



City of Somerville
URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

14 MAY 2024 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	6:09pm
Luisa Olivera	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Cheri Ruane	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Houde	Alternate	<i>Absent</i>	

City staff present: Madison Anthony (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm and adjourned at 7:01pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Board voted unanimously (3-0) to table approval of the 9 April 2024 meeting minutes to the next meeting.

UDC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVIEW: 52 Elm Street

The Commission noted that this item was before the Commission at the election of the Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Department to get input on an issue that impacts the public realm. This could be included in the Design Review Recommendation. The motion made by the Commission was that the massing and scale were appropriate for the NR District and that motion failed. The Commission guided the applicant through various recommendations and suggestions for preferred façade design concepts but did not vote on a preferred schematic option.

DESIGN REVIEW: 22 McGrath Hwy

The applicant team explained that the application is a for Site Plan approval to update the façade of the Twin City Plaza shopping strip. The façades in question are the ones facing the parking lot and streets beyond. Some modifications were made to the buildings in the 1980's, including galvanized steel and cornices applied to the façade. The intention of this project is to give the façade a more modern and welcoming look. Three façade options were presented.

The Commission expressed interest in the third option presented, especially to create a better public realm and create longevity for the buildings. There was interest in option 2 regarding painting the brick in certain areas of the building. There was a recommendation made that the applicant look into the zoning requirements for tree coverage on the site. Concerns were raised regarding the discrepancy between the proposed landscape in the renderings and the actual plan.

The Commission discussed direct applied stucco as a finish on the steel members to maintain the monolithic element look and the crisp corners. There was interest in the Marshalls façade being painted brick instead of stucco panels with clad columns to continue the preferred option.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Board voted unanimously (3-0) that the preferred façade, as presented, should move forward.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Board voted unanimously (3-0) that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Ruane, the Board voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance:

- An investment in landscape planting improvements such as shade tree canopy cover across the entire site to combat the urban heat island effect, improved plantings in areas closest to the pedestrian way, and improved landscaping in the parking field islands.
- Flexibility for the architect to incorporate design options 2 or 3 at/around the Marshalls building, subject to their technical understanding of the materials.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED
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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 urbandesign@somervillema.gov.