



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

**3 AUGUST 2023 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>	<i>Exited at 6:13 pm</i>
Jahan Habib	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Debbie Howitt Easton	Alternate	<i>Absent</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Dan Bartman (Deputy Director of Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), and Emily Hutchings (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 pm and adjourned at 7:56pm.

Clerk Geno noted that she would be stepping down from the Planning Board at the completion of her two-year term. As such, she exited the meeting.

**GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes**

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes from 4 May 2023, with the amendments discussed to reflect the discussion had during the 4 May 2023 meeting.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes from 18 May 2023.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes from 15 June 2023.

**OTHER BUSINESS: MBTA Communities Update**

Staff gave an update on the MBTA Communities requirements. There are three separate amendments drafted to become compliant with MBTA Communities. The Mayor has suggested that this should be treated across the City equally. Thus, these three amendments will be submitted for the entirety of the NR Zoning District. The City is required to be compliant by 31 December 2023.

There was discussion by the Board regarding there previously being an extensive zoning overhaul in the City in order to comply with these requirements. There was a question as to whether or not the City should be subject to additional requirements. There was also discussion regarding applying this uniformly throughout the entire NR District. Applying the same language throughout the district may not be the preferred approach. It will be important to create educational outreach regarding the potential changes. There should be a data-driven approach to any proposed changes.

## **OTHER BUSINESS: Stretch Code Adoption Update**

Staff explained that the city recently adopted a specialized Energy Code that allows a requirement for energy ready buildings and other sustainability items. However, zoning cannot regulate items already regulated by building or energy codes and cannot have more strict regulations than these. Staff is working to examine the Zoning Ordinance and determine what needs to be removed because they are now out of zoning's jurisdiction. Policy goals and improvements may also be able to be added regarding sustainability items.

The Board discussed the possibility of modifying items instead of simply removing them from the Zoning Ordinance. The intention would be to keep the same incentive structures in place. This may include interim measures to preserve the items proposed to be removed. This process could also be a vehicle to address current and future issues in the city.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: 620 Broadway (P&Z 21-145)**

*(continued from 15 June 2023)*

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this application to the next Planning Board meeting on 17 August 2023.

**RESULT:**

**CONTINUED**

## **PUBLIC HEARING: 366 Broadway (P&Z 21-175)**

*(continued from 15 June 2023)*

The applicant team explained that the unit count has been reduced from 58 to 50. This was done while increasing the percentage of 2- and 3-bedroom units to a total of 17 units, or a combined 34%. An area to accommodate larger bicycle stalls has also been included in the plan.

Staff noted that the Housing Division reviewed the updated plans and unit mix. The increase in family-size units is a benefit, but results in one fewer affordable Tier 1 unit and one fewer affordable 3-bedroom unit, which are not benefits. The Housing Division would like to see more affordable units. The Board discussed if the reduction in affordable units and increase in family-size units seems to be an improvement to the plan.

It was noted that one of the Board's previous comments dealt with the cornice on the Broadway Street façade, not the Thurston Street façade, which seems to have been altered. There was a question as to if there could be signage to indicate that the loading area on Thurston Street should be used. The applicant team stated that they would work with Staff on both the cornice design and the loading signage. The Board asked the applicant team to move forward with the original cornice design.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve, with the conditions laid out in the Staff Memo and as amended this evening, the Site Plan Approval to develop a 4-story LEED Gold and Net-Zero Ready apartment building in the Mid-Rise 4 Zoning District.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve, with the conditions laid out in the Staff Memo and as amended this evening, the Special Permit to establish a household living principal use for 50 dwelling units in the Mid-Rise 4 Zoning District.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS</b>
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*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.*