



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

3 OCTOBER 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>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Stephen Cary (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm and adjourned at 7:00pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: 45 Mystic Avenue (P&Z 22-029)

Continued from the 19 September 2024 meeting

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this hearing to 17 October 2024.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC HEARING: 74 Middlesex Avenue (ZP24-000087)

Continued from the 19 September 2024 meeting

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this hearing to 17 October 2024.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the meeting minutes of 5 September 2024, as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: 393 Highland Ave Avenue (ZP24-000058)

Continued from the 5 September 2024 meeting

The applicant team explained that a presentation was previously made regarding the proposal to establish a fitness services use of over 10,000 s.f. in a Pedestrian Street District. The proposal includes nine short term bike parking spaces in the front of the building. There are long term parking spaces that are required for bikes proposed, but no car parking. The building abuts the municipal parking lot, the bike path, and the Red Line station is down the

street. There is a bus stop located next door at the municipal parking lot. The proposal includes a mural on the side of the building facing into the parking lot. There was no opposition raised at the last Board meeting or in writing, but approximately 34 emails of support were submitted.

Chair Capuano asked for public testimony in support of or against the proposal. Seeing none, he closed the public testimony portion.

There was no additional Board comment at this time.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve, with the conditions laid out in the staff memorandum, the Special Permit to establish a Fitness Service Use on the first floor, facing a pedestrian street, in the CC4 Zoning District.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve, with conditions laid out in the staff memorandum, the Special Permit to occupy a single commercial space greater than 10,000 square feet in the leasable floor area for a Fitness Service Use in the CC4 Zoning District.

RESULT:

APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARING: 393 Highland Ave Avenue (ZP24-000089)

This item was addressed as part of the previous agenda item for the same address.

RESULT:

APPROVED

OTHER BUSINESS: Review of Standard Conditions of Approval

The Board reviewed its standard conditions of approval, specifically the conditions for Special Permit requests.

The Board discussed potentially inviting all of the cannabis shops that are already in operation to come back and apply to have the appointment-only condition removed. There was a suggestion that, amongst the Planning staff and the staff interfacing with the Licensing Commission, when an applicant is going through the process to relieve that condition at the Commission level, they would likely become aware of the need to amend the parallel condition through this Board. There was discussion regarding there being a systemic approach to these requests. There was agreement to continue to consider this item into the future.

There was discussion regarding determining if there is a way to consider a deemed abandonment of a permit in some way. This will be considered with the legal department.

There was discussion regarding making a recommendation to the Land Use Committee to consider an additional revision for a density bonus for a fourth unit, instead of a third unit, if it were affordable, to build off the momentum of MBTA Communities.

The Board agreed to continue this discussion at its November 7, 2024, meeting.

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