



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

NOVEMBER 23, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Absent</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>

City staff present: Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM and adjourned at 10:26 pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the minutes from 12 October 2021, with edits provided by Member Talun.

PUBLIC MEETING: 350 Assembly Row (P&Z 21-137)

(continued from 9 November 2021)

Due to a lack of quorum for this case, as Member Arbaugh needed to recuse himself from the discussion, the Commission was required to continue this item.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the case to a future meeting date.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC MEETING: 16 and 20 Medford Street (P&Z 21-057)

(continued from 9 November 2021)

The applicant team presented an updated proposal with feedback from previous meetings incorporated into the design. Several changes made to the preferred facade design were highlighted, as well as changes made to the landscape plan.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the location of the transformer vault, the retail signage, and the storefront design. The Commission suggested reducing the base on the commercial ground-story of the building, as well as reworking the design of the geometry of the balconies where the two facades meet. The Commission also suggested adjusting the building massing on the secondary facades along Bedford Street and Warren Street to create a differentiation between the front and side of the building, and possibly refining the façade by stepping down the column bays from three-stories to two-stories. The Commission recommended altering the location of the street trees to create a more balanced look on Bedford Street, unifying the furnishing zones to become more

continuous along the streetscape, and exploring an alternative plan for the location at the rear of the site as the Commission is not confident in the currently proposed dog-run plan. The Commission and applicant team also discussed the materiality and depth of the balconies.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to incorporate additional guidance into the design.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that the Planning Board impose a condition on the applicant to provide large-scale details describing how the building meets the grading along the edges of the public realm.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 50 Webster Ave (P&Z 21-060)

(continued from 26 October 2021)

The applicant team presented updates to their façade design; including the materiality, the revised corner, and entryway design. The team also presented a lot plan.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the updated materiality color, the parking plan, and the penthouse design. The Commission recommended refining the design of the significant corner of the building facing the T-stop. They also suggested that the team design the penthouse in a way that does not feel as prominent compared to the rest of the building, as well as examining the setbacks further. The Commission encouraged the applicant team to develop the materiality changes further, especially the green glass element and possibly returning to the brick that was originally proposed. They felt that the green glass could be a good element to incorporate into the Civic Space to tie both spaces together. The Commission also recommended that the applicant team look for opportunities to add art or a green wall along the train track (North) side of the building façade.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) that the design guidelines have been met for the High-Rise district.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to incorporate additional guidance into the design.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 62 Prospect Street - Civic Space (P&Z 21-166)

(continued from 26 October 2021)

The applicant team presented the updated proposal with feedback incorporated from the previous design review, as well as shared a full site plan. The team explained possible programming ideas for the space, presented seating options, and explained materiality choices.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the possibility of interactive features, the update of the Union Square Plaza and Streetscape design, and the direction of the pavilion concept. The Commission encouraged the team to let the space be “funky and creative” and allow the weird moments to exist. The Commission recommended exploring the curved glass component more and how the columns of the building will be interacting

with that space. They felt that there is a possibility of adding a water feature in this element, which could create a prism effect. They also encouraged the team to think about how the space will look in the daylight versus at night time. The pavilion design could be pushed further to create an iconic piece of art for the neighborhood. The Commission suggested that the connection to the Civic Space should be larger to create a more welcoming and prominent entrance.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) that the design guidelines have been met for a central plaza.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to incorporate additional guidance into the design.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to make the Planning Board aware that the Urban Design Commission was unable to render the streetscape relationship to the proposed Civic Space, as the Union Square Plaza & Streetscape plan is still being worked on by City staff.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

The meeting went into recess from 8:41pm and reconvened at 8:50pm.

PUBLIC MEETING: 10 Washington Street (P&Z 21-134)

The applicant team presented a 4-story, 78,000 square foot, LEED platinum, commercial/lab building. The proposed design will emulate the appearance of the team's other brick and beam mill building properties in the Boston area, with large entrances and windows. The team presented four façade design options, with option 4 being the preferred option. The applicant team also touched upon their initial landscape plan.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the design and height of the penthouse, the intent of the first floor commercial spaces, and how a full landscape plan is needed to be able to fully understand the scope of their strategy. The Commission is in agreement that option 4 is their preferred option as well. The Commission and applicant team discussed the best location for the main entrance.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend façade design 4.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC MEETING: 96-100 Broadway (P&Z 21-117)

The applicant team presented the site context, shadow studies, and site plan for a proposed general building, as well as quickly touching on their landscape plan. The team presented floor plans and three façade design options.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the arts space, the amenity spaces being provided to the residents in and outdoors, the sizes of the windows, how the proposed plan reads more of a commercial building rather than a residential building, the residential unit composition, and how there was a lack of specificity in the materiality in

the presentation. The team then went back through their façade options with more detail regarding their materiality choices. The Commission and applicant team reviewed the floor plans in more detail, including window placements in certain units. They continued the discussion of the façade options in relation to other buildings in the area. The Commission encouraged the team to continue developing their design.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.