



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Land Use Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 18, 2025

6:30 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair McLaughlin at 6:31 pm and adjourned at 7:09 pm on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Councilor Sait, Councilor Wilson, and Councilor McLaughlin), 0 opposed, and 0 absent.

Councilor Wilson joined the meeting at 6:37pm.

Others present: Yasmine Raddassi - Legislative Liaison, Samantha Carr - City Council Land Use Analyst, Madalyn Letellier - Legislative Services Manager.

Roll Call

Present: Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait and Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis

Absent: City Councilor At Large Jake Wilson

- Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1402](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Land Use Committee Meeting of September 4, 2025.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, Ward Five City Councilor Sait and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Wilson

- Order (ID # [25-0338](#)) By Councilor McLaughlin That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning provide the Committee on Land Use with an opinion as to whether the City Council may dictate standards and materials used for outdoor bike facilities.

Liaison Raddassi was present on behalf of the Inspectional Services Department. She stated there is no roadblock from allowing the council to decide on materials for outdoor bike facilities.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

- 3. Order
(ID # [25-0246](#))

By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Mbah
That the Director of Inspectional Services and the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning discuss with this Council, Type IV heavy timber construction now permitted in the 10th edition of Massachusetts State Building Code 780 and potential impacts on inspections, development, and the Zoning Ordinance.

Chair McLaughlin introduced the item and Gavin Robb from Machado Silvetti who was present speak on the submitted presentation, *Land Use 2025-09-18 Mass Timber Presentation (with 25-0246)*. Liaison Raddassi also expressed there is a memo attached from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) in response to questions from Councilor Wilson from a previous meeting, *Land Use 2025-09-18 Memo (with 25-0246)*. Following the presentation Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Davis expressed interest in seeing how the city will be able to incorporate this development with the current zoning and what flexibility this will bring. Councilor Davis asked for clarity from staff about how zoning for a specific building type works, and if there are other ways to think about building for height now that these options exist within the Building Code. Councilor Sait asked for further clarification on fire code related to the timber and how that relates to density. Mr. Robb replied in short, there are heavily regulated fire codes for this building type.

Legislative Raddassi relayed ISD’s position that they do not recommend doing construction based on zoning. Chair McLaughlin asked for clarification on whether the city should allow taller buildings based on this new material. Mr. Robb confirmed that it is the goal and highlighted the climate goals using this material.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

- 4. Public
Communication
(ID # [25-0200](#))

15 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinance sections 3.1.8c, 3.1.9c, 3.1.10c, 3.1.13k, 3.1.13l, 3.2.12l and 3.2.12m.

This item required action within 165 days, since that timeline has lapsed the item is placed on file.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE

- 5. Order
(ID # [25-0085](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Davis and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning draft an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances for transit oriented height and density bonuses for additional affordable housing and other enumerated community benefits.

Land Use Analyst presented on the presentation *Land Use - 2025-09-18 Gilman Square TOD Upzoning Updates (with 25-0085)*, that highlighted the next steps for a Gilman Square Analysis.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- Land Use - 2025-09-18 Memo (with 25-0246)
- Land Use 2025-09-18 Mass Timber Presentation (with 25-0246)
- Land Use - 2025-09-18 Gilman Square TOD Upzoning Updates (with 25-0085)