



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR**

*NANCY A. BUSNACH
CHAIR*

MINUTES

Wednesday March 8, 2017
Aldermanic Chambers
Somerville City Hall, 2nd Floor
93 Highland Avenue, Somerville

Present from the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA): Nancy Busnach (Chair), Iwona Bonney (Secretary), William Gage, and Phil Ercolini. Also present were Michael Glavin as Director of OSPCD, Eileen McGettigan as Special Counsel, Thomas Galligani as Director of Economic Development, and Emily Hedeman as Economic Development Assistant.

The special meeting was called to order at 5:31PM by Nancy Busnach, Chair. Open session commenced. A quorum was present.

1. Open Special Meeting:

2. Open Public Hearing on Master Land Disposition Agreement:

- Vote: To enter into a Public Hearing for the purpose of hearing public comments in regards to the Master Land Disposition Agreement.
- Motion to open the Public Hearing made by William Gage. Iwona Bonney seconded the motion.

Alderman Bill White: Expressed concern over number of parcels taken. Alderman White expressed that there should have been a community process at the outset and then engaged in master development selection process. Alderman White expressed that the SRA should have worked out the terms and conditions of the MLDA, including public benefits, and then have a developer bid on the entire package. Not leave benefits agreement up to developer. Alderman White expressed concern in regards to the high cost of infrastructure and unclear contribution from developer.

Alderman Dennis Sullivan: Expressed that community benefits should have been discussed prior to determining a master developer. Alderman Sullivan stated that the residents offer major insight over the needs of Union Square. Alderman Sullivan expressed that there is a need for a Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) before MLDA is signed.



Alderman Katjana Ballantyne: Alderman Ballantyne expressed that she echoed previous comments of colleagues. Alderman Ballantyne stated that she has two concerns: the first being transparency in the form of the CBA. Alderman Ballantyne referenced page 2 of the MLDA, the nonfinancial terms specific to such parcel, and that a MOU ensuring CBA should be included within the aforementioned section to increase transparency. Alderman Ballantyne's second concern is in regards to phasing, specifically that 50% of the residential units are allowed to be built before the commercial.

Alderman Lance Davis, resident of Highland Avenue: Alderman Davis expressed that he echoed colleagues' comments, especially those of Alderman White. Alderman Davis expressed concern over timing and how the MLDA is drafted. Alderman Davis expressed that zoning approval could alter the document and MLDA should wait until zoning passes.

Alderman Matthew McLaughlin: Alderman McLaughlin expressed that he echoed colleagues' previous sentiments. Alderman McLaughlin expressed concern over the process and wanted to make sure that due diligence has been completed. Alderman McLaughlin expressed concern over the assumption that zoning and infrastructure is going to get passed. Alderman McLaughlin expressed that the SRA should wait until BOA have made their decision. Alderman McLaughlin expressed that he is taking his time and doing his own due diligence.

Alderman Mary Jo Rossetti: Alderman Rossetti stated that she attended the extensive public hearing last night for zoning. She stated that many businesses are in favor with moving the MLDA forward, however a larger portion of residents is against moving forward without CBA. Alderman Rossetti stated that she would like language to show enforceability, timeline, and penalty if agreement is not adhered to. Alderman Rossetti stated that she is looking for MOU for a CBA. Alderman Rossetti recognized that staff is meeting with community representatives. Alderman Rossetti stated that she is in favor of development, but looking for language within the agreement to confirm adherence to CBA.

Fred Berman, resident of Cherry Street: Mr. Berman stated that the group that is forming the Neighborhood Council would like the SRA to postpone their decision to make sure that the MLDA can be consistent with zoning and the covenant so that all documents are consistent, specifically in regards to the mix of land uses and phasing of development. Mr. Berman stated that the existing MLDA is at odds with the use mix that the community would like to see. Mr. Berman inquired in regards to the deadline for closing for the property.

Father Richard Curran, member of the Catholic Collaborative, CAC member, Union United steering committee member, resident of Washington Street: Fr. Curran stated that he has been involved in the Union Square process for over three years. Fr. Curran expressed that given what happened in Assembly Square with IKEA, he is concerned and is focused on the long term and the importance for enforcement and accountability.

Sal Inglima, resident of Allen Street: Mr. Inglima expressed concern over the design review and the square itself. Mr. Inglima stated that he has experience living in various places across the country and that people go to Union Square for community, and relaxation. Mr. Inglima expressed that Union Square's gritty charm should be enhanced and that he is concerned over traffic flow.

Daniel Madri, resident of Avon Street: Mr. Madri stated that he is a long term resident and business owner. Mr. Madri stated that the city should commit to a legally binding and

enforceable CBA before the MLDA is approved and that the SRA has a duty to ensure that community interests are protected.

Jacob Kramer, resident of Quincy Street, Neighborhood Council participant: Mr. Kramer provided a background on the Neighborhood Council's participating groups, mission, and make-up. Mr. Kramer expressed that the developer should engage directly with an elected body of representatives and that public benefits are part of the MDDA and should be incorporated.

Matt Miller, resident of Rossmore Street: Mr. Miller stated that he already sent comments digitally. Mr. Miller stated that he understands the need to move forward, but would like firm commitment from developer before we move forward.

J.T. Scott, resident of Washington Street: Mr. Scott recognized that the SRA could state that the CBA is not the SRA's issue. Mr. Scott stated that the SRA's issue is to make fiscally responsible decisions for the citizens and that he is concerned over how the agreement will affect the neighborhood financially and demographically. Mr. Scott expressed that he is concerned over fiduciary duty and believed that nothing is lost over resuming negotiations.

Katie Gradowski, resident of Pearl Street, member of Union United, Neighborhood Council participant: Ms. Gradowski urged the SRA not to vote on the MLDA tonight. Ms. Gradowski stated that she is grateful for the Aldermen's support. Ms. Gradowski states that there should be a binding commitment included in the agreement. Ms. Gradowski expressed concern over financial risk over the \$94 million investment in infrastructure. Ms. Gradowski expressed concern over commercial first and no timeline for remaining residential.

René Mardones, employee of Somerville Community Corporation, member of Union United, Neighborhood Council participant: Mr. Mardones stated that he would not like to see a vote this evening. Mr. Mardones brought examples of other CBA agreements and letter from Union United, which he distributed to members of the SRA. Mr. Mardones stated that he would like for the vote to be delayed, for the MLDA to be renegotiated and would like to see a clear plan in regards to the covenant and CBA.

Shana Berger, resident of Concord Avenue, member of Union United, Community Garden organizer: Ms. Berger states that she cares about affordable housing, green space, jobs and that those things should be incorporated into CBA. Ms. Berger stated that she has been working for three years on CBA and would not like the work over the past three years to be cancelled out by an appointed committee. Ms. Berger stated that she would like the vote delayed until there is a commitment in the form of a CBA.

Erik Neu, resident of Bow Street, member of CAC: Mr. Neu stated that the SRA took 10-12 weeks to dive into RFQ for developers in contrast to the fact that the MLDA has only been in the public's hands for a few weeks. Mr. Neu requested that MLDA be presented as digestible piece to the CAC.

Mary Jo Connelly, resident of Marshall Street: Ms. Connelly stated that she is a long time Somerville resident, has been involved in SCC, jobs for Somerville, and has a long history of attending development meetings. Ms. Connelly stated that the decision has deep implications on the entire City and that the City has been living with consequences with the Assembly Square agreement and attempts at changes have not been successful.

Tori Antonino, resident of Boston Street, Green and Open Space Committee member, Neighborhood Council participant: Ms. Antonino asked to delay vote on MLDA. Ms. Antonino stated that there is not enough space in the Union Square plan, that there is a lack of human scale, community gathering spaces, and expressed concern over prioritization of current residents and developer. Ms. Antonino stated that she would like the SRA to vote no or to delay the vote and that she would like a plan with residential, commercial, and open space before just residential building.

Bill Shelton, resident of Boston Street: Mr. Shelton stated that he was an attendee at the previous meeting, and that he felt alarm over the city's exposure. Mr. Shelton stated that the agreement is very one-sided. Mr. Shelton stated that the reason the Assembly Square agreement worked out is because the plaintiffs were required to negotiate directly with FRIT and that there were other consequences related to the orange line and commercial build out.

Ethan Contini-Field, resident of Summer Street: Mr. Contini-Field stated that he was speaking broadly to community sentiment in regards to the developer benefits. Mr. Contini-Field stated that if the Union Square development rolls out and is not consistent with mayor's vision, this will influence sentiments towards the entire development.

Wig Zamore, resident of Highland Avenue: Mr. Zamore stated that he would be sending notes from meeting from last night. Mr. Zamore stated that he thinks that it would be beneficial to delay vote and that the MLDA is at odds with what the zoning and community has asked for. Mr. Zamore questioned whether the MLDA is consistent with proposed zoning, comprehensive plan, and jobs. Mr. Zamore stated that the BOA has the sole authority to propose zoning, if either passes that will control the MLDA- would be beneficial for MLDA. Agreement between ASQ and community that netted 15M is binding on all successors and interests- even with smaller agreement.

David Gibbs, resident of Linden Place, Executive Director of CAAS, member of Union United: Mr. Gibbs stated that he is asking for a commitment to CBA and to delay MLDA. Concerned over the scheduling of the elements of the development. Believes that focusing on residential at the expense of commercial, at the expense of the City's financial health is short-sighted.

James Crall, resident of Vinal Avenue: Mr. Crall expressed his pride in living in Somerville, a progressive city. Would like the developer to directly engage with community to create CBA. Mr. Crall expressed that he is pro development, but is in favor of accountable development.

Nina Vyedin, resident of Prescott Street: Ms. Vyedin recalled the February 8th Sanctuary City rally. Ms. Vyedin stated that she is concerned over signing the MLDA, which the community does not support.

Ian Urquhart, Attorney for Union United: Mr. Urquhart stated that the MDDA is specific about affordable housing, community benefits, however as the MDDA moves to MLDA, there is less defined language over community benefits. Mr. Urquhart stated that Union United's concern is loss of specificity. Mr. Urquhart stated that they are asking to postpone vote and insert stronger language over the type of community benefits.

Alderman Maryann Heuston: Alderman Heuston stated that she hopes that the record will remain open after this evening. Alderman Heuston recognized the importance of development and that she is here representing constituents that can't be at these evening meetings. Alderman Heuston expressed concern over whether an MOU for a CBA can be

included in MLDA. Alderman Heuston stated that the MOU is important to articulate needs of the community. Alderman Heuston stated that commercial development is essential and the timeline for commercial development is too long, as explained within the MLDA.

3. Close Public Hearing

- Vote: To close the Public Hearing
- Motion to close the Public Hearing made by Phil Ercolini. Iwona Bonney seconded the motion. All in favor. Public hearing adjourned at 6:35pm.

4. Discussion - Master Land Disposition Agreement

Phil Ercolini stated that the analysis of the MLDA is a departure from his previous experience, and that he is pro-development. Mr. Ercolini expressed that the public had great comments. Mr. Ercolini stated that he is concerned over commercial tax basis issue that Alderman Heuston raised. Mr. Ercolini stated that given the upcoming City expenses, stressing commercial development or a more balanced equation is critical. Mr. Ercolini noted that there were good points made during zoning meeting. Mr. Ercolini stated that he would like a defined time frame and referenced Boynton Yards. Mr. Ercolini stated the need to work on zoning as well as have the community negotiate with the developer in good faith and sees a reason to delay vote. Mr. Ercolini stated that he would like time to review additional comments, as well as have the full SRA board in attendance.

William Gage stated that he reiterated Mr. Ercolini's comments. Mr. Gage stated that his big concern is that US2 is building residential first and not commercial. Mr. Gage stated that he sees a need for MOU or covenant between the Neighborhood Council and US2. Mr. Gage stated that he agrees to delay vote in order to review material and other forthcoming comments. Mr. Gage stated that he would like to see exhibits: Schedule I (square footages) and exhibits showing D2 parcels as part of the package. Mr. Gage recognized Special Counsel for addressing his comments from the last meeting about timing of infrastructure with a revised Exhibit M. Mr. Gage expressed concern over infrastructure costs and how they will be paid.

Nancy Busnach stated that the MLDA acts like a purchase and sale agreement and outlines the conditions and rules of the transactions. Ms. Busnach stated that there are many safeguards for the city and the process has been going on for three years. Ms. Busnach stated that she was part of the Assembly Square development process and thanked the Mystic Valley Task Force for making the project better. Ms. Busnach stated that IKEA left because of changes in the market, and the City benefitted long term with FRIT's purchase of the land. Ms. Busnach stated that Assembly Square has been an economic boon for the City and based on personal experience, the people at Assembly Square are residents and have benefitted from the T. Ms. Busnach expressed her concern in regards to if the SRA doesn't take care of this beginning step in a reasonable time, the City could miss out on something. Ms. Busnach stated that the SRA worked with 11 developers and they were all qualified. Ms. Busnach stated that the list of developers was

reduced to two based on community input and that the SRA selected a developer based on who the SRA thought would be best for the city. Ms. Busnach stated that the general feeling of the board is to delay the vote. Ms. Busnach expressed caution over extending the process and implications towards MBTA development.

Mr. Ercolini followed up his initial comments with the remark that he is looking for a defined and reasonable timeframe to review the matter and would provide impetus for other parties to review.

Mr. Gage stated that he is in agreement

Iwona Bonney inquired at what stage is US2 and the community in regards to the CBA?

Eileen McGettigan stated that there is a provision within the Development Covenant negotiated between US2 and the City, to which the SRA is not party. The Development Covenant will be signed and attached to zoning. Development covenant will soon be released and that will reassure the community that the developer is required to negotiate in good faith with the community

Mr. Gage inquired whether there should be a clause within MLDA that outlines that the developer should sign a MOU or negotiate with the community in regards to a CBA?

Ms. McGettigan stated that such a clause would be duplicative and is covered within the Development Covenant and the MLDA.

Mr. Gage inquired whether the Development Covenant would be released to the community before the next scheduled SRA meeting of April 13th.

Michael Glavin stated that the Mayor made it clear that the Development Covenant would include a commitment to negotiate CBA. Mr. Glavin expressed that while other communities have been critical of redevelopment authorities, the structure of the SRA cedes power to other branches within the City and allows the other groups to approve the necessary pieces. Mr. Glavin commented over how the process has been in the wrong order, and that the mayor agrees with that sentiment, but now we must move forward. Mr. Glavin stated that the Union Square plan reflects the concerns, vision of the city- which has then been interpreted into zoning. Mr. Glavin stated that the community can look forward to the BOA, the Mayor acting responsibility and that the MLDA relies on duties and responsibilities held by others.

Mr. Gage inquired over a date for the release of the Covenant.

Mr. Glavin stated that the covenant, pending negotiations, should be released prior to the BOA's Land Use Committee Meeting.

Ms. Busnach cancelled the upcoming March 16th SRA meeting. Ms. Busnach stated that an additional comment period will close April 14th. Ms. Busnach stated that the next SRA meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 27th.

Ms. Busnach recognized the smart and thoughtful comments from this evening and stated that the SRA and the community all share the goal of making Somerville the best place.

Vote: To authorize execution of the Master Land Disposition Agreement

- Vote not taken

Vote: To submit the Master Land Disposition Agreement to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for review and approval in accordance with 760 C.M.R. 12.05(2)

- Vote not taken

5. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

- No other business.

6. Selection of Date for Next Meeting:

- The next regular meeting will be April 27th, 2017 at 5:30PM.
- Regular meetings scheduled for March 16th, 2017, April 13th, 2017 are cancelled.

7. Adjournment

Vote: Adjourn the March 8th meeting.

- Motion to Adjourn made by Iwona Bonney. William Gage seconded the motion. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.