



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 7, 2017
REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Lance L. Davis	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Absent	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: George Proakis, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees. Alderman Heuston was unable to attend due to her presence at a Cambridge meeting to discuss Inman Square traffic.

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:08 PM by Alderman Davis and adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Approval of the January 17, 2017 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the January 24, 2017 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

200787: Proposing a new Article 16B in the city's Zoning Ordinances, with attendant Zoning Map changes, to establish a minimum mixed use ratio in designated areas.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

201843: Requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to create a new "CCD-55

Commercial" subdistrict, a new "CCD-45 Commercial" subdistrict, a new Section 5.8: Coordinated Development Special Permit, a new Section 6.7: Union Square Overlay District, and to make related changes to Article 5 and the Zoning Map.

Mr. Proakis told the members that the new draft of the zoning amendment would be submitted to the BOA at this Thursday's meeting and that any changes requested tonight could be worked in, if not too substantial. Alderman Rossetti would like a side packet showing the changes from the last submission and Mr. Proakis said that he will show the changes. Alderman Ballantyne and Mr. Proakis discussed the submission of the proposal and how open space would be taken up. Alderman Ballantyne said that she doesn't understand how the proposal is ready when there are still 2 or 3 meetings scheduled.

Chairman Davis would like to see more meaningful conversations before the draft is submitted and said that an alternative would be to provide a working draft to be put on the record. He would like to start looking at language and would like to see a draft, but would like to have time to mark up the language, if needed. Mr. Proakis will take this under advisement. Alderman Niedergang stated that he is comfortable with the proposed schedule. Alderman White said he doesn't see the sense of urgency because he hasn't seen enough information from the designated developer yet and he would like to hear from them first. He said that publishing the zoning now would only be to freeze the zoning if someone were to file for a special permit. Mr. Proakis said he is not aware of a special permit pending which would cause the need to freeze the zoning.

Alderman Lafuente said there is no need to introduce this, yet, adding that whomever chose the developer is responsible to make sure it is done properly. The BOA should take its time and do it diligently and properly. He said the blend necessary in Union Square needs proper thought. Alderman McLaughlin is not ready to submit the proposal. Mr. Proakis will take everyone's comments into consideration and discuss them with his colleagues.

Civic and open spaces were discussed as well as affordable units. Mr. Proakis explained that the city doesn't have to allow a 40B development because it meets the affordable housing threshold. Alderman White said he doesn't want all affordable units in one building and asked how to ensure the same quality and amenities in the affordable units. Alderman Niedergang is not comfortable giving the Planning Board discretion to implement this. He wants to make sure enough family housing is being built. Chairman Davis asked about integrating affordable housing into neighborhoods, saying that people don't know their neighbors today. He said it is the BOA's job to draft something that is good for the community and he is not comfortable with the way it is drafted now. Mr. Proakis explained the reasoning behind putting affordable housing in the neighborhoods and Chairman Davis was not comfortable with that explanation.

Alderman White wants to look at this issue closer and said parents' influences need to be looked at. He also said that, presumably, the developer should know now if they are building a tower, where they propose to but 3 bedroom units and the timing of the build out. Alderman Lafuente would like to know if there is data on social interaction and what the probability of interaction among people would be if 2 bedroom units cost \$3,000/month. He asked if social interaction should be looked at first, noting that artists are more likely to be involved in the community than transients. Alderman McWatters said it is a good point because there isn't much interaction between affordable and market rate units and Alderman McLaughlin said the neighborhood will most likely be against the affordable housing development at an off-site location. Alderman Niedergang said large towers usually have urban anonymity and believes that the buildings

should be mixed. Phasing should be done at the same time. The affordable and market rate units should be done at the same time. Alderman McLaughlin said he fears the 20% requirement that was fought for will be lost and asked what guaranties the city has that affordable housing will be built. Mr. Proakis said that there can be a bond in case the city has to finish it.

A study on the city's website shows that 14% of people looking for housing are looking for family type housing. Somerville has much family housing and many of the units have roommate situations. The demand is for smaller units. Alderman Ballantyne asked how one would get roommates to move out of a shared apartment and into a more expensive one bedroom unit. Mr. Proakis acknowledged that it is difficult, but he thinks many people would switch, but for the cost. Building smaller units may cause a shift.

Chairman Davis asked about design guidelines requiring a family room and not just 3 bedrooms with a shared kitchen. Alderman Lafuente asked if parents get moved to a smaller unit when the kids move out. Alderman McWatters asked about creative financing options for families that want to buy a unit. Alderman White said the BOA is trying to build a community going forward. The demand for Somerville is great with 2 and 3 family houses are being sold. Rentals and condos are forcing the only affordable units to be in the new buildings that are being built.

Mr. Proakis mentioned the 100 homes program from the Somerville Community Corp., dimensional requirements and formula businesses, noting that there is a limited ability to prohibit chains. Alderman White said the Somerville Redevelopment Authority could get a commitment from the developer, adding that the city can define exactly what is going to be built at the site.

Alderman White said if there is a storm this Thursday causing the BOA meeting to be cancelled, he will call a special BOA meeting for next week.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202235: 138 voters requesting a Public Hearing on Community Benefits Agreements and their potential to address displacement and uphold community values.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202410: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #201843, a proposed Zoning Amendment for Union Square.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202409: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #200787, a Zoning Amendment to establish a minimum mixed use ratio.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202357: That the City Solicitor appear before the Land Use Committee to explain the threshold that would require a new notice and hearing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202358: That a formula business restriction be added to the Union Square zoning amendment.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202303: Union United submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202304: Bill Cavellini submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202320: Ed Marakovitz submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202392: Melissa Lowitz submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202393: 24 Action Network members submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202394: 12 Union Square business owners and 1 resident submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202395: 115 signers to a Chamber of Commerce petition submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202396: Green and Open Somerville submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202397: Union Square Main Streets submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202398: State Representative Denise Provost submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202399: Wig Zamore submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Handout:

- Union Sq Zoning Amendment - Meeting #8 (with 201843)