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Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
City Hall
Somerville Massachusetts 02144

Dear Madam Mayor,

This letter summarizes remarks I was invited to present to a Davis Square community meeting at Seven Hills Park this past Sunday morning, which you were unable to attend. As they aroused considerable interest and go to issues beyond our local community, to Somerville and to the entire Commonwealth, I beg to bring them to your attention.

Some background: my family and I have lived in Somerville for almost 60 years, though I myself spent many of them in Asia mainly in Buddhist countries, strongly influencing me to see the value of compassion for everyone, because we all suffer in one way or another. My youngest daughter, a physician, regularly calls to tell me the awful things she sees in treating drug addicts and schizophrenics in Manhattan. Together with her, I've studied this subject closely.

I have advanced professional training in government and in public administration and am an officer of the United States.

I'm also an active bike rider.

Today I'm concerned with the direction our City Elders are taking us. With my graduate training in government, I am highly aware of the centrality of the rule of law to our success as a nation. Some with good intentions are actively undermining it. You can see it in decisions to disable official cooperation in dealing with those illegally in our city, and in our city's announced plan to set up shooting galleries for dangerous and illegal drugs. The overthrow of the rule of law, our treasure and our great model to the world, is too great a sacrifice. Worse: the overthrow of the rule of law is exactly former President Trump's approach to public policy: "It's my pet project and I'll have it done even though it's brazenly illegal." You see daily in the press how well that worked for America on January 6, 2021.

Formerly I spent a great deal of time with my customers in Silicon Valley, staying in San Francisco or in Berkeley. I witnessed with my own eyes the fall of these great communities. Now one sees open narcotic drug sale and use on their streets, and open public copulation and public defecation, all without consequence. Gangs swarm into shops with pocket calculators stealing just under \$1,000, then calmly walk out without consequence. The City Elders think it's great: the public are exercising their autonomy.

Sacrificing the rule of law would be too great even were noble goals reached. But they won't be. These well-intentioned California policies enable self-destructive be-

havior. Anyone who, like me, has sadly had an addicted relative or employee knows that enabling physically destructive behavior means to kill that person. Regardless of intention, **that is the reality**.

Some suggest that shooting gallery visitors will be offered help which they may decline. Medically and legally it's known addicts have diminished capacity, so this suggestion is a medical monstrosity and legal nonsense. Shooting galleries will also act as a public subsidy to narcotic drug dealers.

Our City Elders are on the way to making Somerville a horrorscape like San Francisco. I've seen these things happen with my own eyes. I urge you to stop these degenerative moves, and reverse course right now, because this is where Somerville is heading. We can find ways to actualize our compassion without destroying our city or setting a damaging precedent in the Commonwealth.

Finally, regarding bikes, I urge you and your colleagues to mandate training and licensing of all bike riders and a visible registration plate on all bikes on Somerville streets. A friend was gravely injured by an errant bike and spent a year in recovery. As with the other issues above, to maintain a safe and civilized community, you must attach consequences to actions. It's the very first lesson in Behavioral Science 1.

Very respectfully,