



City of Somerville  
**PLANNING BOARD**  
City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**5 MARCH 2026 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>Absent</i>	
Jahan Habib	Clerk	<i>Present</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	
Lynn Richards	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Coralie Cooper	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Alvaro Esparza (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Justin Schreiber (Mobility Division); Kit Luster (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm and adjourned at 6:45pm.

**GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes**

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Member Habib, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the 16 October 2025 meeting minutes.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Member Habib, the Board voted (5-1), with Member McNeley abstaining, to approve the 5 February 2026 meeting minutes, as amended.

**PUBLIC HEARING: 360 Foley Street**

The applicant team explained that this property is what was referred to as Block 5A of the larger Assembly Row Master Plan PUD. The proposed project is to relocate an existing accessory dining area and lounge, located on the first floor of the hotel, to a new fourth floor portion of the building's interior and exterior. In order to do that, the design guidelines that were previously approved by the Board as part of the PUD need to be updated and the Special Permit needs to be modified. In addition to the design guidelines being updated, the square footage of the hotel needs to be updated. The PUD has a specific square footage of the hotel, and adding this space will increase it. Otherwise, the proposed change does not impact the utilities, sewer, traffic, etc. The proposal will relocate space in the hotel to the fourth floor, as part of the accessory use of the hotel.

The applicant team explained that the prior design guidelines were approved in 2016. The added level 4 on top of the podium level 3 is the only change to the design guidelines. Condition #39 of the PUD required the design guidelines to be approved. Upon meeting with Staff and discussing the changes, this was deemed a Major Amendment. The hotel, as built, is 100,056 s.f. The PUD approved the hotel square footage as 104,550. The additional 5,000 s.f. of space requires Board approval for a modification to the PUD to increase the space to 105,626 s.f. The room count remains the same at 158.

The applicant team also explained that the proposal is for the addition of a fourth floor above an existing ballroom. The location currently includes retail, hotel, and residential uses. There are 122 condominiums, 158 hotel rooms, and approximately 20,000 s.f. of ground floor retail space. The proposed addition would add

approximately 5,500 s.f. to the fourth floor of the hotel. On lower portion of the existing hotel, would be the third story. However, the first two floors are entirely used for the hotel and restaurant program and are much taller, sitting apart from the larger building. There is a floor to ceiling height of 20' for the ground floor and approximately the same for the second floor. This total approximately 40', which is essentially the size of three stories for the balance of the building. The proposed roof deck will sit at floor 3, above the second floor ballroom and meeting area, while connecting back to the hotel at floor 4. The proposed 5,500 s.f. addition will be a relocation of an existing dining area that currently sits behind the hotel lobby bar. The hotel has been serving breakfast since it opened nearly eight years ago. There has been significant demand which the hotel has been unable to meet, as well as a significant demand for additional meeting spaces. In relocating the breakfast dining area to the third story and expanding it, the hotel can then renovate the ground floor space into meeting rooms for the purpose of the hotel guests, and those who want to rent the space. The intention is to expand the breakfast program and eventually take the dining through the evening to provide small plates and lighter fare. The applicant team notes that this will not be a late-night bar or a late-night destination. Access to the third floor is via the hotel lobby and hotel elevators. The hotel may eventually explore brunch as well. This will be owned and operated by the hotel and the hotel partner. The third floor addition will have an approximately 1,700 s.f. outdoor terrace, connected to the dining space.

The applicant team stated that the design is intended to look as if the addition has always been there. All of the façade detailing, colors, and materials will be as specified in the original drawing. The proposed metal panel and color are as seen on the existing building. The fenestration is similar both in size and dimension. The mullion design also matches.

Chair Capuano opened public testimony. Seeing none, Chair Capuano closed public testimony.

The Board asked about additional employee count based on the proposal. The applicant team agreed that there will likely be an approximate 10-15 additional employee job creation. This will not trigger additional parking requirements for the site.

The Board asked how the proposed new meeting space use on the ground floor will lead to a street-level vibrancy. The applicant team explained that there will continue to be an active, lit hotel lobby, viewed by the public. The windows to the proposed meeting space area front on a service alley. The public will not access that area. The Board expressed concern that there does not seem to be a need to create a vibrancy simply because no one accesses that area. Street level vibrancy is a core guiding principal for this area. The applicant team stated that this space does not front on a street area; it fronts on a private service alley. Conference space is not a very dynamic use to have at grade, though it will likely be used throughout the day and into the evening. Currently, the space is only used for a breakfast use and otherwise sits dark and unused. The intent is to keep the vibrant, active portion along the public, pedestrian frontage. Other Board members expressed that they did not have an issue with the proposed vibrancy along the service alley.

The Board thanked the applicant team for highlighting the project's impact to utilities and resources in the area.

The Board asked about the use of the proposed outdoor space on this new level. The applicant team explained that there is existing outdoor space at the hotel, used primarily during events and conferences. The intent is not for the proposed space to be used deep into the evening. This is directly connected to the fourth floor and near hotel rooms.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Member Habib, the Board voted (5-1) with Member Richards abstaining, to approve with the conditions outlined in the Staff Memo, the Major Amendment to the updated Block 5 Design Guidelines and existing PUD (PB 2006-59) in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use District.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Member Habib, the Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve with the conditions outlined in the Staff Memo, the Major Amendment to the previously issued Site Plan Special Permit (SPSR-A PB2014-34) in the Assembly Square Mixed-Use District.

**RESULT:**

**APPROVED**

**OTHER BUSINESS: Board Discussion Regarding the Ways in Which the City's Sustainability Goals & the Form-Based Code May Need to Be Reconciled**

The Board tabled discussion on this item to a future meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS: Board Administration Open Discussion**

The Board discussed the open Design Framework which will be discussed further at the next meeting.

*NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. A recording of these proceedings can be found online here: [Agendas, Minutes, & More.](#)*