



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

22 JULY 2025 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>	
Luisa Olivera	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Martin Pavlinic	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Lexie Payne (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Stephen Cary (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

Estello Raganit, Acting Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:06pm and adjourned at 6:43pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted (3-0) to table discussion of the minutes to a future meeting.

DESIGN REVIEW: 1 Myrtle Street

Staff explained that as this is in an apartment building in the MR3 zoning district, a modification to the building triggers the full site plan review process, including review before this Commission, even though the modification of the building is fairly small in scope, and not visible from the right of way.

The Commission stated that the proposal has no impact on the urban design in any way. No additional design guidance was provided.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Pavlinic, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) that the design guidelines for the district have been met.

RESULT:

DESIGN GUIDELINES MET

DESIGN REVIEW: 32 Webster Street

The applicant team explained that this property is in the MR4 zoning district. This is proposed to be an apartment building without any vehicular parking. The building is longer than 100' and two main masses will be created to split the length along Webster Street. The main residential entrance on Webster Street will be inset a bit with a change of materials. Since this is in an MR4 district abutting an NR district, the top floor will be stepped back, creating some cascading effects. There will be a common roof deck for everyone and private roof decks on the

third floor for the units that face the back. The mixture of units includes studio, one-bedroom, two-bedrooms, and three-bedrooms. There is a fully affordable six-story housing project being proposed to the left of this building.

The applicant team explained that the overall landscape design consists of three main components: streetscape improvements, greenscape, and private outdoor amenity areas for the residents at multiple levels with vegetative buffers. In terms of the streetscape, the applicant is proposing a total sidewalk width of 12' from the back of curb on both Webster Street and Newton Street. The sidewalk in this area was previously roughly 4'-7' wide. The proposed streetscape consists of a furnishing zone, with permeable pavers, short term bike parking, and street tree plantings. The existing two street trees on Webster Street are to be protected and three new street trees are proposed on Newton, where there are currently none. The remaining sidewalk width consists of accessible concrete paving and a raised planter bed at the front corner of the building. Layered plantings are shown throughout the site, predominantly of native plantings, with buffer plantings along the side, fronting 24 Webster Street. There will be an extensive green roof at the fourth floor level, adjacent to several private decks. At the rooftop level, there will be a common amenity deck providing various gathering spaces for the residents, along with a semi-intensive green roof surrounding the deck, providing a greater depth of soils and ornamental grasses. The proposal currently exceeds the required green score for the MR4 zoning district.

The applicant team reviewed the three design options.

The Commission discussed conditionally approving option 3 with some potential changes including to differentiate the corner of the building to define the street level section and consider changes to the colors of the back of the building, to be reviewed by the Commission at a future meeting.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Pavlinic, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to conditionally approve option 3, with the potential changes discussed, to be reviewed by the Commission at a future meeting.

RESULT:	CONDITIONALLY 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 UrbanDesign@somervillema.gov.