



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

DECISION

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 32-40 White Street
CASE NUMBER: ZP25-000041
OWNER: 32-40 White St LLC
OWNER ADDRESS: 667 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
APPLICANT: Kinvarra Capital / David Swanson
APPLICANT ADDRESS: 667 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143
DECISION: Approved with Conditions (Special Permit)
DATE OF VOTE: September 3, 2026
DECISION ISSUED: September 14, 2026

This decision summarizes the findings made by the Planning Board (the "Board") regarding the Special Permit submitted for 32-40 White Street.

LEGAL NOTICE

32-40 White St LLC/Kinvarra Capital seeks to construct a mechanical penthouse that exceeds the maximum height in the Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district, which requires a Special Permit.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

On July 16, 2026, the Planning Board held a public hearing advertised in accordance with M.G.L. 40A and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. Present and sitting at the public hearing were Board Members Chair Michael Capuano, Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff, Clerk Jahan Habib, Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, and Alternate Coralie Cooper. The Applicant gave a presentation on the proposal for a 29-unit residential building in the MR4 Zoning District. The Chair opened the public testimony portion of the hearing. Two neighbors gave testimony on the project, and the Chair left the written testimony portion the hearing open until July 31, 2026. The Board then discussed the proposal. The Planning Board requested that larger family size units (three-bedroom units) be incorporated into the unit mix. The Board also asked about the underground vaulted transformer viability. The Applicant confirmed they had spoken to Eversource regarding the location of the transformer. The Chair requested an updated unit mix be presented at a future hearing. The Board continued the public hearing to August 6, 2026.

On August 6, 2026, the Board resumed the public hearing. Present and sitting at the public hearing were Board Members Chair Michael Capuano, Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff, Clerk Jahan Habib, Lynn Richards, Alternate Luc Schuster, and Alternate Coralie Cooper. Member Luc Schuster was absent from the hearing on July 16, 2026, but submitted an affidavit confirming review of the evidence, and was able to participate in the decision. The Applicant team presented an updated plan and stated their request for the Planning Board to approve the previous unit-mix presented on July 16, 2026 and

should the 3-bedroom unit be required the project runs the risk of being financially unviable due to market conditions. The Board suggested continuing this application further for the Applicant to discuss relief options with the City. The Board brought up that the intent of the MR4 district is to in part, to create dwelling unit types, sizes, and bedroom counts ideal for larger households in apartment buildings, and to create dwelling unit types, sizes, and bedroom counts ideal for smaller households in general buildings. The Applicant stated that they would work with City Staff to find potential solutions to address the need for a three-bedroom unit while creating a financially viable project. The Board continued the hearing to August 20, 2026.

On August 20, 2026 the Planning Board resumed the public hearing. The applicant team requested a continuance to the September 3, 2026 Planning Board meeting. The Board continued the hearing to the September 3, 2026 hearing.

At the September 3, 2026 hearing the Planning Board resumed the public hearing. Sitting and present at the public hearing were Board Members Chair Michael Capuano, Vice-Chair Amelia Aboff, Clerk Jahan Habib, Michael McNeley, Lynn Richards, Alternate Luc Schuster, and Alternate Coralie Cooper. Member Michael McNeley was absent from the hearing on August 6, 2026, but submitted an affidavit confirming review of the evidence, and was able to participate in the decision. The applicant presented updated plans showing one three-bedroom unit in the basement level of the building. The Planning Board discussed the proposal and moved to approve the Special Permit. The motion passed 5-0.

PLANS & DOCUMENTS

Application plans, documents, and supporting materials submitted and incorporated are identified below.

Document	Pages	Prepared By	Date	Revision Date
32-40 White Street Plan Set	39	Balance Architects 1 Thompson Square Boston, MA 02129	May 15, 2026	July 27, 2026
32-40 White Street Narrative	1	Balance Architects 1 Thompson Square Boston, MA 02129	December 17, 2026	n/a
Neighborhood Meeting Report #1	4	Balance Architects 1 Thompson Square Boston, MA 02129	February 2, 2026	n/a
Civil Site Plan	4	Peter Nolan & Associates 80 Jewett Street, Suite 1 Newton, MA 02458	May 29, 2026	n/a

SPECIAL PERMIT FINDINGS

In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, the Board may approve or deny a Special Permit upon making findings considering, at least, each of the following:

1. *The comprehensive plan and existing policy plans and standards established by the City.*

The Board finds that this project supports the goals laid out in SomerVision 2040, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, including the following:

- Focusing on our largest GHG contributor (buildings).
- Increase the housing supply.
- Prioritize walking, biking, and transit options and minimize space dedicated to personal vehicles.

2. *The intent of the zoning district where the property is located.*

The Board finds that this proposal meets the intent of the MR4 zoning district which is, in part: "To create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for smaller scale, multi-use and mixed-use buildings and neighborhood serving commercial uses."

DECISION

Following public testimony, review of the submitted plans, and discussion of the statutorily required considerations, Chair Michael Capuano moved to approve the Special Permit to construct a mechanical penthouse that exceeds the maximum height in the MR4 district with the conditions included in the staff memo and discussed at the hearing. Amelia Aboff seconded. The Board voted **5-0** to approve the permit, subject to the following conditions:

General

1. A digital copy of the recorded Decisions stamped by the Middlesex South Registry of Deed must be submitted to the Planning Division for the public record.

Prior to Building Permit

2. This decision must be recorded with the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds.

Attest, by the Planning Board:



Michael Capuano, *Chair*

Amelia Aboff, *Vice-Chair*
Jahan Habib, *Clerk*
Michael McNeley
Lynn Richards
Luc Schuster, *Alternate*

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE

Any appeal of this decision must be filed within twenty days after the date this notice is filed in the Office of the City Clerk, and must be filed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40A, sec. 17 and SZO sec. 15.5.3.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, no variance shall take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and no appeal has been filed, or that if such appeal has been filed, that it has been dismissed or denied, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title.

Also in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 A, sec. 11, a special permit shall not take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the City Clerk that twenty days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the Office of the City Clerk and either that no appeal has been filed or the appeal has been filed within such time, is recorded in the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title. The person exercising rights under a duly appealed Special Permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone.

The owner or applicant shall pay the fee for recording or registering. Furthermore, a permit from the Division of Inspectional Services shall be required in order to proceed with any project favorably decided upon by this decision, and upon request, the Applicant shall present evidence to the Building Official that this decision is properly recorded.

This is a true and correct copy of the decision filed on _____ in the Office of the City Clerk, and twenty days have elapsed, and

FOR VARIANCE(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ any appeals that were filed have been finally dismissed or denied.

FOR SPECIAL PERMIT(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ there has been an appeal filed.

FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL(S) WITHIN

_____ there have been no appeals filed in the Office of the City Clerk, or
_____ there has been an appeal filed.

Signed _____ City Clerk Date _____