



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

21 SEPTEMBER 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>	
Jahan Habib	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Debbie Howitt Easton	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Absent</i>	

City staff present: Raisa Saniat (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Dan Bartman (Zoning & Urban Design); Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm and adjourned at 7:30pm. Member Easton and Vice Chair Aboff disclosed that, while each missed the 7 September 2023 meeting, they have watched back the meeting recording and submitted the associated affidavit.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the minutes from 7 September 2023 meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Recommendations to the City Council

- Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Wilson requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Section 10.3, Development Standards, and Table 10.4.1. to include vegetated roofs.

Staff explained that the OSPCD is supportive of green roofs. However, this appears to be a difficult thing to achieve through a Zoning Ordinance.

The Board noted that there may be issues with applicability of this topic in the Zoning Ordinance. There was discussion regarding structuring this through incentive programs. There was discussion regarding that the Town Attorney questioned if this is a defensible use of the Zoning Bylaw. The Board agreed that there is generally support the concept and goals proposed to be achieved by this amendment, but no recommendation will be made at this time by the Board. The Board would encourage Staff to continue to seek alternate ways to achieve these goals.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to make a recommendation of no recommendation, while reflecting comments made by Board members during the meeting.

RESULT:

NO RECOMMENDATION WITH COMMENTS

- Daniel C. and Lieba R. Savitt requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Map to change the zoning district of 113 Prospect Street from Urban Residence (UR) to Neighborhood Residence (NR).

Staff stated that there are no objections to this item at this time.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to make a recommendation that the Land Use Committee adopt this amendment.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT
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- David Einis requesting the adoption of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Map to change the zoning district of 0 White Street Place from Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) to Urban Residential (UR) and 14 White Street Place from Neighborhood Residential (NR) to UR.

Staff explained that this amendment will unify the zoning into one district for many of the properties facing White Street Place.

The Board expressed support for this proposal.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to make a recommendation that the Land Use Committee adopt this amendment.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT
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PUBLIC HEARING: 45 Mystic Avenue (P&Z 22-029)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to continue this application to 5 October 2023.

RESULT:	CONTINUED
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PUBLIC HEARING: 7 Washington Street (P&Z 21-147)

Staff explained that an additional staff memo for this item was not needed at this time. Staff explained that the Mobility Division commented regarding the applicant's Transportation Access Plan. There is not a dedicated loading/unloading area for this property.

The applicant team explained that passive suitability is possible for this property. Solar can be considered through this process.

The Board mentioned a few inconsistencies in this application, and these were worked through with the applicant team. There were concerns expressed regarding the flood water that could be expected on this site. The applicant team explained how large flood events will be handled on the site.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve with conditions outlined in the Staff memorandum the Site Plan approval to develop a four-story Net Zero ready apartment building in the MR-4 Zoning District.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve with conditions outlined in the Staff memorandum the Special Permit to establish a household living principle use in the Mid-Rise 4 Zoning District.

RESULT:	APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
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PUBLIC HEARING: 394 McGrath Hwy (ZP23-000036)

The applicant team explained that the original proposal included five parking spaces at the rear of the property. Subsequently, this project was sold to another developer that does not want parking on the site. Conversations with Staff indicated agreement with this proposal, based on location of the spaces to be removed and the additional green space and building space allowed because of this. A 20' existing easement on the site must be left empty at all times. A retaining wall at the rear of the site is intended to be preserved, if at all possible. A new trench drain is proposed to pick up any additional runoff. Patios may be added for some of the units in the back. The landscape plan will be updated.

The Board requested an additional condition regarding building occupants not being available for parking stickers, due to the major amendment proposed to this project. This major amendment will require public testimony. The Board requested that the package room be accessible to facilitate and encourage deliveries to occur along the way. The applicant team agreed to provide signage that package deliveries and a package room are at the rear of the building.

Chair Capuano opened public testimony. No one indicated they wished to speak. Chair Capuano closed public testimony.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve, with the conditions outlined in the Staff memorandum and supplemented tonight, the major amendment to a previously granted Site Plan approval (P&Z 21-122) for an apartment building in the MR-4 Zoning District.

RESULT:	APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
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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.