



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

7 MARCH 2024 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation via Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Michael Capuano	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Amelia Aboff	Vice Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Jahan Habib	Clerk	<i>Present</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Debbie Howitt Easton	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Raisa Saniat (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and adjourned at 6:32pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the 1 February 2024 meeting minutes.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the 15 February 2024 meeting minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS: Recommendations to the City Council

- Mayor Ballantyne requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances to amend Article 9: Use Provisions, and the Permitted Uses tables of all zoning districts, to establish a Recreational Camp for Children use within the Recreational Services use category.

Members of the Board asked if Staff considered this as a Special Permit rather than by-right in order to better consider hours, circulation, capacity, etc., for a use potentially within a residential neighborhood. Staff explained that the criteria for establishing a day camp, such as those required by the Board of Health, would already be met. It was further explained that the spaces needed for a day camp would only be in large places that could accommodate large groups of children. An arbitrary house in a neighborhood would not have the space required for this amendment. The number of children will be limited by the camp size. A traffic plan could be required for this use.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend adoption of this amendment to the City Council.

- Gregg Donovan requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 321 Washington Street from Fabrication (FAB) to Commercial Industry (CI).

The Board expressed concerns and highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to preserve desirable uses for the community, rather than an ad hoc approach, such as proposed. It was noted that it is difficult to recommend this without compelling reasons to do so. There has also been overwhelming public testimony against this proposal, and it was recommended that this be included with the no recommendation vote to the City Council.

The Board asked that Staff include the sentiment that there is skepticism of this amendment as there have been no reasons given for the Board to support it and there has been overwhelming public testimony against it. Also, this neighborhood should be considered in a more comprehensive way instead of the proposed zoning amendment.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to make no recommendation of this amendment with the given narrative.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at planningboard@somervillema.gov.