



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

19 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>Present</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); Sarah Lewis (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm and adjourned at 7:37pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the 19 February 2026 meeting minutes, as presented.

PUBLIC HEARING: 222 Broadway

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to continue this hearing to 16 April 2026.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: Arts & Innovation District – Urban Design Framework

Staff presented an updated Arts & Innovation District Urban Design Framework, noting that the Urban Design Commission had provided initial comments and requested clarifications. The presentation included updates to boundary definitions, public realm functions, and streetscape designs based on feedback from various departments, though some elements were restricted due to building code requirements.

There was discussion regarding the loading docks in the design framework. It was noted that some of the narrower blocks, such as development block numbers 2 and 4, are not currently deep enough to allow for a rear alley along the tracks. One of the statements in the document is that if the trucks stay on Park Street and Dane Street and this is where the loading docks occur, this could erode much of the definition of the public realm, and the active street frontage.

The Board discussed the possibility of encouraging exploring geothermal or other energy type systems. There may be aspects of the infrastructure that present themselves in the urban environment to be open to these ideas. This is a unique opportunity for some efficiencies at scale.

The Board noted that the design framework calls for adaptive reuse of the American Tube Works building, located at 24 Dane Street. There was discussion regarding preservation of historic buildings. It was explained that preservation is handled under a different Massachusetts General Law. If someone proposes to alter or demolish a historic building, they will have to pursue the review process through the Historic Preservation Commission. There was discussion regarding the importance of historic and cultural recognition of some of the valuable assets in the City.

The Board recessed at 6:29pm in order to enter a Joint Hearing with the Land Use Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS: Joint Hearing with Land Use Committee

- Mayor Wilson requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 8.1 of the Zoning Ordinance to provide for larger buildings, additional dimensional flexibility, and fewer use restrictions for affordable housing projects.
- Councilor Strezo, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Davis, and Councilor Sait requesting an amendment to sections 2.1.1 and 3.1.12 of the Zoning Ordinances regarding Accessory Dwelling Units.

The Board reconvened at 7:37 pm.

OTHER BUSINESS: Board Administration Open Discussion

The Board did not have any items to discuss at this time.

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.](#)