



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

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

NOVEMBER 22, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>
Emily Hutchings	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)
The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm and adjourned at 8:13pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 23 August 2022 meeting minutes.

PUBLIC MEETING: 32-44 White Street (P&Z 22-054) (continued from 25 October 2022)

Member Talun confirmed that he reviewed the recording from the previous meeting and is able to participate in the discussion and vote this evening. Member Valdes did not review the recording from the previous meeting; therefore he may only participate in the discussion this evening.

The applicant team presented the revisions made to the façade designs from the previous design review, focusing on façade option 2, as well as the proposed material palette and treatment of windows. They also reviewed the updates made to the landscape plan, including tree planting, planter beds, expansion of the bioswale, and paving materials.

The Commission, Staff, and applicant team discussed paving materials in the bike parking area, location of the transformer vault and the possibility that an underground vault will not be approved, proposed materiality, windows, and the desire for uniformity across the façade to accommodate solar control. The Commission noted that the detailing of the penthouse and the materiality of the non-street facing facades are still unresolved; they discussed the idea of recommending that the Planning Board attach a condition as part of the Site Plan Approval for a review a physical mock-up/material board.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted (4-0-1), with Member Valdes abstaining, to recommend façade option 2.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted (4-0-1), with Member Valdes abstaining, to recommend that the design guidelines have been met and that the applicant team should prioritize design guidelines E, M, S and T.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted (4-0-1), with Member Valdes abstaining, to incorporate additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance:

- Additional review of the materials of the building, particularly the materials used on the non-street facing facades; uniformity should be considered across all facades of the building.
- Detailing of the penthouse should have further articulation and integration with the overall architectural language of the building.
- UDC requests that the Planning Board include that the SPA Permit have a condition that requires a review of a physical mock-up/material board.
- Clarify the feasibility of the below-grade location of the transformer and present an alternate location if not feasible.

RESULT:

APPROVED

PUBLIC MEETING: 8 Medford Street (P&Z 21-013)

(continued from 25 October 2022)

The applicant team gave a brief recap of the project and presented the revisions to the façade design options, as well as the updates to the landscaping plan, including the extension of the public right-of-way. The team showed renderings of the building in the neighborhood context per the UDC's recommendation.

The Commission and applicant team discussed if the updated landscape plans coincide with the property across the street as the Commission would like to ensure that the details match across both developments, the sidewalk widths, if there is an accessible curb cut at the corner, and the details and materiality of façade options 2 and 3.

The Commission agreed that they were drawn to façade option 3, with a revised materiality palette; brick on the first three floors (including the ground floor) and a brighter color incorporated into the bays. They also recommended that the corner of option 3 be increased in height to the same height of the bay windows on the fourth level, but not go beyond the cornice line.

Member Valdes left the meeting.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend façade option 3.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to incorporate additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance:

- Wood texture fiber cement material be reevaluated.
- Placement of the windows should be reconsidered; possibly avoid the staggered window pattern and consider the sack design of façade option 2.
- Streetscape palate should match the proposed development across the street.

- Materials for where the building meets the street should be carefully considered and reviewed by the Planning Board; detailed plans should be requested by the Planning Board and compliance of those conditions should be a condition of the Certificate of Occupancy.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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The Commission acknowledged that Staff sent out a draft of the updated Rules and Regulations for the UDC, but they have not had a chance to review the document yet. Staff confirmed that this item will officially be on the agenda for discussion at the 13 December 2022 meeting, after a thorough review has been completed by Senior Staff that they meet the legal requirements and are consistent across all the Boards and Commissions.

The Commission asked Staff about their request to meet with the Planning Board. Staff confirmed that they will follow up with Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Director Lewis and the Planning Board Liaison about setting up the meeting.

The Commission asked Staff about extending the UDC's purview to be able to review Master Plan Special Permits and Urban Design Frameworks. Due to Open Meeting Law, Staff recommended adding this item to the agenda for the next meeting so that they can have a more robust discussion about it. That would also ensure that Staff has time to research the topic and provide recommendations to the UDC about how they could move forward with communications with the City Council, should they desire to do so.

The Commission also asked Staff about adding the topic of in-person meetings to the next agenda, as the UDC has never met in person. Staff confirmed that they will discuss this with Director Lewis.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. A recording of these proceedings can be accessed at any time by using the registration link at the top of the meeting agenda.