



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

6 AUGUST 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>Absent</i>	
Michael McNeley	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Luc Schuster	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	
Lynn Richards	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Coralie Cooper	Alternate	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Alvaro Esparza (Planning Division); Sarah Lewis (Planning Division); Kit Luster (Planning Division)

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm and adjourned at 6:46pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Minutes of June 18, 2026

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 18 June 2026 meeting minutes, as presented.

RESULT:

APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARING: 222 Broadway

(continued from 16 July 2026)

This item was previously continued to 20 August 2026.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC HEARING: 120 Middlesex Avenue

(continued from 16 July 2026)

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to continue this hearing to 20 August 2026.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC HEARING: 6 Wheatland Street

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to continue this hearing to 20 August 2026.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: Arts & Innovation District – Urban Design Framework

Staff explained that the edited version took into consideration all of the Planning Board and Urban Design Commission comments. The most noticeable item is likely the format edits. The forward which was the overview of the plan types, has been removed as it was duplicative with the introduction page. Also, the Urban Design Commission requested a graphic showing potential massing which was included.

There were no Board comments at this time.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to adopt the Arts & Innovation District Urban Design Framework as proposed and amended.

RESULT:

ADOPTED

OTHER BUSINESS: 32 Webster Design Recommendation

Staff explained that Design #5 was chosen as the recommendation as it complements the existing neighborhood and surrounding buildings.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to adopt Design #5 as satisfactory of the original condition of approval.

RESULT:

APPROVED

The Board recessed until 6:21pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: 32-40 White Street

(continued from 16 July 2026)

The applicant team explained that all of the accessible units have been upgraded to Tier 2 units. The plan now shows three Tier 2 accessible units, as opposed to the minimum requirements. Based on the feedback from the last meeting, it was mentioned that there is a high desire for the applicant to explore incorporating three-bedroom units into the plan. It appears the most optimal way to accomplish this would be to merge two of the one-bedroom units together to create a three-bedroom unit. This would reduce the unit count from 29 units to 28 units. The applicant team stated that it would take two of the highly marketable units and condense them into a less marketable unit, a three-bedroom unit, roughly 1,250 s.f. The team does not view this as desirable for families and does not believe it would be highly appealing to the market. This would sell for a considerable discount to the other one-bedroom units. The applicant discussed other options with the Mayor's office, but it does not appear that there are other options available. In comparing the two one-bedroom units to the three-bedroom unit, there would be a loss in value to the project, anywhere from \$350,000 to \$400,000. This tips the project into the territory of being not viable. Boston's inclusionary requirement is 13%. The applicant team is open to discussing anything else related to the project in terms of design, accessibility, bike units, etc., but would ask the Board to consider the project as presented previously for 29 units, including the benefits that it brings to the community of five truly affordable units, a 0.8% fractional payment towards the Affordable Housing Trust, 24 market-rate transit-oriented units, and three Tier 2, fully accessible units.

Some Board members suggested continuing this further to determine if there can be relief sought from other City departments. The Board votes are likely not available for the original request to move forward. The intention is to make sure the best project is available for this site. Other Board members noted that this is in a Mid-Rise 4 (MR4) zoning district and the applicant is applying for a Special Permit for an all-residential building, which is an apartment building type. The intent of the MR4 zoning district is 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 team explained that they thought the Board had some latitude in adjusting the inclusionary requirement for this project. It was believed that, given the proximity to the Porter Square T-Stop and the high transit-oriented nature of the area, the project will appeal to the bedroom sizes as originally proposed.

Staff noted that for administrative permits, the quorum is three Board members and the same amount of votes for Site Plan Approvals. For discretionary permits, such as Special Permits, the quorum is four members, and there will have to be four votes.

Following a motion by Chair Capuano, seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, the Board voted unanimously (4-0) to continue this hearing to 20 August 2026.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

OTHER BUSINESS: Board Administration Open Discussion

The Board discussed a future agenda topic about the need for larger units in the City.

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.](#)