

# Neighborhood Meeting Report - 10 Washington Street – P&Z #21-134

## Meeting Dates:

Neighborhood Meeting #1 – October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Neighborhood Meeting #2 – March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Executive Summary:

The project team for the proposed development at 10 Washington Street in Somerville, MA, held two neighborhood meetings ahead of the submission of the final Development Review Application. These meetings, held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, were moderated by Ward 1 Councilor Matt McLaughlin and attended by Rebecca Cooper from the Somerville Planning Department. Both meetings were well attended by members of the public.

At each meeting neighboring residents, and business and property owners in the project area were given the opportunity to learn more about the proposed development, ask questions directly to the design team, and voice feedback on the initial design and subsequent refinements.

Notice for both meetings was distributed as outlined in Section 15.1.3 of the Somerville Zoning ordinance, with notice posted publicly to the Somerville City website, mailed directly to abutters within 350 ft. of the development site on both the Somerville and Boston side of the municipal boundary, and also delivered by hand.

Both meetings held in Webinar format.

## Neighborhood Meeting #1 Summary & Community Feedback

At the initial neighborhood meeting the following key project elements were shared:

- Project Site Information and Existing Conditions
- Summary of the Project Team
- Summary of Key Project Specifications
  - Zoning
  - Proposed Uses
  - Massing & Project Size
  - LEED & Sustainable Design Elements
- Initial Design Approach and Preliminary Renderings

Feedback from the neighborhood attendees and abutters was largely positive, with key questions around the following issues:

**Attendee Question:** How do you plan to have no parking?

**Owner Response:** Parking requirements are met in the neighboring garage built as part of the 20 Innerbelt apartment development. The project's close proximity to public transportation should also drastically reduce the reliance on individual car travel to and from the building.

**Attendee Question:** You had mentioned two tenants that would be going into this building, is that the case?

**Owner Response:** Pardon the miscommunication, those were examples of tenants that could occupy the space as they currently occupy 56 & 52 Roland Street, our other properties adjacent to the development site. We expect similar users to occupy the future building, but the project will be built on a speculative basis.

**Attendee Question:** Okay, have you decided what type of use this new building will have and what types of tenants will be occupying this space?

**Owner Response:** We are anticipating targeting Research and Development and Laboratory users for this building. There's a subset of the marketplace that the brokerage community has labeled "Intelligent R&D" covering things from battery technology and robotics to BSL-2 laboratory space. We anticipate targeting those uses.

**Attendee Question:** Hi, I really appreciate that this meeting is happening. It's good to learn more about the project. I just have a question about the first floor. Is there going to be retail space on that floor or is the entire building going to be commercial?

**Owner Response:** We are early in the process, and we are reaching out to brokers in the market to see if it is feasible to attract some sort of small retail offering on the first floor. We are still making that determination.

**Attendee Question:** I saw that the sidewalk looks like it is going to be expanded in the initial design. I believe that there is a bus stop on that section of street, is there anything additional that will be added there, or will it remain just a sign?

**Owner Response:** You're right, there is a bus stop there. We are working with the mobility department to determine what level of improvement they would like to see for that location. We may include a bus enclosure in our final design once we have the feedback of Mobility.

**Meeting Attendance:**

Noah Sparkman	Organizer
Turner, Nathan	Presenter
Kevin McCall	Presenter
Rebecca Cooper	Attendee
John Caldwell	Attendee
Diethelm, Mark	Attendee
Gerald B	Attendee
Henry White, Florence St	Attendee
Chung Lee	Attendee
Michael	Attendee
Oscar Ditwillya	Attendee
Matthew McLaughlin	Attendee
Stephen Mackey	Attendee
Meredith Porter	Attendee

Tony Morra SGA  
Margulies, Marc  
Scott Nielsen

Attendee  
Presenter  
Attendee

## Neighborhood Meeting #2 Summary & Community Feedback

At the second neighborhood meeting, the project team provided an update on the approval steps taken since the initial neighborhood meeting in October, iterations on the design, and landscaping details. Key topics covered in the meeting were:

- Feedback and iterative design based on the Urban Design Commission Process
- Meetings with the Mobility, Engineering, Sustainability, and Economic Development departments
- A detailed breakdown of the need for a Special Permit to proceed with a no-parking project

Feedback from the neighborhood attendees and abutters was largely positive, with key questions around the following issues:

**Attendee Question:** Hi, we have a property on Mount Vernon Street which is just up from the corner of Broadway and Washington. This might be a question for you or the city councilman. We've had issues with rodents and rats and that kind of stuff, and oftentimes projects where there is excavation increase the problem. I'm wondering if there will be any type of control or abatement during the project to help address this issue and how we're going to control this.

**Councilman Response:** I can take this if you don't mind because rats are something I spend a lot of time talking about. Fortunately there is some help on the way. I actually live on Mt. Vernon St. as well on the other end of town, and yes, the city requires a rodent mitigation plan to address any potential movement of earth with projects. I will also put my email address in the chat and you can contact me directly and I will connect you with the Rat Czar who is going around the city doing a lot of great services and addressing this issue. There's a lot of rodent resources and the developer will be held to a high standard throughout the process.

**Attendee Question:** Hi, my question is much more around the special permit required. Can you go into greater detail about why you need a special permit for this project? Is it only for the parking or are there other elements behind that requirement?

**Owner Response:** Sure. In our initial neighborhood meeting we had proposed a no-parking project. As we completed a more detailed review of the zoning ordinance it became apparent that while we have a highly transit-oriented development site, we're within .27 miles of the Sullivan Square Orange Line Station, and there is a bus stop at our front door, we were outside of the ¼ mile walk-shed which allows for no-parking projects. With the full support of the mobility and planning departments we have elected to maintain our no parking approach to the project, but we will need to apply for a special permit to formalize the city's approval of this approach. No other aspects of the project require a special permit.

**Attendee Question:** Hi, I am the project manager for the project next door where the City Club was. We are really excited for the Paradigm project on the corner and the efforts to continue to reinvigorate Somerville. I will say this from a personal perspective, Paradigm as a company has been a delight to work with, always prompt and good for their word. It's clear they will be here for a long time and continue to

contribute to the community. So, we're excited to have this project as a neighbor and I like to think that all the projects in this area will bring a new vibrancy to the area.

**Post Meeting Follow-up:**

Emails from three members of the community were received after the meeting requesting copies of the slides presented at the neighborhood meeting and additional information regarding the project's sustainability, floor plans, and design. These emails were answered by the ownership team.

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John Caldwell	Attendee
Diethelm, Mark	Attendee
Gerald B	Attendee
Matthew McLaughlin	Attendee
Scott Nielsen	Attendee
Colleen Langford	Attendee
Niranjan Gawli	Attendee
Tori Antonio	Attendee
Jessica McGuinn	Attendee