

Application for Special Permit Narrative Description

Lotus Yoga Studio is applying for a special permit for the retail space located at 288 Highland Ave, Somerville, MA 02145 to be used as a Yoga Studio.

Lotus Yoga Studio has been in business in Arlington MA for 5 years. We successfully navigated the pandemic and continued to offer quality yoga classes throughout that difficult time. Lotus Yoga Studio offers a variety of classes for all abilities, inclusive educational courses and yoga teacher trainings. Last year we got a grant to provide ASL interpretation for our Yoga Teacher Training program making it accessible for our Deaf yoga students. We offer special workshops such as Full Moon Ritual and events such as the very popular Yoga Book Club. We plan to continue to offer these wonderful events, and invite more students to join us in the Somerville space and bring more health, wellness and community connection to the neighborhood.

The building at 288 Highland Ave, has been used as a Yoga Studio in the past by O2 Yoga for many years until they closed in 2021. Since they closed, it has been vacant. The space is already set up for a yoga studio and is the only available commercial space in the area that is set up for this use currently, without work needing to be done. The building is a mixed use MR4 residential and commercial building; the residents and owner of 288 Highland Ave feel that a yoga studio on the ground floor would support a harmonious building and enhance the neighborhood.

The Somerville community lost almost all of its yoga studios due to the pandemic leaving a need for more health and wellness businesses in the area. Lotus Yoga wants to bring health and wellness to Somerville and specifically, the Highland Ave Neighborhood. This neighborhood does not have any other yoga studio in the area, and the addition of Lotus Yoga would help add to the diverse blend of businesses in the community. Due to the lack of yoga studios in Somerville at this time, our Arlington Lotus Yoga Studio location is seeing many residents from Somerville coming to Arlington to practice. Adding this location would allow them to practice in their hometown.

Lotus Yoga Studio loves getting involved with local events such as Town Day, health fairs etc and engaging with the community. Lotus Yoga Studio makes it a priority to give back to the local community in Arlington and plans to do the same in Somerville when we open our business here. Some ways Lotus Yoga Studio gives back are:

- The annual free community yoga in the park every summer.
- We offer fundraiser yoga classes for local charities, like Arlington Eats Food Pantry, Rosie's Place and more.
- We donate yoga mats to communities and people that need them, and in 2020 we donated over 250 yoga mats and props to help people practice yoga and stay healthy at home.

Lotus Yoga Studio wants to engage with and support the Somerville community as best we can by bringing yoga, mindfulness and fitness to the neighborhood. We ask that the special permit for yoga studio use be approved.