



City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Condominium Review Board

Katjana Ballantyne, Mayor

August 25, 2025

6:00 pm.

Staff Liaison & Housing Policy Coordinator
Morena Zelaya

Board Members
Zachary Zasloff, Chair
Kate Byrne, Vice-chair
Alix Simeon
Jennifer Tsolas

Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM

Virtual Hearing

Board Members present: Kate Byrne, Alix Simeon, Jennifer Tsolas
Staff present: Morena Zelaya, Staff Liaison

Vice-chair Byrne, serving as Chair, convened the meeting at 6:02 PM. She read the following information aloud: Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, this meeting of the Condominium Review Board will be conducted via remote participation. We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels.

CONDO REVIEW BOARD MEETING AGENDA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with a call for attendance made by Vice-chair Byrne.
Responses were as follows:

Chair Zasloff	Absent
Vice-chair Byrne	Present
Member Simeon	Present
Member Tsolas	Present

With three in attendance there was a quorum, and the meeting was called to order.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE

- Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board for comments; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To approve the meeting minutes for February 2025

3. NEW BUSINESS

- **APPLICATIONS FOR FINAL/COURTESY PERMITS**

WARD 1 PRECINCT 1

56-58 Oliver Street

Application of 56-58 Oliver Street Condominium Trust, Max Almanzor, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #2 at 56-58 Oliver Street. Doug Farley attended on behalf of the applicant. He explained that the applicants had been waiting on the expiration of the notice period, which had now occurred and as such were requesting a final permit for unit #2.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #2 at 56-58 Oliver Street.

WARD 7 PRECINCT 4

230-232 Powder House Blvd

Application of Michael & Anna Whitham, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #230 at 230-232 Powder House Boulevard. Michael Whitham attended to speak on the application. He stated that all outstanding documentation had been submitted, the notice period expired and that the tenant was staying on past her notice period through their mutual agreement.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant Final Conversion Permit for Unit#230 at 230-232 Powder House Boulevard.

WARD 2 PRECINCT 1
192 Washington Street

Application of 192 Washington Street Somerville LLC, Jason Santana, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #192A & Unit #192B, and a Courtesy Permit for Unit #192C & Unit #192R at 192 Washington Street. Mariana Tristao attended to speak on the application. She stated that all outstanding documentation had been submitted.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #192A & Unit #192B, and a Courtesy Permit for Unit #192C & Unit #192R at 192 Washington Street.

WARD 4 PRECINCT 1
13 Langmaid Avenue

Application of 13 Langmaid Avenue LLC, Chanh Ly, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 13 Langmaid Avenue. Attorney Mark Sheehan attended as representative for the applicant. He stated that all required documents had now been submitted and as such his clients were requesting a final permit.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion Permit Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 13 Langmaid Avenue.

WARD 4 PRECINCT 2
13 Sargent Avenue

Application of Jessie Grogan, Timothy Armstrong, Lindsay Defrees Lucke, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit#2 at 13 Sargent Avenue. Attorney Cameron McGinn attended as representative for the applicant. He stated that the tenants the tenants had voluntarily vacated and had submitted an affidavit attesting to the voluntary vacancy and to waiving the relocation payment. As such the notice period had expired and the applicants were requesting the final permit.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant Final Conversion Permit for Unit#2 at 13 Sargent Avenue.

WARD 6 PRECINCT 1

36 Burnside Avenue

Application of Frederic R. Barthelemy & Cecile F. Barthelemy, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 36 Burnside Avenue. Attorney Cameron McGinn attended as representative for the applicant. He stated that all required documents had now been submitted and as such his clients were requesting a final permit.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant Final Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 36 Burnside Avenue.

WARD 3 PRECINCT 3

555-557 Somerville Avenue

Application of Somerville Ave Holdings 555 LLC, David Shepherd, seeking a Final Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit#2 & Unit #3 at 555-557 Somerville Avenue. Attorney Mark Sheehan attended as representative for the applicant. He stated that all required documents had now been submitted and as such his clients were requesting a final permit.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant Final Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit#2 & Unit #3 at 555-557 Somerville Avenue.

- **PRELIMINARY CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION PERMITS**

WARD 6 PRECINCT 1

333 Highland Avenue

Application of Fan Wang & Marc Wagner, seeking a Preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1A, Unit #1B, Unit #2, Unit #3 at 333 Highland Avenue. Ms. Wang attended to speak on the application, she stated that tenants vacated voluntarily and were notified of her intent to convert in mid-July. She listed all the documents that had been included with the application and requested preliminary permits be granted.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; Board Member Tsolas asked for clarity regarding the number of units and the status on the tenants. Ms. Wang stated that she only dealt with the realtor who provided contact information for the tenants. Ms. Wang also asked for more information on renting during conversion. Board Staff stated that renting during conversion is permitted as long as prospective tenants are informed in writing prior to conversion. If tenants are not informed prior to lease signing then those tenants have protections under the ordinance. Board Members Tsolas also questioned when the Purchase & Sale agreement was signed, which Ms. Wang stated was sometime in March. Board members all expressed concern that tenants were still in the building at the time of the P&S, vacated before the sale and were not afforded protections under the ordinance. Board member Tsolas asked if Ms. Wang did any evaluations of the building for renovations related to condo conversion. Ms. Wang stated that at the time they conducted evaluations they were unsure if they'd be keeping the property as rentals or converting to condos. She stated that they did not decide to convert to condos until after the sale was finalized. With no further questions or comments the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment. A number of different former tenants of the property spoke and were limited to three minutes. Joanne Lao, Caroline Lorenz, Leah Ellis and Robyn Belair all spoke to the board regarding their tenancies at the property, the way their tenancies were terminated and their belief that the applicant formed an intent to convert while they were still living on the property. Ms. Lao submitted written testimony laying out why they believed intent had been formed and thus tenants were entitled to protections. That written testimony is attached to these minutes.

The board members engaged in extensive discussion on what factors could be considered when determining when intent to convert was formed, including if they could consider the surveying that was done of the property before tenants had vacated. Members expressed sympathy for tenants, some of who were long-term, for having been displaced. During testimony, Ms. Lao had stated the applicant has a history of conversion. Board staff stated that Ms. Lao had listed five addresses owned, or that had been owned, by the applicant. Three of the addresses were in Somerville, two are in Cambridge. Two of the Somerville addresses were converted to condos but had previously been owner-occupied, one address was still being used as rentals as far as Board Staff was able to determine.

Ms. Wang was permitted to respond and was also limited to three minutes. She restated her previous assertions that her communications regarding the tenants were limited to communications with her realtor. Board member Tsolas requested proof of the applicant's communications with the tenants along with any documentations the applicant could submit regarding inspections and surveys done while tenants were still living on the property. Vice-chair Byrne suggested tabling the application while waiting for these documents and any applicant response to the tenants' assertions.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To table the application of Fan Wang & Marc Wagner, seeking a Preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1A, Unit #1B, Unit #2, Unit #3 at 333 Highland Avenue.

WARD 5 PRECINCT 4

737 Somerville Avenue

Application of 737 Somerville Ave, LLC, James P. Douglas & Israel Barroso Managers, seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and a Preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit#2 & Unit #3 at 737 Somerville Avenue. Attorney Matthew Spang attended as representative for the applicant. He listed all the documents that had been included with the application and requested preliminary permits be granted.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and a Preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit#2 & Unit #3 at 737 Somerville Avenue.

WARD 4 PRECINCT 1

34-36 Governor Winthrop Road

Application of 36 Governor Winthrop Road LLC, Wilner Alexis, seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and a preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit#2 at 34-36 Governor Winthrop Road. Attorney Mark Sheehan attended as representative for the applicant. He listed all the documents that had been included with the application, stated that the former tenant of Unit #1 had vacated voluntarily to relocate out of the country and as such his clients requested preliminary permits be granted.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; Board Member Simeon requested confirmation as to why the tenant vacated. Attorney Sheehan responded that the tenant vacated to move out of the country and did so voluntarily and before intent was formed. With no further questions or comments the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and a preliminary Non-rental Conversion Permit for Unit#2 at 34-36 Governor Winthrop Road.

WARD 5 PRECINCT 1

294 Lowell Street

Application of Yangqing Xu seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit#1 and Unit #2 at 294 Lowell Street. Attorney Mark Sheehan attended as representative for the applicant. He listed all the documents that had been included with the application, stated that the property has been vacant since June 2025 and was formerly used as rentals.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to Board comments. Board member Tsolas asked about communication with the former tenants. Attorney Sheehan responded that they were all notified of the intent and of the hearing and that they were also told ahead of time that the applicant intended to sell the property and retire out of the country. He also stated that a P&S was signed in August with a buyer and that they would be closing in September. Board members again expressed concern regarding timing of intent to convert and when the tenants vacated, especially given that the owner went before the Historic Preservation Committee in June 2025 on a petition to demolish while tenants were still living in the building. Board members discussed at length whether this could be factored into making a determination on whether the former tenants were entitled to protections under the ordinance.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Board members discussed the type of vote they would be making. Attorney Sheehan mentioned that the applicant was only taking these steps to preserve an application under the current ordinance as the Somerville City Council had recently approved changes that would impact this type of property. Board members expressed considerable concerns regarding the timing and the lack of protections being afforded to the tenants. They asked Board Staff about her interactions with the former tenants. Board Staff responded that she had only heard concerns from one former tenant and her concerns were regarding what was actually going to happen at the property because she had vacated under the impression that the property would be sold but now was receiving conversion notices by her old landlord. She felt that if the property was not being sold at the time they were told it would be, she could have stayed longer. Board staff, and the former tenants, had been unaware that a P&S had been signed. Vice-chair Byrne suggested tabling the application in order to gather more information surrounding the Historic Preservation application and whether that could be taken into account when determining intent.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To table the application of Yangqing Xu seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit#1 and Unit #2 at 294 Lowell Street.

WARD 1 PRECINCT 4

36 Everett Avenue

Application of 36 Everett LLC, LLC, Kavita Shah Manager, seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and Unit#2, and a Courtesy Permit for Unit #3 at 36 Everett Avenue. Attorney Mark Sheehan attended as representative for the applicant. He listed all the documents that had been included with the application, verbally corrected an error on the application as to the last use of the property and said his clients were requesting preliminary permits.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to the Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Vice-chair Byrne opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Vice-chair Byrne-yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and Unit#2, and a Courtesy Permit for Unit #3 at 36 Everett Avenue.

ADJOURN

Vice-chair Byrne motioned to adjourn at 7:51pm which Board Member Tsolas seconded. The meeting was adjourned.