



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

22 SEPTEMBER 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>	
Erin Geno	Clerk	<i>Present</i>	
Jahan Habib	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Debbie Howitt Easton	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Raisa Saniat (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Emily Hutchings (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Sarah White (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Charlotte Leis (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and adjourned at 7:45pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: 59 Bow Street (P&Z 21-017)
(continued from 18 August 2022)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this case to 13 October 2022.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: 299 Broadway Project Introduction

Staff stated that the Planning Board will have an important advisory role to the Zoning Board of Appeals in the applicant's process to a Comprehensive Permit on this case, once the application is formally submitted. The Board confirmed that they will not take any votes or grant any permits on this application.

The applicant team presented the project timeline, the 40B process, site context and plan, ground floor plans, building massing and materiality, and the civic spaces. The team noted that *Walgreens* will be relocating down the street so the neighborhood will not be losing that amenity due to this project. There is also another empty lot on Sewall Street that this applicant team will be giving over to the city or a city entity to develop into another affordable housing project. The team reviewed the affordable housing unit and retail space breakdown, the reason they are not offering on-site parking, and how they plan to encourage the tenants of the buildings to use the public transit options in the area.

The Board and Staff discussed exactly how the Planning Board's advisory role works with regards to making recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as a broad overview of the 40B process.

The Board and applicant team quickly touched upon if there is room to increase the number of affordable units, how loading and deliveries will be handled, the reason behind the separation of the affordable and market units, the need for ADA accessible affordable units, the plan for the retail spaces, and the intent of the community room.

The Board, applicant team, and Staff discussed the process and how the project may change after the team receives approval from the state (Department of Housing and Community Development).

PUBLIC HEARING: 394 McGrath Highway (P&Z 21-122)
(continued from 8 September 2022)

Chair Capuano stated that the Board already heard a presentation from this applicant team, the public testimony has been closed on this case, and the Board asked the team to return to address concerns that were raised regarding transportation and loading.

The applicant team explained that they relocated the transformer vault and increased the height of the second floor to allow room for larger trucks to fit when needed for loading/unloading and deliveries. The unit count will remain the same, just reconfigured slightly, and the truck bay will now be 15 feet high.

The Board confirmed that this is new information and will need to be reviewed by Staff. They may also need to re-open public testimony.

The Board and applicant team discussed the new transformer location and loading area.

Staff confirmed that from a procedural standpoint, the Board cannot vote on this case until Staff reviews the new information, provides a supplemental Staff Memo, and public testimony is taken.

Chair Capuano opened public testimony. No one indicated they wished to speak. Chair Capuano closed public testimony. Written testimony was left open until noon on 7 October 2022.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the case to 13 October 2022.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

Vice Chair Aboff recused herself.

PUBLIC HEARING: 50 Webster Avenue – Building (P&Z 21-060)
(continued from 8 September 2022)

The applicant team presented an overview of the information requested by the Board at the previous hearing including the wind analysis, glare analysis, and mobility and accessibility analysis.

The Board and applicant team discussed how great it is that the ADA accessible ramps line up with the main crosswalks, how the plantings will mitigate the wind impacts, and the possibility of adding condition language to ensure that the landscaping continues to mitigate the wind impacts during and after construction. The applicant team was amenable to the additional condition.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Clerk Geno, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Site Plan Approval to develop a nine (9) story, LEED Platinum Lab Building in the HR zoning district, with conditions.

RESULT:

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

PUBLIC HEARING: 50 Webster Avenue – Thoroughfare (P&Z 22-073)

(continued from 8 September 2022)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Clerk Geno, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Site Plan Approval to develop a Thoroughfare in the HR zoning district, with conditions.

RESULT:

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

PUBLIC HEARING: 50 Webster Avenue/62 Prospect Street - Civic Space (P&Z 21-166)

(continued from 8 September 2022)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Clerk Geno, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Site Plan Approval to develop a Central Plaza Civic Space type in the HR zoning district, with conditions.

RESULT:

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

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.