



City of Somerville
URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

8 AUGUST 2023 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Cheri Ruane	Member	<i>Present</i>	<i>Exited at 7:34pm</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Tim Houde	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Emily Hutchings (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning), Sarah White (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm and adjourned at 7:44pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Houde, seconded by Member Ruane, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the 9 May 2023, 27 June 2023, 11 July 2023, and 25 July 2023 meeting minutes.

DESIGN REVIEW: 720-722 Broadway

(continued from 27 June 2023)

The applicant team explained that 722 Broadway was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This distributed the historically significant portion of the building in a 70/30 split between the two addresses. Most of the originally proposed materials are the same, aside from changing a precast panel to a cement siding. This proposal steps back the storefront at the commercial/retail space to allow for outdoor seating. The corner bay at the Willow/Broadway intersection has been moved over in order to give more pronunciation. The language from the historically significant portion of the building has been carried through the entire building. The long-term bike storage has also been enclosed on the plan.

The Commission noted that the projected sills add a layer of complexity that does not support the building. There was a discussion regarding including street trees as part of the plan. The Commission expressed concern regarding the Green Score of the building and suggested that the applicant team's landscape architect come back at a future meeting.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the direction of the Option 4 façade.

Following a motion by Member Ruane, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue 720-722 Broadway to the next meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

DESIGN REVIEW: 53 Chester Street

The applicant team explained that the sidewalk around the building is narrow and will need to be widened to approximately 12'. The proposal is for commercial space on the ground floor and three residential units above, one on each floor. These will be three-bedroom units with generously sized decks. A parking garage is proposed to be at the rear of the building and bays are proposed on the side of the building. The applicant team noted that the proposed retail space is small at 750 s.f. There was discussion regarding the proposed materials of the building. The improved sidewalk will allow for a safe and continuous sidewalk experience for the public in the area, also allowing for safe ADA access to adjacent existing sidewalks. There are street trees and permeable pavers proposed as part of the landscape plan. A city-standard bench and bike racks are proposed in front of the commercial space area. Most of the roof will be vegetated and green.

The Commission discussed the proposed façades and made recommendations.

Member Ruane exited the meeting at 7:34pm.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend Option 3 as the preferred façade option, with changes to the handrails, windows, and ground floor spandrel glass height, as discussed.

Following a motion by Member Houde, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) that the design guidelines have been met for the Mid-Rise 4 district.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to accept the material pallet of Option 3, including changes to the handrails to balance between opaque and transparent, more contemporary windows as in Option 1, and a decreased ground floor spandrel glass height, as discussed.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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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.