



SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom Webinar

Date: September 10th, 2024

Time: The Chair convened the meeting at 5:33pm.

Meeting recording: <https://youtu.be/Mi6GZWVXb-Y>

ATTENDANCE:

SRA Members Present: Philip Ercolini (Chair), Iwona Bonney (Secretary), Ben Ewen-Campen (City Councilor), Patrick McCormick, William Gage.

SRA Members Absent: Christine Stone.

Staff Present: Catherine Lester Salchert (Special Counsel), Ben Demers (Senior Economic Development Planner), Ted Fields (Senior Economic Development Planner).

AGENDA ITEMS:

Staff presented virtual meeting house rules to the Board.

1: Approval of minutes for the June 11th general meeting.

No edits were recommended.

I. Bonney moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by P. McCormick. Approved 5-0-0 (Yes-No-Abstain) by roll call vote.

2: Public Comment:

No public comment was made.

3. Recruitment and reappointment update.

Staff updated SRA members that the Mayor had selected one of the two candidates put forward by the Appointments Advisory Committee for the vacant SRA position, and recommended this candidate to the City Council. This item will be included in the City Council agenda for September 12th and will likely be referred to the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters (CAPM) Committee, who would send a final recommendation back to the full City Council. Staff anticipated that, assuming the candidate was approved, they would be able to begin joining meetings in October or November.

Staff also updated SRA members that the Mayor's office will begin implementing a new reappointment policy for the city's boards and commissions starting in January. Staff will share more details as they received them.



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4. Union Square Revitalization Plan (USRP)

a. Update from Union Square Station Associates (US2) on USRP implementation.

Greg Karczewski presented to the SRA on behalf of US2 regarding their implementation of the USRP. The presentation focused primarily on development of 10-50 Prospect Street, which are located on subparcels D2.1, D2.2, and D2.3 of the D2 parcel in the USRP. ("D" in this nomenclature refers to "Disposition.") G. Karczewski summarized that this development has delivered substantial economic, housing, and open space benefits to the city, including 450 residential units (90 of which are deed-restricted affordable) and a new life-science building. G. Karczewski also reviewed the delivery of community benefits that are outlined in US2's Community Benefits Agreement with the Union Square Neighborhood Council.

W. Gage complimented G. Karczewski on the landscaping of the civic space on the parcel.

W. Gage asked US2's plans for the D2.4 subparcel, which is another subparcel of the D2 parcel. G. Karczewski answered that the site was set aside for construction laydown for the MBTA as they built the Green Line station, so it was not included in this initial phase of development. US2's intention is to make the site a neighborhood park in a later phase of development, likely in conjunction with the development of the hotel on the D1 parcel. In the interim, US2 plans to make the space usable for the public.

P. Ercolini asked for clarification on tenancing in 10 Prospect. G. Karczewski explained that the building does not yet have tenants, and that tenants are expecting landlords to deliver built-out space, which they would not have expected when the project began. Because of this, US2 has built out several suites on the 5th and 6th floors prior to having tenants.

P. Ercolini asked if US2 still intended to develop more life science projects as part of the USRP implementation, given the state of the life science market. G. Karczewski answered that US2 remains steadfast in realizing the goal of the USRP, which is to restore Union Square's role as the commercial center of Somerville. P. Ercolini asked if they are shifting to add more housing. G. Karczewski answered that they are open to exploring alternative uses but are focused currently on tenancing 10 Prospect and constructing the next life-science building in the project, 50 Webster.

B. Ewen-Campen thanked G. Karczewski for the work that went into leasing all 90 of the deed-restricted affordable unit.

B. Ewen-Campen noted that he receives many questions about parking and asked how tenants in these buildings are utilizing the limited parking available on-site. G. Karczewski noted that there is one space available for approximately every four units. Leasing has been manageable with this ratio, but not without challenge. G. Karczewski will follow up with more information.

B. Ewen-Campen asked for an update on leasing ground-floor retail spaces. G. Karczewski noted that Life Alive would open in early October. US2 is working with their retail broker, Graffito, to find other tenants for the other ground-floor retail spaces.

b. Overview of the Certificate of Compliance process.

Staff explained that US2 had submitted a request to receive a Certificate of Compliance (COC) for 10-50 Prospect Street. The process for this type of certificate is referenced in the Master Land



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Disposition Agreement (MLDA), which is the agreement between the SRA and US2 that outlines both parties' responsibilities in implementing the USRP. Issuance of a COC implies that the project was completed to the standards of the USRP, and removes the SRA's right of reverter for the property (which allows them to reclaim the property from US2 if necessary to further the USRP). The window for the SRA to respond to the request is 45 days, which means they must respond by October 18th.

For the SRA to grant COCs for the projects, staff recommend that the projects must have already received their final Certificates of Occupancy to confirm they have fulfilled all obligations in their Planning Board approvals, and that SRA members tour the projects to see them firsthand. Staff have scheduled a tour for SRA members to see the projects next week. Staff are reviewing some other relevant phasing documents and will follow up with more information and a recommendation for SRA members ahead of their October meeting.

W. Gage asked if D2.4 needed to be considered in this phase of COC issuance. Staff explained that this is part of what they are confirming as they are reviewing phasing documents and would provide more context in October.

5. 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan.

a. Planning updates from staff.

At a previous meeting, staff had shared recommended criteria to include in a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a developer for 90 Washington Street. These criteria had been created by members of the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee (CAC), which advises the SRA on implementation of the 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan. At the time, CAC members expressed that they wanted the parking and access drive located on 90 Washington Street that are currently used by the adjacent Cobble Hill Apartment residents to be preserved in development. However, after staff provided the CAC with a presentation that showed alternative parking options on the adjacent property that could meet the needs of Cobble Hill Apartment residents, CAC members decided they would prefer the parking and access drive areas to be included in the redevelopment of 90 Washington Street. Staff will update the RFP draft criteria to reflect this.

b. Executive session to discuss active litigation (Cobble Hill Center LLC vs. Somerville Redevelopment Authority).

B. Ewen-Campen moved to enter executive session. Seconded by I. Bonney. Approved 5-0-0 (Yes-No-Abstain) by roll call vote.

SRA members returned from executive session at 6:27pm. W. Gage did not return from executive session.

6. Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

No items were brought forward.



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7. Adjournment:

B. Ewen-Campen moved to adjourn at 6:29pm. Seconded by I. Bonney. Approved 4-0-0 by roll call vote.