support small businesses through added vibrancy and engagement in our business districts.
- Maintain safe and accessible sidewalk access for all users.
- Balance the needs of other street activities, including adequate parking infrastructure.

### Section 2. Policy

- 2.1 No outdoor restaurant seating shall be permitted within the public right-of-way, public sidewalks and/or on public property unless the Select Board authorizes the placement of temporary outdoor seating.
- 2.2 Under Zoning Bylaw Section 6.9, the Select Board may authorize the placement of seasonal, temporary outdoor seating including but not limited to tables, chairs, serving equipment, planters, and umbrellas, within the public way and on public property, for eat-in restaurants during normal hours of operation, provided that:
  - 2.2.1 The Select Board holds a public hearing and deems that pedestrian and vehicular circulation, the safety of restaurant patrons and the public, and parking for patrons

of restaurants, retail establishments and service establishments in the vicinity of the outdoor seating, is adequately provided for;

- 2.2.2 The seating is within the public sidewalk abutting the front, rear, or side of the restaurant's owned or leased property or on a public way or on other public property abutting the front, rear, or side of the restaurant's owned or leased property;
  - 2.2.3 Such use is clearly related to the restaurant conducted inside the principal building;
  - 2.2.4 Unless otherwise permitted by law, a minimum sidewalk width of forty-eight inches (48") and a minimum width of thirty-six inches (36") of unobstructed pedestrian paths , shall be continuously maintained, as shown on the plan provided to the Select Board;
  - 2.2.5 Such use does not obstruct or otherwise interfere with visibility at intersections;
  - 2.2.6 During all operating hours and thereafter, the area of outdoor seating must be kept clean, including clearing of all tables and removal of all trash; and
  - 2.2.7 The application and proposed plans adhere to all health, safety, access, and operational requirements established by the Town, as outlined in Appendix A: Outdoor Dining Requirements. The Town Manager is authorized to update these requirements, as needed, and will ensure the application form reflects any changes.
- 2.3 Items 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 shall not apply during special town-wide festivals or events during the year as designated by the Select Board.
  - 2.4 A restaurant applying for outdoor seating must possess a Common Victuallers License.
  - 2.5 Operation of outdoor restaurant seating areas is only permitted when the main place of business is open.
  - 2.6 Two or more restaurants may apply jointly for a shared outdoor seating area, subject to all requirements that apply to individual applicants.
  - 2.7 The Board may not approve more than 3 public parking spaces for any single applicant. The three spaces include any area taken by concrete safety barriers.

- 2.8 If an applicant is requesting the use of a designated handicap parking space for outdoor dining, the Board may not approve unless a suitable alternative location for handicap parking is identified.
- 2.9 The outdoor dining season shall be April 1 - November 30. The Select Board may authorize seasonal temporary outdoor seating under Zoning Bylaw Section 6.9.2 (b) earlier than April 1 and later than November 30 of each year. Applicants should specify the requested start and end date for their outdoor seating area. Board consideration shall be given to snow removal operations, roadway and sidewalk construction schedules, and other needs of the Town.
- 2.10 Outdoor dining licenses must be renewed annually. For those applications seeking a renewal from the prior year, the Town Manager will determine whether a public hearing is required, taking into consideration any compliance issues, resident or abutter complaints, and safety concerns in the prior year. Renewals will be reviewed subject to the criteria above and to the operational needs of the Town, including but not limited to anticipated roadway or sidewalk construction, potential changes in use of the public property, and changes in the Town's overall parking infrastructure.
- 2.11 An application for outdoor seating on public property that increases the restaurant's overall seating capacity by more than thirty percent (30%) must receive approval by the Special Permit Granting Authority that granted the special permit allowing the use of the premises as a restaurant (either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals), before the Select Board will review the outdoor dining application.
- 2.12 If an applicant currently has a liquor license that allows consumption on premises and intends to extend that service to the Outdoor Seating area, the applicant must file an Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission's Alteration of Premises form with the Select Board.
- 2.13 Applicants must provide a certificate of liability insurance covering the approved outdoor dining area and naming the Town of Needham as an additionally insured party in the amount of \$500,000/\$1 million.
- 2.14 Permission to use Town land does not modify or amend any applicable state or local rules, requirements, permits, licenses, or approvals. To the extent that modifications of any existing permits, licenses or approvals may be necessary, they should be separately applied for by the applicant.
- 2.15 Permission to use Town land may be modified or terminated by the Town, in its sole discretion, at any time. Upon termination, the restaurant shall be responsible for removing all its property from the designated area.

### **Section 3. Procedures**

- 3.1 The applicant shall file an application for outdoor dining on the form prescribed by the Town of Needham and submit requisite plans, photographs, and information.
- 3.2 The application and related plans that are submitted must adhere to all health, safety, and access requirements established by the Town, as outlined in this policy and in Appendix A: Outdoor Dining Requirements.
- 3.3 Applicants must provide a certificate of liability insurance covering the approved outdoor dining area and naming the Town of Needham as an additionally insured party in the amount of \$500,000/\$1 million.
- 3.4 Upon receipt of an application, the Town Manager or their designee, will review the application for completeness, request any missing documentation, and circulate the completed application to relevant Town departments for review and comments.
  - 3.4.1 An application for outdoor seating on public property that increases the restaurant's overall seating capacity by more than thirty percent (30%) must receive approval by the Special Permit Granting Authority that granted the special permit allowing the use of the premises as a restaurant (either the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals), before the Select Board will review the outdoor dining application.
  - 3.4.2 If an applicant currently has a liquor license that allows consumption on premises and intends to extend that service to the outdoor seating area, the applicant must file an Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission's Alteration of Premises form with the Select Board.
  - 3.4.3 Applicants are encouraged to apply in late fall/early winter prior to the next outdoor dining season. Applicants may need approval from multiple local boards including the Select Board, Planning Board, and/or Zoning Board of Appeals depending on the specifics of the application. Applicants with liquor licenses will also require approval from the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, after local approval is received. While the Town will work diligently to process applications, applicants are not guaranteed a decision by April 1.
- 3.5 The Office of the Town Manager will notify the applicant and all owners of property within a 300-foot radius of the premises to be licensed of any public hearing via certified mail, at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled hearing date.
- 3.6 Applicants that are approved by the Board will be required to sign a license agreement with the Town of Needham for the use of the public right of way.
- 3.7 Approved applicants may be required to obtain additional permits, subject to the specific furniture and accessories proposed for outdoor dining. Tents and outdoor structures with roofs require a permit from the Building Department. Outdoor

electrical wiring and lighting require an electrical permit from the Building Department. Outdoor heaters require a permit from the Fire Department.

- 3.8 Applicants with outdoor seating approved in on-street parking spaces or in a parking lot must coordinate with the Department of Public Works for the placement of concrete jersey barriers, before outdoor dining furniture can be installed or used.
- 3.9 Outdoor dining licenses must be renewed annually. The Select Board will determine whether a public hearing is required for renewal, taking into consideration any compliance issues, resident or abutter complaints, and safety concerns in the prior year. Renewals will be reviewed subject to the criteria above and to the operational needs of the Town, including but not limited to anticipated roadway or sidewalk construction, potential changes in use of the public property, and changes in the Town's overall parking infrastructure.

#### **Section 4. Fees**

- 4.1 There shall be an annual application fee of \$25, which will be credited toward the annual licensing fee, as defined in Section 4.2, when the application is approved.
- 4.2 For all approved applications, there shall be an additional annual licensing fee for the sole use of public space for outdoor dining at the rate of \$250 per public parking space and \$100 for the use of the sidewalk. If an applicant is approved for the use of public parking space(s) and the sidewalk, the \$100 sidewalk licensing fee will be waived.

#### **Section 5. Exceptions**

The Select Board reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy if it determines that it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.

## **Appendix A. Outdoor Dining Requirements**

All outdoor dining applications will be reviewed by the relevant Town Department(s) to ensure compliance with the following requirements:

### **Public Safety & Accessibility**

1. The plan submitted must show a minimum sidewalk width of 48” and a minimum width of 36” (or as otherwise prescribed by law) is maintained and unobstructed from the sidewalk or entrances into the building or any other designated walkways or pedestrian paths. The table and chairs must be placed within the outdoor seating area in such a manner as to allow free and safe passage of pedestrian traffic.
2. The outdoor seating arrangement may not obstruct or interfere with visibility at any street intersection and must not impede Police or Fire access.
3. The outdoor seating arrangement may not obstruct any fire exit, fire escape or other required ingress or egress.
4. The outdoor seating area must be accessible to people with disabilities and the applicant must at all times comply with all applicable laws, ordinances and regulations concerning accessibility and non-discrimination in the providing of services.
5. Outdoor seating placed on sidewalks or in outdoor areas should maintain a 36’’ clear path between and around all tables and chairs.
6. Seating placed near or adjacent to public ways or parking lots that vehicles can pull up to or travel by must have crash protection, such as concrete barriers.

### **Public Health**

7. All entrances and exit doors through the kitchen used by food service personnel and customers must be screened and provided with air curtains meeting National Sanitation Foundation standards. All windows or openings through the kitchen used for the transfer of food must also be screened and provided with air curtains. (If your entrance and exit or service opening to the outdoor seating area is through the kitchen, you must get Health Department approval.)
8. All food must be prepared inside the facility’s kitchen and kept inside until served. No food may be prepared outside.
9. A system for washing down the outside seating area must be provided.
10. Food service personnel may not serve patrons beyond the outdoor seating area as shown on the plan approved by the licensing authority.
11. Food service personnel must constantly police the outdoor seating area for wastepaper, garbage, and other trash. Covered trash receptacles should be provided and must be emptied as needed to prevent overflowing. They must also be emptied at the end of each evening’s service.
12. If dumpsters are located near these proposed seating areas, need to ensure that areas around dumpsters are clean and sanitary, and no public health nuisance issues with odors or attraction of pests exist.
13. During the operating hours and thereafter, strict clean-up practices must be adhered to. Food service personnel must clear up after each patron and remove all trash and dirty dishes.

14. Outside food handlers must have easy access to handwash sinks and cleaning cloths. Facilities for preparation and disposal of sanitizing solutions must be accessible.
15. Outdoor seating areas shall be considered as part of the restaurant and shall comply with Board of Health regulations, including a prohibition of smoking in seasonal outdoor dining areas and only service animals being allowed in those same areas.
16. Pets not allowed in outdoor seating areas. Only service animals are permitted.

### **Furniture, Fixtures, Lighting & Heating**

17. Tents and outdoor structures with roofs will require a permit from the Building Department.
18. Electrical wiring and lighting for outdoor seating will require an electrical permit from the Building Department.
19. Outdoor heaters require a permit from the Fire Department.
20. The applicant shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the public right-of-way used for the outdoor seating area and the replacement of damaged public property, including brick pavers. No furniture or furnishings may be permanently attached by any means to the public sidewalk or any other public property.
21. Planters may be used to provide added visual interest and create a more attractive and welcoming atmosphere. Planters may not be used to define the area of outdoor seating where the service of alcohol is involved.
22. If a patio is constructed, the patio or other ground surface must be constructed of material readily cleanable and not susceptible to dust, mud, or debris. (Brick, bluestone, tile, and concrete are examples of acceptable materials.)
23. Outdoor dining furniture and fixtures must be maintained in good visual appearance and in clean condition. Tabletops must be easily cleanable and durable and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
24. Umbrellas may be used but must be, when extended, at least 7 feet above the sidewalk or patio level and contained within the outdoor seating area. Umbrellas should be closed when the restaurant is not open for business.
25. Furniture and fixtures must be removed or safely secured when inclement weather is forecasted.
26. At the end of each outdoor dining season, all furniture, umbrellas, and trash receptacles must be removed.
27. All outdoor seating, furnishings and obstructions must be removed from December 1 through and including March 31, unless you have received written approval from the Town of Needham extending your outdoor dining license beyond April 1 - November 30.
28. Electrical or lighting used in or around outdoor seating needs to be UL listed for outdoor continuous use, such as power outlets, lighting and cords or cables. Exterior feeds for lighting or power should not be laid on the ground and installed overhead without code compliant cable and supporting hardware. Electrical wiring for lighting and power shall require a permit and inspection, this work shall be installed by a licensed electrician.
29. Tents, membrane structures and their accessories such as sidewalls, drops, tarpaulins, floor coverings, bunting and combustible decorations shall be certified by an approved testing laboratory meeting the design criteria of NFPA 701. Each Membrane structure or tent shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the size, fabric, and material type, testing agency and standard that fabric was tested under.

30. Portable fire extinguishers are required for each tent or membrane structure.
31. Open or exposed flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any other flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal, or other cooking device or any other unapproved devices shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent or membrane structure while open to the public unless approved by the Fire Code Official.
32. LP Gas containers shall be located on the outside. Containers of 500 gallons or less shall have a minimum separation distance of 10 feet between the container and the structure. Storage of over 500 gallons shall have a minimum distance of 25 feet between the container and the structure.
33. Portable LP Gas containers, piping, valves, and fittings located outside and are being used to fuel equipment inside the tent or membrane structure shall be adequately protected to prevent tampering, damage by vehicles or other hazards and shall be in an approved location. Portable LP Gas containers shall be securely fastened in place to prevent unauthorized movement.

**Licensing Authority**

34. A restaurant requesting outdoor seating must possess a Common Victuallers License.
35. The outdoor seating area must be clearly related to the restaurant conducted in the principal building.
36. Operation of outdoor restaurant seating areas is permitted only when the main place of business is open.
37. If an applicant currently has an alcoholic license and intends to extend that service to the Outdoor Seating area, it must file an Alteration of Premises ABCC form with the Select Board.