



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff
SUBJECT: 325-375 Assembly Row, P&Z 22-101
POSTED: August 12, 2022

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions – Plan Revision Major Amendment

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the development review application submitted for 325-375 Assembly Row, identifies any additional discretionary or administrative development review that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary. The application was deemed complete on July 22, 2022, and is scheduled for a public hearing on August 18, 2022. Any Staff recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

LEGAL NOTICE

Street Retail, LLC proposes a revision to a previously issued Special Permit with Site Plan Approval (PB2016-14) in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use District to change the permitted design of ASQ Linear Park.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

Street Retail, LLC is proposing to change the existing bocce court in Assembly Line Park to a fire feature and seating area. The proposed development does not change the amount of open space, landscape, or pervious surface.

ADDITIONAL REVIEW NECESSARY

325-375 Assembly Row is located Assembly Square Mixed-use District (ASMD) represented by Ward 1 Councilor Matthew McLaughlin. A revision to the PUD-PMP requires a Plan Revision Major Amendment and the Planning Board is the decision-making authority for all (non-variance) discretionary or administrative permits required for the ASMD zoning district.

ANALYSIS

Street Retail, LLC (successor to the original applicant SRI Assembly Row B8, LLC), on behalf of Federal Realty OP LP (formerly known as Federal Realty Investment Trust), is requesting a revision to the Special Permit with Site Plan Approval (SPSR-A) for the ASQ Linear Park (PB2016-14), as approved September 22, 2016. The revision includes improvements to the outdoor amenity space now called Assembly Line Park within the Planned Unit Development Preliminary Master Plan (PUD-PMP), originally approved by the Planning Board on December 14, 2006 as PB2006-59 and subsequently amended.

Section 7.4.3.c of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, adopted in December 2019, specifies the PUD-PMP and subsequent SPSR-A remain governed by the provisions of the previous ordinance, in effect on August 1, 2019.

Due to the underutilization of the existing bocce court area, the Applicant is proposing to replace the bocce court with an enhanced fire feature area (which had been originally proposed within the approved SPSR-A) to include additional wood decking, catenary lighting, plantings, and landscaping. The revisions to the outdoor public amenity space are in line with the original application and will not result in any changes to buildings, program, or proposed use.

CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

The Planning Board is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to deliberate each of the following considerations at the public hearing. The Board must discuss and draw conclusions for each consideration, but may make additional findings beyond this minimum statutory requirement.

Special Permit with Site Plan Approval Considerations

1. The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.
2. The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.
3. Mitigation proposed to alleviate any impacts attributable to the proposed development.

Per SZO 15.2.4.e.ii. "When considering a revision to a previously approved development review application, the Review Boards shall limit their review to only the changes to the previously approved application." As the open space is complete and this request is only a specific activity change, there are no changes to the findings requiring consistency with the comprehensive plan or the intent of the zoning district. The proposal remains consistent with the goals described within the Assembly Square Plan and the PUD-PMP to create a high-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly environment. However, the Board may consider whether any

mitigation is required to alleviate impacts on the surrounding neighborhood due to this requested change.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the required Site Plan Approval for the Central Plaza Civic Space, Public Space and Urban Forestry Staff and Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff recommend the following conditions:

Permit Validity

- This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

Public Record

- Physical copies of all development review submittal materials, as permitted by the Planning Board, must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division for the public record.
- A copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division for the public record.