



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

20 NOVEMBER 2025 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>Absent</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	
Lynn Richards	Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Alvaro Esparza (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Sarah Lewis (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and adjourned at 7:00pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: 379 Somerville Ave
(continued from 6 November 2025)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this hearing to 4 December 2025, at request of the applicant.

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 2 October 2025 meeting minutes, subject to confirmation of certain information.

PUBLIC HEARING: 44 White Street
(continued from 6 November 2025)

The applicant team explained that there were previously some Board comments regarding pedestrian safety. The applicant's traffic engineer will be working closely with the Mobility Division during the Building Permit process to create a proper resolution for that.

The Board asked about the City's interface with Cambridge in terms of the jurisdictional issue of a Somerville property backing onto a Cambridge right of way. Staff explained that there is coordination between both municipalities on this item. In terms of pedestrian safety, there can likely be a condition to include something like an alert system with lighting for pedestrians tied to the garage door opening and closing.

The Board asked about additional bike parking for the project. The applicant team explained that 1:1 parking spaces are needed for the project to make it marketable. The intention is to allow buyers to decide during the sale of the units if they would like a bike parking space instead of a vehicle parking space. The Board suggested a wall

rack storage for bicycles at the front of the parking spaces. The applicant team stated that this may be difficult with the given dimensions of the parking area, but it will be further examined. The building could also eventually be made parking-free through the purchasing process, if the buyers so choose.

The Board noted that it would have liked to see additional information presented regarding the safety of the access interaction with pedestrians on the site. The applicant team stated that the developer and traffic engineer will continue to work with the Mobility Division on this. Currently, a warning post system is being considered. This is intended to be installed fully on the applicant's property. Staff explained that draft Condition #19 is that the applicant team will work with Mobility prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy to ensure that there is a pedestrian alert system installed. The Board noted that it would like the applicant team to consider additional options to encourage more visibility for cars backing out to look for pedestrians. There was also a suggestion that the warning alarm system be hardwired in order to require less maintenance over time.

Staff noted that the Mobility Division is not in support of any vehicles on this site, likely due to the cramped motion that would be required. There was discussion by some Board members regarding accepting the Special Permit despite Mobility's recommendation of denial if bike parking is provided for all of the anticipated residents of the building. It has been stated that these will be three-bedroom and family-sized units, with the building likely able to accommodate 12 people. With the right bike parking rack system, and the idea that bike parking should be in a shared area, the parking Special Permit could be considered. Staff noted that there could be a condition that 12 bikes must be accommodated on the site. Other Board members suggested nine full-sized bike parking spaces, with an additional rack system that could fit other sized bikes, as these are proposed to be family-sized units. The applicant team suggested having this discussion with Mobility in order to determine their requirements.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (5-0) to continue this hearing to 4 December 2025, at request of the applicant.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: Chapter 91 Approval – Pedestrian Bridge at Draw Seven Park

The Board agreed to continue this discussion at a later date.

OTHER BUSINESS: Board Administration Open Discussion

The Board agreed to continue this discussion at a later date.

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