

MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Somerville Inspectional Services, Planning Board and Zoning Board
RE: 16 & 20 Medford Street - P&Z 21-057
Neighborhood Meeting Report - DRSR
Project Neighborhood Meeting #1 – August 30, 2021
Project Neighborhood Meeting #2 – January 10, 2022

As required under the Form: DRSR, following please find Somerville Living LLC's (the "Applicant") Neighborhood Meeting Report for the 16 & 20 Medford Street Project (P&Z 21-057) (the "Premises"). The following includes a summary of any concerns raised at the two (2) neighborhood meetings for the project, a detailed response to those concerns raised and a description of any changes to the proposed development made as a result of the feedback.

The Applicant, in conjunction with Ward 2 Councilor JT Scott, held two (2) virtual neighborhood meetings for the project; the first was held on Monday, August 30, 2021, at 6:00PM; and the second was held on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 6:00PM.

First Neighborhood Meeting Report - Monday, August 30, 2021

1. Concern – Traffic and Parking Concerns for residents as well as visitors.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this concern and has worked diligently to address them with the proposed project. The Applicant notes that the traffic patterns and site utilization trips for the proposed project will be distinctly different from the existing and longtime utilization of the Premises by Somerville Gas & Service Station + Cubby Oil. There will no longer be large oil trucks and vehicles coming in and out of the site's large curb cuts at all times of day for deliveries, gas, and related services. Additionally, the large curb cuts will now be removed to help curtail the ability for short term temporary parking on the sidewalk which has historically blocked pedestrian and bicycle activity. Furthermore, the Applicant has since reduced the total number of proposed units from 44 to 41, while maintaining the proposed 43 off-street garage parking spaces, thus providing a one-to-one parking ratio per unit and allowing for two (2) potential short-term visitor and delivery spaces on the site (and/or ride sharing spaces in compliance with the Mobility Division requirements). The Applicant has also relocated the garage entry door along Bedford Street further into the Premises, so the proposed project is able to allow for these short-term parking spaces without the need to enter the actual garage allowing for ease of access for short-term visitors and deliveries.

2. Concern – Traffic circulation in and around site and City's plans for South Street directional change, bike lanes and other changes.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this concern and has worked closely with the City's Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development – Planning, Preservation, and Zoning Division, its Mobility Division (collectively, "OSPCD") as well as the nearby Boynton Yards development team to understand current and future plans for South Street as well as the immediate area and impacts on traffic circulation. As a result, the Applicant has located its garage

entrance off of Bedford Street in order to minimize vehicular entrances and exits on South Street and Medford Street. Additionally, Medford Street is categorized as a “Pedestrian Street” under the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (“SZO”) which limits what can and cannot be incorporated along this longest street frontage of the Premises; because it is designated as a Pedestrian Street under the SZO, the ground floor must include a retail/commercial use and curb cuts are not allowed on Medford Street as a result. The Applicant looks forward to continuing to work with OSPCD to incorporate any City plans for South Street and the immediate area with regard to the proposed project.

3. Concern – Trash Pickup and Logistics.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this quality-of-life concern from its neighbors and has indicated that it will review the potential for private commercial trash management and pickup. As the proposed project is intended as condominium home ownership, the building will be professionally managed and there will be a property manager and/or maintenance staff member that will bring trash out on the day of collection to/from the interior trash rooms. Additionally, the Applicant modified its ground floor layout in response to these concerns, relocating the residential trash room from its original location off the main residential lobby to a space immediately off the main garage entry and Bedford Street, with direct access off the street. This location will provide for a much more convenient location for pickup access, easier and quicker to pick up directly from the Street, while maintaining direct resident access from within the building envelope. The commercial trash room for the small 3,500 square foot commercial space is proposed to be located along Warren Street with direct access for pickup thereat. Finally, the Applicant notes that this is a condominium home ownership project and, once constructed and occupied, the Applicant and/or condominium board will be established and approved condominium documents to manage trash logistics.

4. Concern – Deliveries to the Building and Logistics to Prevent Double Parking and Sidewalk Parking.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this concern and has worked diligently to address them with the proposed project. Please see response and details described in concern no. 1 above herein. The Applicant also notes that the removal of the existing large curb cuts will help to curtail double parking, parking on top of the sidewalk, and blocking of the sidewalk. The Applicant also proposes to add additional street trees and a bike rack around the Premises, which will also help minimize the ability for vehicular sidewalk parking and more defined curb areas.

5. Concern – Move In/Out, Moving Trucks and Logistics.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this quality-of-life concern from its neighbors and again notes that the proposed project is intended as condominium home ownership; as such, the building will be professionally managed and there will be a property management company to assist residents moving in and out of the building. Additionally, as this is intended as a condo building, there will be less yearly turnover versus a rental building with a traditional one (1) year lease structure. Furthermore, once constructed and occupied, the Applicant and/or condominium board will establish and approve condominium documents to address the logistics of move in and

move out procedures. Finally, the Applicant notes that, as a response to the neighborhood concerns, it has relocated the garage entry by pulling in the overhead door roughly 25 feet from the building façade, and raised the garage level to increase the finish height of the first-floor open garage area, to accommodate smaller moving trucks within the garage and Premises itself, thus alleviating the need for a moving truck to park along the adjacent streets.

6. Concern – Overhead wires, potential removal of power lines via grounding and location of transformer vault.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this concern and request as a potential opportunity to update and improve the public realm and streetscape in and around the Premises as part of the proposed project and has reviewed its feasibility with both Eversource and the City’s Director of Engineering. As a result of these discussions, the Applicant respectfully submits that it is both financially and logistically infeasible to bury underground wires at the site and, moreover, the City’s Engineering Department has had limited prior experience with this scope of work. Based on these discussions, it is the Applicant’s understanding that the City does not have any recent involvement with burying overhead utility lines in public streets and that the cost is estimated to be very high with valuations likely crossing a million dollars simply for a block or two of work (such as at the site). Additionally, this estimate does not consider that telecommunications would need to be buried in separate duct banks; likely doubling or tripling the total cost, and there are approximately 250 feet of concrete encased ductbank and UG cables, along with telecom and other utilities on the existing street poles. Therefore, the Applicant submits that this undertaking is simply too expensive, too time consuming and too complex for this size of a proposed project.

However, the Applicant is working with Eversource to potentially eliminate and improve the site at the corner of Bedford and South Street, where there are two telephone poles adjoined to each other. The Applicant is also working with Eversource to potentially eliminate the telephone pole currently servicing the gas station only. These design upgrades to the public realm will vastly improve the sidewalks as well as site aesthetics and accomplish as much of these goals as possible to remove and replace overhead wires and power lines.

Finally, with regard to the location of the underground vault, the Applicant has sited it at the rear of the Premises itself along Warren Street, on private property, where it is least impactful to the development and the neighborhood.

7. Concern – What type of business/tenant in ground floor commercial space?

Response/Changes – The Applicant has not yet selected a business or tenant for the ground floor commercial space; however, it will use best efforts to select a local retail component, if possible, that will help to serve the local neighborhood in a pedestrian manner, and bring vibrancy and activity to the streetscape. In this regard, the SZO includes use limitations for ground floor commercial space (as Medford Street designated as a Pedestrian Street) with the following principal use categories as potential allowed uses:

- a) Arts & Creative Enterprise, for example, *Artisanal Production/Arts Exhibition/Design Services/Co-working*;

- b) Food & Beverage Service, for example, *Bar/Restaurant/Tavern/Bakery/Café/Coffee Shop*;
- c) Retail Sales, for example, *Consumer Goods/Fresh Food Market/Grocery Store*; and
- d) Civic & Institutional, for example, *Community Center/Library/Museum/Public Service*.

8. Concern – Property Management of landscaping, trash, deliveries.

Response/Changes – See above responses to similar questions. Again, the Applicant submits that, as the proposed project is intended as condominium home ownership, the building will be professionally managed and there will be a property manager and/or maintenance staff member who will provide property management of landscaping, trash, deliveries, etc., all as delineated in the forthcoming condominium documents and as part of the building owners' condominium fees, this will include maintenance of all landscaping, including street trees situated on the Premises but within the public realm.

9. Concern – Lot coverage and existing conditions of sidewalks around site, curb cuts.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this concern and believes the proposed project will vastly improve the existing conditions of the Premises and will also greatly enhance the walkability and the pedestrian experience. The Applicant has also since reduced the proposed project's building footprint on all sides in order to enlarge all sidewalks to 12 feet wide. At the time of the first neighborhood meeting, the Applicant proposed widening the existing sidewalks at Medford, South and Bedford Streets; for instance, Bedford Street currently has a four (4') foot wide sidewalk, and the Applicant was proposing to expand it to six (6') feet wide; South Street currently has a six (6') foot wide sidewalk at most areas, but pinches at the corner of South and Bedford Streets, and the Applicant was proposing a 12-foot-wide sidewalk. As a result of input at the first neighborhood meeting (and that from the Urban Design Commission), the Applicant is now proposing to reduce the building footprint in order to enlarge all sidewalks to 12 feet wide, as follows:

- Medford Street: Existing Sidewalk = 8'-0" +/- wide - Proposed increase to 12'-0" wide.
- South Street: Existing Sidewalk = 6'-0" +/- wide - Proposed increase to 12'-0" wide.
- Bedford Street: Existing Sidewalk = 4'-0" +/- wide - Proposed increase to 12'-0" wide (previous proposal 6'-0" wide).
- Warren Street: Existing Sidewalk = 4'-9" +/- wide - Proposed increase to 12'-0" wide (previous proposal 4'-9" wide).

Lastly, the Applicant states that the current site is almost 100% impervious due to the large parking areas, pavement and building coverage, and the proposed project incorporates more pervious materials, open space and landscaping than currently available.

10. Concern – Construction Management and Construction Parking.

Response/Changes – The Applicant understands this quality-of-life concern from its neighbors and is very experienced in the construction management practice. The Applicant has over 65 years of

experience developing projects in Massachusetts and, as a multi-generational family-owned and operated business, they take extreme pride in creating a high-quality development with detailed construction management practices. Additionally, the Applicant plans to engage with a successful building contractor with experience in the urban setting and will work with all neighbors and the City to implement a construction management plan to limit impacts to the neighborhood. All contractors to the site will be notified in advance that there will be no parking on or around the site and will be required to adhere to the Applicant's construction management policies.

Second Neighborhood Meeting Report - Monday, January 10, 2022

1. Concern – Parking for Visitors and Deliveries to Site.

Response/Changes – The Applicant has now incorporated at least two (2) on-site parking spaces in the surface parking area just outside the garage doors as “short term/drop off/pickup” parking spaces and/or ride sharing spaces in compliance with the Mobility Division requirements, and will include signage to this effect for these spaces. The Applicant has also relocated the garage entry door along Bedford Street further into the Premises, so the proposed project is able to allow for these short-term parking spaces without the need to enter the actual garage allowing for ease of access for short-term visitors and deliveries.

2. Concern – General Parking Questions Related to ADA Parking Compliance, Unbundled Parking and Deeded Parking for Condominium Project.

Response/Changes – The Applicant appreciates these questions and continues to work with the OSPCD and related City agencies such as Disabilities to understand and formalize the parking programming for the proposed project, which continues to provide a one-to-one parking ratio per unit and the allowance of two (2) potential short-term visitor and delivery spaces on the Premises. As this is a proposed condominium homeownership project, the Applicant respectfully notes that certain parking programming measures (amenity parking, public parking, etc.) are simply not feasible for legal, security, and other reasons.

3. Concern – Snow and Ice Clearing on Sidewalks Pre-Construction for Existing Site.

Response/Changes – The Applicant appreciates this concern and has contracted with a company to ensure that snow and ice is correctly cleared and cleaned in and around the site during the winter.

4. Concern – South Street Direction and Modifications.

Response/Changes – The Applicant continues to work with the OSPCD to understand current and future plans for South Street, as well as the immediate area, and impacts on traffic circulation and potential bike lanes in order to ensure that the proposed project is compatible with these future plans and does not hinder the City's impending programming thereon.

5. Concern – Garbage Collection and Logistics.

Response/Changes – Please see above details and response from the first neighborhood meeting. Again, the Applicant subsequently modified its ground floor layout in response to these concerns, relocating the residential trash room from its original location off the main residential lobby to a space immediately off the main garage entry and Bedford Street, with direct access off the street. This location will provide for a much more convenient location for pickup access, easier and quicker to pick up directly from the Street, while maintaining direct resident access from within the building envelope.

6. Concern – Burying powerlines and location of transformer/vaults (repeat question).

Response/Changes – Please see above details and response from the first neighborhood meeting.