



City of Somerville

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals
FROM: Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff (PPZ)
HEARING DATE: April 5, 2023
RE: 483 Broadway, P&Z 2023-016

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from the Planning & Zoning staff to the Review Board members.

This brief memo summarizes the development review application submitted for 483 Broadway, identifies any additional discretionary or administrative development review that is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO), and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary.

The application was deemed complete on March 7, 2023 and is scheduled for a public hearing on April 5, 2023. Any Staff-recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to-date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

LEGAL NOTICE

Tavis Babbitt seeks re-approval of previously granted, and now expired, hardship variances for story height and the minimum number of stories in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district (P&Z 2021-012).

BACKGROUND

483 Broadway is located in both Somerville and Medford. The existing building on-site rests wholly within the purview of Medford permit-granting authorities. The Applicant seeks to add a two-story addition to the building within the ~800 square feet of the lot that is in Somerville. The Applicant pursued and was granted two variances for this work on December 15, 2021:

Variance for number of stories (to construct two stories in a zone where a minimum of three stories is required)

Variance for story height (to construct a ground story of 11'2" in a zone where a 14-foot ground story is required)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The Applicant seeks re-issuance of two hardship variances granted on December 15, 2021: one variance for number of stories and one variance for story height. Please see the attached decision and staff report from December 2021 for the specifics of the variance request and the conditions attached to the decision.

In the intervening 15 months, the Applicant has been working to fulfill the requirements of the Site Plan Approval (SPA) process with the Planning Board, a review that is required by the SZO for the proposed project. As this has taken the Applicant longer than they anticipated, the previously-granted variances have now expired.

Variances need to be active in order for the Planning Board to be able to hear and make a determination on the Applicant's SPA proposal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Applicant's variance proposal has not changed since first approved.

Planning Staff recommends that any (re) granting of these variances carry the same conditions as the prior approval. Please see attached decision from December 15, 2021 for additional background information.