



City of Somerville  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**5 MAY 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Michael Capuano	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Amelia Aboff	Vice Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Jahan Habib	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Erin Geno	Clerk	<i>Present</i>	
Debbie Howitt Easton	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Sarah Lewis (Director of Planning, Preservation & Zoning), Victor Nascimento (Planning, Preservation & Zoning), Emily Hutchings (Planning, Preservation & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm and adjourned at 7:17pm.

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

Director Lewis provided an overview of the project as well as reviewed the Assembly Square Preliminary Master Plan of the Planned Unit Development (PUD). She noted that since the development was previously approved it follows different rules, although the applicant team has continued to work with the city to follow the intent of the existing zoning ordinance. The team has been through all the required procedural steps, including Neighborhood Meetings and Design Review. Director Lewis did note that there must be a revision to the PUD amendment to include updated design guidelines, which has been separately advertised and will be on the agenda for the next Planning Board meeting, and that they must be voted on prior to the Site Plan Approval so the Board cannot vote on the item before them this evening. Director Lewis reviewed what was required when the PUD was approved versus what the zoning ordinance requires now.

The applicant team reviewed 350 Assembly Row and stated that it is the last parcel to complete the main street through the area. The team presented the parking plan, proposed uses, and noted that they are pursuing LEED Gold despite only being required to be LEED Certifiable. The applicant team presented the site massing concept, building design evolution, ground floor plan, renderings from different perspectives, elevations from all sides of the building, and the materiality of the exterior. The team continued the presentation with a review of the roadway condition, paving and streetscape improvements that prioritize pedestrian use, landscape plans including lighting fixtures and seating options, programming options such as outdoor dining and games, and showed further renderings that emphasized the pedestrian focus and the connection between Block 7A and Block 8.

The Board and Staff discussed the status of the Assembly Row Neighborhood Plan and if the proposal follows SomerVision2040 as it was noted in the Staff Memo. Staff stated that they will follow up on this and will get back to the Board.

Chair Capuano opened public testimony. No one indicated they wished to speak. Chair Capuano closed public testimony. Chair Capuano stated that the written comment period will remain open until noon on 13 May 2022.

The Board and Staff considered whether the project should be held to the standards of SomerVision2040 or SomerVision2030.

The Board and applicant team discussed the traffic flow and the use of the alley/roadway, the pedestrian infrastructure, and the loading plan for the building. They spoke about how the massing of the building is significantly smaller than what is permitted, how the market risk and nature of the lab/life science industry drove their decision on building size and massing, that this is an area where the city is encouraging density, and that the Board encourages the applicant team to use the full extent of their permitting rights as it applies to the city's economic development and sustainability goals.

The Board requested that the applicant team speak to if the proposal is keeping with the city's best practices and urban design goals in public spaces, including accessibility. The applicant team confirmed that they will review the most recent recommendations with the Public Space & Urban Forestry (PSUF) Division and will be prepared to present at the next meeting.

The Board and applicant team also discussed how the parking plan has evolved, the two Neighborhood Meetings they held, whether a parking study was done, and where (in the context of the neighborhood goals, the master plan, and in a global sense) they came from and where they expect to go with parking. Staff confirmed that they will get the Board's questions answered regarding parking. The applicant team verified that when the PUD was originally approved, about 15 years ago, about 10,000 parking spaces were approved. With the construction of Block 7A they will be at about 3,400 spaces, significantly lower than what they were entitled to build. The Board noted the presence of the Orange Line and its benefit.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>CONTINUED</b>
----------------	------------------

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