



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

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

AUGUST 23, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Houde	Member	<i>Present</i>
Cheri Ruane	Member	<i>Absent</i>

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm and adjourned at 7:58pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Staff failed to include the 10 May 2022, 24 May 2022, and the 7 June 2022 meeting minutes in the Commission's packet for this meeting, therefore this item will be continued to the next meeting.

PUBLIC MEETING: 299 Broadway (40B) – Buildings and Civic Spaces

Staff provided a summary of the 299 Broadway project, which will be permitted through a Comprehensive Permit, and provided an overview of the 40B process. Staff noted that the city is supportive of this 40B project.

The Commission asked if the project has received a Project Eligibility Letter (PEL) from Mass Housing. The applicant team responded that the project is still being reviewed by the state.

The Commission and applicant team discussed how the design and review of the project is a collaborative process between the applicant team, the community, the city, and the state. The Commission inquired whether they would be making a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals so that they can vote on the project. Staff confirmed that was accurate and the recommendation would be like any other design review. The Commission requested that the applicant team return to the UDC with any design review notes and recommendations they receive from Mass Housing.

The applicant team presented the site context, existing conditions, public realm concept, the dedicated community space that will be disassociated from the project when finished, retail spaces, floor plans, bicycle parking, the general massing strategy, and elevations. The presentation was a broad overview of the proposal, as the applicant team will return to the UDC with a more detailed presentation at a later date.

The applicant team presented two civic spaces, a pocket plaza, and a pocket park with a connecting mews between the two civic spaces. The team spoke about the civic spaces, connections with the buildings and greater

neighborhood, and how the design takes into consideration the topography and shape of the site. They also addressed their native planting strategy, seating options, and the programming of the spaces.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the public versus private areas, the indoor/outdoor schematic of the residential units, the lack of parking being offered and how the Commission would like to see the parking study that they conducted, how this will not be a phased development considering the team has acquired control over the *Walgreens* site, the small section of the property that the team plans to deed out to the city to build a small affordable housing development, and the number of affordable versus market rate units. They also spoke about how the civic spaces will be privately owned and operated but with a public easement, the management plan for the buildings and civic spaces, the streetscape thought process for Broadway and Temple Street, how the team has been researching how they can make the retail spaces viable, the small green space abutting Grant Street, and emergency access.

The Commission and application team also discussed the success of the massing approach, the possibility of increasing the height on Broadway, the opportunity to differentiate building A from building B, the importance of making sure the amenity spaces and accessibility are high quality, the need for being specific about selecting the right types of retail tenants for these spaces considering the lack of parking being offered, and the tightness of the connection between the plaza and the courtyard of building B. The Commission requested that the team provide a more elaborate shadow study of the courtyards at the next meeting.

They continued the discussion with the ground floor residential units and the 30' planting buffer along those units, the entrances to the mews off Broadway and Sewall Street, the programming of the mews, the trash/recycling plan and locations, and the balance between public and private spaces. The Commission recommended that the team further explore the design of the connection between Temple Street and the Sewall Street civic space, as well as the programming of both civic spaces.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the design review for the buildings to a future meeting.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the design review for the civic spaces to a future meeting.

RESULT:	CONTINUED
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OTHER BUSINESS: Update on UDC's Rules of Policies and Procedures

Member Arbaugh provided an update on the subcommittee's work on reviewing the UDC's current Rules of Policies and Procedures and asked that the subcommittee's review be distributed to the rest of the Commissioners.

Staff confirmed that the Planning, Preservation, and Zoning Division is currently working on updating all of the Board's and Commission's Rules of Policies and Procedures to ensure that everything is up-to-date, and all of the legal processes have been included in the documents. Staff stated that they can distribute what the subcommittee has drafted, but they will also be circulating the updated document that they have been working on as soon as possible.

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.