

**DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE
FOR REVISION OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SPECIAL PERMIT**

Property: 365 and 369 Somerville Avenue
Applicant: Somerville Family Dental PC
Owner: Senick LLC
Agent: Adam Dash, Esq.
Zoning District: Mid-Rise 5 (“MR5”)
In the ½ Mile Transit Area
In the Pedestrian Street District

Summary: Application to Remove Conditions and Revise Plans From an Approved Special Permit

The Property is two adjoining commercial condominium units, being 365 and 369 Somerville Avenue respectively, in a larger mixed-use condominium building which sits at the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue in Union Square in Ward 2. These two ground floor units which are the subject of this Application face Somerville Avenue and are currently operated by Applicant as a single dental office.

The dental office use was granted a Special Permit with conditions on June 25, 2020 by the Planning Board in Case DRA#2020-0125 due to this Health Care Services use being on the ground floor facing a Pedestrian Street, which is Somerville Avenue.

On April 2, 2026, the Planning Board in Cases ZP26-000002 and ZP26-000003 removed a condition from the previous 2020 Special Permit decision which required the use to run with the individual dentist who is the principal of the Applicant.

Applicant now seeks a revision to remove conditions 1 and 2 from said 2020 Planning Board decision regarding the community art window displays and transparent windows because they are negatively impacting Applicant’s dental practice on the interior of the Property, and to revise the previously approved floor plan to match.

Said condition 1 now reads:

“All storefront windows should maintain visual transparency with the exception of conforming merchandise display areas for art displays.”

Said condition 2 now reads:

“Any artistic displays shall be rotated on a quarterly basis.”

Applicant is not asking to change any of the other conditions in said 2020 Planning Board decision.

Relief Requested

Applicant now seeks the following relief:

- Revision of the previously approved Special Permit to remove conditions under Somerville Zoning Ordinance (“SZO”) Section 15.2.1.f.iii.
- Plan revision of a previously approved Special Permit under SZO Section 15.2.4.

Revision to Remove Conditions

SZO Section 15.2.1.f states as follows:

Conditions

- i. The review board may attach conditions or limitations that it deems necessary to ensure compliance to the Board’s findings and the standards for granting of a specific Special Permit.*
- ii. Conditions must have a rational nexus to potential impacts of the proposed development, and be roughly proportional, both in nature and extent, to the impacts of the proposed development.*
- iii. The review board may subsequently remove conditions or limitations attached to any Special Permit subject to the review procedures of §15.2.1.d.*

Applicant has been operating a dental practice at the Property in conformance with said 2020 Planning Board decision, however, conditions 1 and 2 in said decision require transparent windows and rotating art displays facing Somerville Avenue.

Applicant would like to remove the artistic display spaces and instead install a privacy screen approximately 4 feet high from the floor there.

Applicant has significant space constraints, and its office manager is currently working in the hallway area between the entrance and the existing art display space due to a lack of interior room caused by those large community art display spaces. Applicant would like to utilize that display space as office work space.

In addition, one of Applicant’s dental treatment rooms is very small and difficult to work in. The current layout limits movement around the patient, and it is challenging for the dentist to position themselves, their assistant, and the needed equipment without bumping into the wall or side cabinetry. Applicant is considering expanding its operatory into the area currently occupied by the window display spaces to improve workflow, ergonomics, and patient care, but this requires said conditions to be removed.

Photographs depicting the current situation are filed herewith.

Applicant is not seeking to eliminate the public-facing storefront presence, but rather to improve the functionality of the interior dental office while maintaining an active streetscape.

While well-intentioned, said conditions do not work for a dental practice. Transparent windows do not provide privacy for patients and workers, and the large window art display spaces impinge too much on the dental practice, preventing it from growing in place to meet the neighborhood need.

Applicant is not a chain (or formula) business. It has been in operation for over 5 years and provides a needed service to the neighborhood in particular, and to the City as a whole.

De Minimis Plan Revision

As a companion to the removal of said Conditions, Applicant also seeks to revise the previously approved floor plan for its dental practice to remove the areas on said previously approved plan labeled “Community Art Space” and to incorporate those areas into the main dental office space.

Applicant believes that such a plan revision pursuant to SZO Section 15.2.4 would be de minimis, as the square footage involved is small, does not change the dental practice use, and does not contravene the previously published legal notice for the 2020 Planning Board special permit approval which was just to establish a Health Care Services Use in the MR5 zoning district on a Pedestrian Street.

The art display space is not for the entire street front of the Property at issue such that, while its depth creates an interior issue for the dental practice, its length is not very large. It is not a major arts space for the City, but it is a major impediment to Applicant’s dental practice and ability to serve the community.

No ACE Violation

Removing said conditions and revising the previously approved floor plan will not cause the building at the Property to fall out of its compliance with the Arts & Creative Enterprise (“ACE”) requirement for the MR5 zoning district found in SZO Section 4.3.13.c.i, which is:

A minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross leasable commercial floor area in any building must be provided as leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use category.

Filed herewith are the original Master Deed, and the second amendment to same along with the amended floor plans, for the condominium at the Property.

According to those condominium documents and plan, the Property has six commercial unit, which total 7,500 sf of commercial space. Therefore, the required 5% ACE space for the Property is 375 sf.

Commercial Unit 60-B, which is occupied by The Green Room is 600 sf alone. The Green Room falls within the ACE uses by being a space for musicians, music events, comedians, hosted events, and the like.

That one Commercial Unit alone satisfies the ACE requirement for the Property, such that the removal of said conditions and plan revision sought by Applicant does not cause the Property to fall out of compliance with the applicable ACE requirements in the SZO.

Conclusion

Per SZO Section 15.2.1.f.iii stated above, the Planning Board may remove conditions attached to said 2020 Special Permit, and Applicant respectfully requests that conditions 1 and 2 be removed from the June 25, 2020 decision of the Planning Board in Case DRA#2020-0125.

Applicant also respectfully requests that a de minimis plan revision be approved accordingly to remove the spaces labeled as “Community Art Space” on the previously approved floor plans in said 2020 Case, per SZO Section 15.2.4.

DEVELOPMENT NARRATIVE SUPPLEMENT

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No Campaign Contribution Form is required according to the Submission Guidelines.