

**Neighborhood Meeting Report**  
**July 24, 2023 Meeting Regarding Major Plan Revisions**

The following summary and attachments comprise the Neighborhood Meeting Report discussing the Major Plan Revision held, after coordination with Matt McGlaughlin and the Planning Staff, on July 24, 2023, remotely via Zoom.

Pursuant to **Exhibit A** attached hereto, which contains a transcript of the July 24, 2023 meeting, members of the community did not raise concerns about the proposed project or the proposed changes, and therefore design responses or feedback are not applicable. Instead, community comments involved questions and clarifications sought from the developer regarding (i) the scope of the project, (ii) the reason for the project change, (iii) use of the parking, (iv) project timeline, (v) number of residential units, (vi) where ingress and egress were located for the parking garage, and (vii) the scope of pedestrian and sidewalk improvements associated with the 44 Broadway project.

Enclosures

**EXHIBIT A**

**Meeting Transcript**

**28-44 Broadway Neighborhood Meeting - Transcript  
July 24, 2023, Zoom**

Starting

**[Introduction provided by Jennifer Schultz, Esq., of Sullivan and Worcester]**

**[Presentation provided by Matt Marotta, project architect with ICON]**

**[Below is the transcript of the Question and Answer period with Community Members]**

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Great. Thanks, Matt. So, with that, we will open up for questions, comments. If no one has any feel free to leave or feel free to please raise your hand and ask questions and we're here for you.

OK, I see Judith Schonhoff with a hand up. So now I need to figure out how to allow you to speak. Ashley do you know?

**Ashley Tan:**

I will allow you to speak. Just for those who are calling in by phone. You can also raise your hand by pressing star nine.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Thank you Ashley.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

Can you hear me?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Yes, we can hear you.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

Yes. Great. I just a few questions. I guess number one was just out of curiosity, what was the motivation for making the change?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Sure, Ben, would you like to answer that question as the developer representative?

**Ben Rogan:**

Yes, the reason for the changes is that we can get a higher rent on a per square foot basis for the smaller units. And in addition, the City is really lacking studio and one bedroom and three bedrooms are not as marketable as the smaller units.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

Okay. My second question was, I can't remember the parking situation I know that was debated over the years, is the parking for the residents or for the commercial space or a combo?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Yeah. So it's a combination in every affordable unit in the building is required to have a certain parking ratio connected to it. And so that does account for a small number of the parking spaces – the 21 spaces and then the remainder of those spaces are really intended to satisfy the commercial uses on the ground floor to make sure that each of those spaces and ultimate retail f&b users, can each have a couple of spaces to ensure that they have a viable business.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

Okay, and then my last question was just, um, you know, obviously, there's been a large hole in the ground for a number of months, I don't even know how long, It's been a while, but do you have an updated schedule, when are you going to start, I know you need approval for this like but like what's the timeline as far as starting construction and completion?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

I'm going to take that one to Ben.

**Ben Rogan:**

We're hoping if this all gets approved, that we'll be able to get finance in place and begin construction this fall and we're looking at approximately 18 to 20 months for a construction duration.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

All right. I've got one more and then I'm done. You guys are the ones that are also building across the street, right?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Hopefully, yes.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

So like, how does that timeline correlate to this building's timeline? Are you doing one after the other? At you going to do it at the same time? Like what are you thinking?

**Ben Rogan:**

Yes, it'll be one after the other.

**Judith Schonhoff:**

All right. I'm done thank you.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Thank you for your question. OK Joan Gardner I see your hand up and I'm gonna let Ashley take care of the rest.

**Ashley Tan:**

Joan, so you should be able to unmute yourself and speak now.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Ashley, are you able to send Joan a push to unmute? Joan if you're on your computer, you'll want to sort of hover your mouse at the bottom of the screen.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay. Can you see me? Can you hear me?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

We can hear you. Yeah. Oh, we lost you.

**Ashley Tan:**

So my bad, you can go.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Sorry about that. Joan. We're gonna need you to unmute yourself one more time. There we go. Okay.

**Joan Gardner**

Okay, perfectly. Listen, I just had a question. I don't know if we can go back to the drawings that showed I was trying to figure out because the first time I saw the plans, when you said that one of the floors was the only floor being changed from the three bedroom and then you go down with that one three bedroom, to one studio in one, one bedroom? Is that what you said?

**Matt Marotta:**

So on floors two and three, this three bedroom unit is changing to a one and a two on those two levels.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay, and then your total on your page and when you said how many units they were going to be it went up three, is that, right?

**Matt Marotta:**

Yep.

**Joan Gardner:**

But if you just changing the three bedroom to a one and a studio, I'm missing the three?

**Matt Marotta:**

So we had two three bedroom units, right – the two three bedroom units is changing into...

**Joan Gardner**

Can you just point out again where those two three bedroom units were.

**Matt Marotta:** 6:04

So the two bedroom units are in this ... Can you see my mouse hovering?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Oh, we can it's just the screen the picture on the screen is fairly small so it's hard to make out.

**Joan Gardner**

Ok you can't see it, okay. Okay, well, my other question has to do with the parking. You did make a comment on that other screen that you were losing parking spots.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Yes.

**Joan Gardner:**

I don't understand why you're losing parking spots if the only thing being affected was the second floor. And if you're losing parking spots and increasing three units, isn't that gonna be more of a hardship to find parking spaces?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

So this is a big discussion all over the City of Somerville and all throughout the Commonwealth, sort of how do you create? Or how do you cause the consequences of fewer cars on the road? And there's, you know, a certain body of thinking that thinks you just don't have parking spaces for residential units. And then people don't drive or the people that rent those units are people without cars, you know, and

some people say have concerns and I hear this all over the place Somerville and beyond that if you don't have enough parking in a particular building, then those people might look to the neighborhood and it's really a constant push and pull. I can tell you that the constant push that this development team faced from the City, both from its Mobility Department and especially from the planning board when we were before them for our approval last year was to reduce parking as aggressively as we could and to really only have it be in order to satisfy the affordable housing obligation for those units and for the commercial parking. So sort of, regardless of which side of the argument you're on, in kind of the great parking traffic debate. This is the clear direction that this team received from the City from multiple perspectives was ...please do as little parking in your building as possible. And so the drop from 26 to 21 is not actually part of what we are proposing right now. It is we are seeking to have it memorialized in the special permit it was agreed to at the hearing, when the planning board and chair of the planning board directly asked would we be reducing the parking and would we agree to that? To which the developer indicated yes but I did not get memorialized in the permit itself. And so that's that is the point there so I understand the oddity of seeing parking going down and units going up. But actually the parking went down before the units went up.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay. I don't know if I agree with the City of Somerville on their whole thing without parking. But I do have a question because I can't remember where is the egress for the parking from the lower level coming?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Matt can you pull that back up on the screen.

**Matt Marotta:**

Sure thing. So, egress is on the left side of the ramp is right here, actually on to George Street.

**Joan Gardner:**

It's coming out to George Street?

**Matt Marotta:**

Correct.

**Joan Gardiner:**

Ok is there anything that's going to be done on George Street to help making turns in and out of that parking because I know having a house with a driveway sometimes people arrive parked on top of the driveway. So it's probably very difficult for anybody who wants to go in or out to move on to George Street. So I was just wondering what future plans will be.

**Matt Marotta:**

I don't have landscape right here, but we are meeting all the requirements and necessary setbacks and sightlines for that egress. Sorry, that's a really small plan there they can be a little bit bigger here. So you know, there is the opportunity for a car plenty of room for a car to make the turn there is a 24 foot wide curb cut.

**Joan Gardner:**

Ok and its coming out on George Street, but is that close to Broadway then, the corner of George Street and Broadway, I can't really see the plan very good, well here. Where you come out on George Street...

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Matt about how many feet setback from the corner of George and Broadway?

**Matt Marotta:**

It's about probably 60ish, 70 feet from the corner to where our curb cut would be.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay. All right. Because I know the light on the corner right in front of the building is so backed up sometimes in the morning and I was just wondering, what's this going to be like? But can you see these plans on the City of Somerville website?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Yes, you can.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay. Okay. Yeah. Because the small plan here I can't really read it.



**Jennifer Schultz:**

Sure, understood, I don't think anyone can. There we go Matt is making it a little bit bigger, my vision is not that good either.

**Joan Gardner:**

And the only other question I have and I think the previous person Judy, I think her name was I'm not sure but she asked about the timeline. And when is this going up against before the board for them to decide? Like say, say you go in September, like when you're going to start work on that corner?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

So the hope would be, you know, to move forward with all alacrity as best we can. I can guarantee that this team will not slow anything down. So the next step would be to go before the board and if we are able to receive approval in a single meeting, we would wait out the appeal period before proceeding forward, which is 30 days, and then would be proceeding forward with the building office for a building permit and to begin construction. As Ben noted as soon as possible.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay, do you have plans of when you're going in front of the board? Like you're already on a docket to be heard.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

We are not. But Andrew Graminski if you are listening we're ready!

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

So no, I mean, I'm not I'm not trying to avoid the question no we don't know yet it this is the necessary step in the process. And next up, will be requesting and seeking a date to appear before the planning board and hopefully, you know, our expectation and desire would be that we could accomplish that in you know, the next 30 to 60 days.

**Joan Gardner:**

Okay, and I'm sorry, one last question. The commercial aspect of this on the first floor. Are you, is it going to be like retail is going to be offices and what are you planning on having there, do you know.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Ben.

**Ben Rogan:**

We are planning on having a retail it'll be a nice amenity for the neighborhood and for the building.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

So retail f&b so, we are not planning on an office building with you know, to your question about traffic - backups at rush hour where I think the idea would be more than it would be something that people would be walking to or be visiting off hours.

**Joan Gardner:**

That would be probably better than. Okay. All right. Thank you for answering all my questions.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Of course we are happy to. Okay, Sarah Lynch. Ashley, do your magic.

**Ashley Tan:**

You should be able to unmute yourself and speak.

**Sarah Lynch:**

Thank you so much. Hi. I just had a very quick question. I am a resident of East Somerville and I frequently walk I'm a pedestrian in that area, and I was told at a ward meeting a while back that there would be some pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Broadway and Lombardi Ave and like sort of the end of Mount Vernon right where this property is like set to be developed. And I was told that there would be some pedestrian improvements like done in conjunction with like, basically the development of this property. And I wasn't sure if that was something that like you guys are already in the loop about or had been planning. It was kind of my understanding that the building of this property would sort of facilitate those improvements and it would be happening kind of in coordination.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Sure, so I can at least speak I part to that. So as part of the process, and I know that it's just you know, one small picture that we've had on the screen but Matt if you want to throw that landscape plan back up, but you know, it's most direct manner the sidewalks directly and curving directly surrounding the building will be improved. You know, both with street trees, pavement, street furniture, lighting, you know, and then obviously where there's retail and you can see removable street furniture, chairs and tables out there in terms of grade and that's on the Mount Vernon, George and Broadway all surrounding the property and in fact, also the back half that abuts directly to another private property as opposed to a street frontage in terms of greater improvements at Broadway, Lombardi as I think that our first commenter asked a question whether this developer also has under control the property across Broadway, for the generally speaking the Broadway break sites, we certainly have a desire to have the two properties together help to enhance the pedestrian experience both for safety purposes with crossing, but also you know, things like wider sidewalks better tree canopy and this project has already you know, received its approvals after many months, if not years of review with the Urban Forestry Department and the mobility department in terms of what each of those groups have in mind for the particular improvement and elements that they most care about. But we do intend when we come forward, hopefully shortly, with a proposal for you know what I'll call a sister development across Broadway to propose further and possibly I guess I'll call them more significant pedestrian improvements.

**Sarah Lynch:**

Thank you.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Sure happy to. Okay, I think I saw user Andrew Graminski. Do you need our permission to speak? Ashley, if he does give it to him?

**Andrew Graminski:**

Can you hear me?

**Jennifer Schultz:**

We can.

**Andrew Graminski:**

Hi folks. Andrew Graminski, planner with the City of Somerville and case manager for this project permitting process wanted to just address sort of the next steps and maybe they'll be helpful for the public. Basically after this meeting working days to be exact, the applicant can submit a complete application. Once that application is in complete by staff there's basically a 65 day clock by state law to get this project and from the planning work, which was reviewed for this project. Basically when the public so it's hard to get obviously like Jenn was saying to get a direct timeline, but at least those are the numbers to work with. So you know, I would say late summer, early fall is an appropriate timeframe to say for a hearing.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Thank you, Andrew. That's certainly our aspiration.

**Andrew Graminski:**

And if I can answer any other questions, please let me know. Thank you.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Okay, let's see. So I don't think that Joan or Sarah have another question. But if you do, I just see that your virtual hand is raised. Oh, nope well, Sarah's gone. Joan if you do have another question, please feel free. We're happy to chat with you. Otherwise, we'll assume that your virtual hand is simply stretching. I don't see any other hands I should note. So I am going to have Ashley give you the chance to talk and no pressure.

**Ashley Tan:**

Joan, if you had anything else, let us know. When you have the ability to speak.

**Joan Gardner:**

This is Joan I don't. I do not have any more questions.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

Okay, great.

**Joan Gardner:**

Sorry about that.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

No, no worries. Just wanted to be sure. Okay, so I'm gonna give a last call. If anyone has any questions. And of course, if you just don't feel like speaking out loud in front of a crowd, or you come up with a question later, please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone on the development team. All of our information is in our public filings. And I'm sure Andrew Graminski is probably the easiest one to find and he can always direct you to us. And otherwise, we are happy to speak with anyone at any time and we look forward to seeing any or all of you when we are hopefully soon in front of the planning board.

**Jennifer Shultz:**

Okay, that's your cue Ashley.

**Ashley Tan:**

Thank you everyone.

**Jennifer Schultz:**

I hope you all have a great night.