



City of Somerville

PLANNING BOARD

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

TO: Planning Board
FROM: Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff
SUBJECT: 120-132 Middlesex Avenue, P&Z 23-065
POSTED: April 3, 2023

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Conditions

Staff memos are used to communicate background information, analysis, responses to public comments, review of statutory requirements and other information from Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Staff to the Review Board members.

This memo summarizes the request for an extension of the duration of the validity of a Master Plan Special Permit previously granted for 120-132 Middlesex Avenue and provides related analysis or feedback as necessary. The application was deemed complete on June 27, 2023, and is scheduled for a public hearing on April 18, 2024. Any Staff recommended findings, conditions, and decisions in this memo are based on the information available to date prior to any public comment at the scheduled public hearing.

LEGAL NOTICE

DWCH Assembly Row, LLC seeks to extend the validity of a previously issued Special Permit (MP#2020-0003) in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use (ASMD) district.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

DWCH Assembly Row, LLC is requesting a 2-years extension to the validity of a previously approved Master Plan Special Permit (MP#2020-0003) to construct an 18-story Lab Building of up to 596,000 square feet of floor area that will include: 324,500 square feet of space for Research and Development and Laboratory uses, 268,000 square feet of space for General Office uses, 500 square feet of space for Bakery/Café/Coffee Shop uses, and a 6,000 square foot ground floor lab use for an Arts & Creative Enterprise use in the form of a makerspace, with below-grade structured parking for up to 629 motor vehicle parking spaces. Granting this extension would extend the validity of the permit from May 5, 2024 to May 5, 2026.

BACKGROUND

120-132 Middlesex Avenue is located in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use (ASMD) zoning district in the Assembly Square neighborhood represented by Ward 1 Councilor Matt McLaughlin.

On April 30, 2021, the Planning Board approved the Special Permit for a Master Plan that proposed an 18-story Lab Building with underground structured parking and was

previously granted a Hardship Variance from the ASMD's civic space requirement. The Planning Board also approved the requests for multiple Special Permits to waive the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR), the maximum permitted building height to allow the proposed building to be 18-story and up to 257 feet, and to authorize occupancy of commercial spaces over 10,000 square feet by any permitted use.

On March 20, 2024, the Zoning Board of Appeals approved with conditions the Hardship Variance once again to grant relief from the required Civic Space from the Master Plan standards in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use (ASMD) district.

CONSIDERATIONS & FINDINGS

In order to extend the duration of validity, the Planning Board is required by the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to make a finding that a demonstrated hardship has prevented utilization of the rights authorized by the Special Permit.

PERMIT CONDITIONS

Should the Board approve the requested extension of the duration of the validity of the Special Permit, Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff recommends the following conditions:

Permit Validity

- This Decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.
- All other conditions of decision (MP#2020-0003) for 120-132 Middlesex remain valid.

Public Record

- A digital copy of the recorded Decision stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds must be submitted to the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division for the public record.