



# Somerville Redevelopment Authority

Philip Ercolini, Chair  
Iwona Bonney, Secretary  
Ben Ewen-Campen  
William Gage  
Patrick McCormick  
Christine Stone

## Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: December 15, 2021

Time: The Chair convened the meeting at 5.31pm.

### ATTENDANCE:

SRA Members Present: Iwona Bonney, Phillip Ercolini, William Gage, Patrick McCormick, Christine Stone.

SRA Members Absent: Ben Ewen-Campen.

Staff Present: Eileen McGettigan (Special Counsel), Tom Galligani (Director of Economic Development), Rachel Nadkarni (Senior Planner).

### AGENDA ITEMS:

#### 1. Approval of November 17, 2021, meeting minutes:

- Ms. Bonney noted a typographical error regarding School Street.

Mr. Gage moved approval, as amended. Seconded by Mr. McCormick. Unanimously approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.

#### 2. Public Comment:

- None.

#### 3. Winter Hill Redevelopment Plan Update:

- Mark Development is proceeding with development at 299 Broadway. The City Council recently approved a zoning change for the site. Neighborhood meetings will follow before a Special Permit application is submitted.
- In compliance with the Winter Hill Urban Redevelopment Plan (“WHURP”), a Civic Advisory Committee will be formed from nearby residents and businesses to provide feedback to the City on how to redevelop corner parcels not included in the Mark Development project. Interviews will start shortly, and membership should be finalized in approximately two weeks.
- Ms. Stone asked how many members the Civic Advisory Committee will have. A total of 14 members are allowed - five residents, four businesses, three language liaisons and two City Councilors. To date, no one has applied for the Haitian Creole language liaison seat.
- Ms. Stone also asked if the Council seats will be filled by existing Councilors or new Councilors. Per a Memorandum of Understanding between the SRA and the City Council, one Council seat is reserved for the Ward 4 Councilor, Councilor Clingan. The second seat is to be filled by the Council President. The hope is to have that seat filled by January.
- No public comment was received on this item.

#### 4. 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Update:

- Two public engagement events were held for the project. OSPCD hosted a luncheon last Thursday for residents of the Cobble Hill Apartments at the Ralph and Jenny Senior Center. Sixty attendees were asked whether they had questions about the project, if they had any concerns about the new public safety facility slated for part of the site, and what they wanted to see developed on the remainder of the site not used for the public safety structure. Two nights ago, OSPCD hosted a hybrid general public meeting with 100+ virtual attendees and 25 area residents participating in-person at various locations. Both the public safety building and the future private phases of redevelopment were discussed over two hours. OSPCD will use the feedback garnered to refine the design of the Public Safety Facility and work with consultants to develop options for the private development phase. Staff should be able to provide another update in February.
- Mr. McCormick asked if the meetings were documented. There is a dedicated project web page on SomerVoice. A video of the proceedings will be posted with notes, presentations and transcripts by the end of the week.
- Ms. Bonney asked what area residents are feeling about having a large development project next to them, particularly tenants of the Cobble Hill Apartments next door. Abutters are concerned about noise impacts, the scale of possible redevelopment, loss of greenery and possible loss of residential parking. There are also neighbors who are interested in the possibilities for new uses afforded by redevelopment of the site. Finally, there is a group of residents who are skeptical about the need for a large new police facility on the site.
- Mr. Ercolini asked how many residents live in the abutting Cobble Hill Apartments. There are estimated to be 300+ residents in 240-250 units.
- Ms. Stone asked about the consultants hired to assist with management of the project. HR&A Advisors has been hired to provide real estate and financial analysis on development alternatives. Horsley Witten Group has been hired to help with public participation processes and illustration of design options. Public engagement will proceed through the spring and result in a public vision for the types of uses and buildings that will inform compilation of the RFP for selecting a private developer for those sites. Some elements of the public safety facility may be incorporated into development on the other lots.

#### 5. Other Business:

- Mr. Ercolini asked a question about *ex parte* communications and the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, specifically about how elected officials who serve on municipal boards and commissions communicate with members of the public. Counsel advised that care must be taken by elected and appointed members to avoid sequential quorums in communicating with other members as well as the public.
- Mr. McCormick suggested members be mindful of the Open Meeting Law while being open to communication from the public.

#### 6. Next Meeting:

Mr. Ercolini announced the next (virtual) meeting of the SRA is scheduled for January 19, 2022, via GoToWebinar software.

#### Meeting Adjournment:

Mr. McCormick moved to adjourn at 6:02pm. Ms. Bonney seconded. The motion was unanimously approved 5-0-0 by roll call vote.