Woburn License Commission
Special Meeting
Committee Room
Thursday, June 11, 2026

Members present: Chair Thomas Skeffington, Commissioner William McGrath, and Commissioner Jared Fallon.

Chair Skeffington convened the special meeting of the License Commission at 4:00 p.m.

1. **Discussion and action on House Bill No. 5482, "An Act Authorizing Municipalities to Opt-In to a Temporary Pilot to Extend the House of Liquor Licenses and to Allow for the Public Consumption in Designated Districts in Summer 2026":** Chair Skeffington read an advisory from the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission as follows: "On June 8, 2026, Gov. Maura Healey signed 'An Act Authorizing Municipalities to Opt-In to a Temporary Pilot to Extend the Hours of Liquor Licenses and to Allow for the Public Consumption in Designated Districts in Summer 2026,' which permits Local Licensing Authorities the option to temporarily allow its on-premises licensees to sell alcoholic beverages for one additional hour not to exceed 3 a.m. as well as the ability for on-premises licensees located with public alcoholic beverage consumption areas determined by the LLA the authority to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption. The law took effect immediately. The text of the law is attached." Chair Skeffington said there are two components to the new law. He said the first component is to allow designated drinking in public areas. He said the second component is to extend hours of alcohol service for one hour. Commissioner McGrath said he would like to take one issue at a time. He said if the Commission goes along with the public drinking component of the law, the public drinking can only take place in an area where patrons are buying the alcohol. He said patrons would have to buy that alcohol there, and you can't carry a 6-pack into the area. Chair Skeffington used an example the pocket park where the old Tanner Tavern used to be. He said if a liquor licensee is close enough to that, you can serve there, like it was with outdoor dining. Clerk said he does not think there is any establishment that directly abuts that pocket park. He said Fox Den may be a couple of doors down. Chair Skeffington said the Commission set a precedent when it allowed Fox Den to serve beer at the pocket park for an event. Chair Skeffington said the only establishments that could be eligible for the outdoor consumption aspect of the law are the Woburn Country Club on their outdoor patio and the Brickyard. Commissioner Fallon said there is also the common area at Woburn Village that could also be used for public gatherings. Commissioner McGrath said the Commission has given the owner of Woburn Village permission in the past to hold public gatherings with alcohol at that common area. Chair Skeffington said his take on option 1. He said the everyone has seen the New Year's Eve event at Times Square. He said he is by no means comparing World Cup watch parties to that event but there is always a potential for problems at an event like that. He said he is not a fan of option 1, the component that allows for designated drinking area. Commissioner McGrath said he

is not so much in favor of the whole thing and he is ready to make a motion to deny option 1 of the new law. Motion made by Commissioner McGrath and seconded by Commissioner Fallon to reject the section of House Bill No. 5482 that allows for the consumption of alcoholic beverages in designated drinking areas; all in favor, 3-0. Chair Skeffington said option 2, which allows establishments with liquor licenses to stay open for an extra hour needs to be clarified. He said if you read some of the news articles about option 2 you would be under the impression the state is allowing you to stay open until 3 a.m. He said that is not the case. He said you can stay open an extra hour from your established closing hours, for example, if you close at 10 p.m., you can stay open until 11 p.m. He said last call will still be a half-hour before closing, all drinks off the table 15 minutes before closing and everyone out the door at close. He said he has talked to various people about extending closing hour, including the Building Commissioner, the Chief of Police, Woburn Police Capt. John Murphy, the City Solicitor and a couple of City Councilors. He said for the most part, it is what it is. He said they were not doing jumping jacks, but they understood the logic behind the law. Clerk said no one has contacted him expressing interest in staying open an hour later. Commissioner McGrath said he thinks the Clerk's statement should be part of the record. Chair Skeffington said he talked to a member of the Burlington License Commission who told him he does not think it is going to pass in that town. He said Burlington does not want it. He said not a lot of communities want it. He said the law is basically for Boston. Commissioner McGrath said he thinks the new law will cause headaches. He said the owners of establishments will have to worry about people coming here who don't belong, and they might feel the need to hire a detail, particularly as it gets later in the tournament. Chair Skeffington said for the establishments that stay open late in Woburn already hire security details and have them in place, which he said makes a difference when the compliance checks take place. He said Capt. Murphy's efforts go a long way, too. He said the police department has a good rapport with the establishments. He said his own personal opinion is this law is going to be extended beyond July 31 and probably end up until Christmas. He said it is similar to when the Commission allows extra hours for Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, and there has never been a problem. He said he does not anticipate a problem. He said the way the law was passed it does not give local communities time react. Commissioner Fallon said just to clarify if the Commission votes yes on this, the establishments still have the option to accept it. Chair Skeffington said that is correct. He said he is not a big soccer guy but if the U.S. team stays in the tournament, he's sure everyone and his brother is going to jump on board. Chairman Fallon said this law doesn't automatically extend their hours, it just gives them the option. Clerk said he wants to make it clear that establishments can only stay open for one extra hour, it does not give them permission to stay open until 3 a.m. Commissioner McGrath said that seemed to be the way it was presented on the news. Chairman Skeffington said that is because there are a lot of establishments in Boston that are open until 2 a.m., and that's not the case here. He said between talking to Capt. Murphy and Chief McManus the police can handle it. Commissioner McGrath said if it becomes a problem, the Commission is meeting again in two weeks and can deal with it then. Motion made by Commissioner McGrath and seconded by Commissioner Fallon to accept the portion of the law that allows establishments with liquor licenses to remain

open for one hour later than their posted closing times until July 31, with a review in two weeks; all in favor, 3-0.

2. **Any other matters that may be legally before the Commission:** Chairman Skeffington said he would like to talk to a couple of City Councilors about rooftop dining. He said he thinks the License Commission should revisit that. He said he was re-reading the ordinance for rooftop dining and he will talk to the Building Commissioner but the Commission should really make sure that rooftop dining should not be adjacent to a main street. He said he is not sure if the Commission can do that. Commissioner Fallon asked which establishments have rooftop dining. Chair Skeffington said Tavern in the Square has it. Clerk asked if the Dog House was approved. Chair Skeffington said he does not think the Dog House ever had rooftop dining. Clerk said he thinks there were issues with the elevator at the Dog House. Chair Skeffington said the Commission has still not gotten a ruling on the Dog House's appeal of the revocation of its liquor license. He said he knows from looking at the regulations there has to be some kind of fencing around the rooftop dining area. He asked if that can be put on an agenda for discussion. He said right now you need a special permit for rooftop dining and then alcohol sales would have to be approved. Clerk said he thinks anyone who wants rooftop dining would have to apply for alteration of premises. Chair Skeffington said he would like to tighten up the Commission's Rules and Regulations. He said he does not think it's very specific. Clerk suggested involving the City Solicitor in those discussions.

Motion made by Commissioner McGrath and seconded by Commissioner Fallon to adjourn, all in favor, 3-0. Chairman Skeffington adjourned the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD

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Gordon Vincent
Clerk of Committees