



City of Somerville
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

5 FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Susan Fontano	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Anne Brockelman	Vice-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Ann Fullerton	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Zachary Zarembo	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Brian Cook	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	
Sisia Daglian	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Emily Hutchings (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm and adjourned at 6:16pm.

Member Cook sat as the Acting Clerk.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Acting Clerk Cook, seconded by Member Brockelman, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the 15 January 2025 meeting minutes, as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: 493 Medford Street (ZP24-000116)

It was noted that Member Cook sat as a voting member for this item.

The applicant team explained that they are trying to install a new, energy efficient, heat pump system recommended by Mass Saves. This property is a corner lot and half of the front of the house is at 493 Medford Street and the other half is on Norwood Ave. According to the Zoning Ordinance, there cannot be mechanical equipment on either of those sides. The other two sides of the property are walkways and placing the equipment there would lead to blocking means of egress to the building.

Chair Fontano opened public testimony.

Henry Susskind (74 Partridge Avenue) – stated that he is an abutting neighbor and is in favor of the proposal.

Chair Fontano closed public testimony.

The Board asked if the equipment is already in place. The applicant team stated that the equipment is located in the proposed location but has not yet been hooked up. They were unaware that the contractor did not pull a permit for the equipment previously. This process was triggered when the permit was pulled for the work.

Following a motion by Acting Clerk Cook, seconded by Member Brockelman, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the Hardship Variance for 493 Medford Street (ZP24-000116), with the conditions as stated in the Staff

Memo, dated 17 January 2025, for zoning relief for 493 Medford Street to install the outside electric heat pump components on the Norwood Street frontage, with the hardship criteria findings as follows:

- 1) The building's placement on a corner lot with narrow rear and non-fronted sides that provide essential building egress leaves only the Norwood Street frontage as a viable location for placement of the outside heat pump components.
- 2) Literal enforcement of the provision of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance would prohibit the applicant from realizing the financial savings of more modern and efficient heating and cooling and contributing to Somerville's stated sustainability and energy conservation goals.
- 3) The proposed location already contains utility meters, gas vents, and electrical wires. The fenced-off area minimizes potential noise from the new equipment.

Therefore, granting the requested Hardship Variance would not significantly harm the public interest nor undermine the intent and purpose of the NR District, as enumerated in the Staff Memo.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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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 ZoningBoard@somervillema.gov