



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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ELIZABETH MORONEY
GERARD AMARAL, *ALT.*

October 17, 2013

The Honorable Board of Aldermen
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: That the Zoning Ordinance is hereby amended by changing all CCD 55 zoning districts in Ward 3 to CCD 45.

Dear Honorable Board of Aldermen:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Planning Board submits to your Honorable Board its recommendation on an ordinance to change the CCD 55 zoning district in Ward 3 to CCD 45. This amendment was addressed in a staff report provided to your honorable board on September 10, 2013.

On September 19, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen jointly held a duly advertised public hearing in the Aldermanic Chambers in City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments and to evaluate the amendments in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Planning Staff.

This report from the Planning Board to the Board of Aldermen will focus on the discussion at the September 19, 2013 and October 17, 2013 meeting and the Board's final recommendation.

DISCUSSION DURING HEARING

At the public hearing on September 19, 2013, Alderman Taylor presented his amendment to the public. George Proakis, Director of Planning, followed with a presentation explaining the process prior to the CCD zoning district being adopted in 2010, the purpose of a CCD which is to build walkable smart-



growth development, and the protections that the CCD district gives to abutting residential neighborhoods. Alderman White requested a cost benefit analysis of down zoning and how many residential units would be lost.

Approximately eight constituents spoke against the adoption of this ordinance. Reasons cited included incentivizing small parcels to consolidate, giving developers certainty so they will invest in the neighborhood, and protecting the property values. Approximately 6 people spoke in support of the ordinance and a written petition was submitted in support as well. Reasons to support the amendment included blocking views, protecting the character of Union Square, and creating better first floor commercial space.

The Land Use Committee and the Planning Board kept the written record open until September 27, 2013. All written records were shared with the Committee and Board prior to the October 17, 2013 vote.

DISCUSSION DURING MEETING

On October 17, 2013 the Planning Board met for a public meeting to discuss the proposed amendment. Kevin Prior, Chair, recapped the process that took place prior to the zoning amendment being adopted. Members of the Board understood the concerns of the neighborhoods, in particular, abutters to the 181 & 197 Washington Street and 315 Broadway projects.

The members of the Board were split in their reaction to the amendment. Some members of the Board felt that this amendment was proposed as a knee-jerk reaction to one development proposal. The special permit process in place worked, the Applicant worked with the Board and Planning Staff to limit the height of the building to preserve skyline views for the neighborhood. The rezoning process in 2010 was, in part, to make Union Square a downtown again; the additional story will only help with this vision. The other members of the Board felt that the projects proposed in the CCD 55 zoning districts did not support the visions of the public process prior to the CCD 55 adoption. A few Board members remember being conflicted in the initial recommendation vote in 2010 and want the opportunity to amend the height allowed in the district.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Following due consideration, James Kirylo made a motion to **RECOMMEND DENIAL** of the proposed amendment as laid out in the Planning Staff Report of September 10, 2013. Elizabeth Moroney seconded the motion, which carried 3-2.

Sincerely,



Kevin Prior
Chair