

October 15, 2018

Mr. George Proakis
Director of Planning
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Mr. Proakis,

I am writing to express my interest in the open seats on Somerville's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. As a Somerville resident and a professional in the urban planning and real estate development community, I am deeply interested in the frameworks that we use to direct development activity and ensure that new projects contribute to the City's long-term vision for our communities. I believe that my experience in public-sector urban planning strategy and private-sector real estate development and permitting has provided me with perspective that would be valuable on either Board. I would love to contribute my time and experience towards the City's efforts to support its long-term goals for economic development, equity, and enhanced quality of life.

From 2012 to 2016 I was employed as a project manager for the urban planning practice of BuroHappold Engineering, where my work focused on planning efforts for campuses and neighborhoods. In the course of this work, my projects addressed everything from transit-oriented development incentives to the revitalization of public parklands, economic development strategies, public-private partnerships, and land use frameworks to reconcile historically industrial neighborhoods facing the pressure of new uses. The majority of my projects were completed on behalf of city, state, and federal government agencies, giving me a strong working knowledge of the competing priorities that entities like the Planning Board and ZBA must balance.

More recently I have led development projects in the private sector, first at Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) and at WS Development. At CIC, my work focused on identifying new markets for innovation campuses and partnering with local institutions to implement them; CIC is often credited as a major factor in Kendall Square's transition to a 24/7 mixed-use neighborhood, and our new locations were often designed to with existing plans for innovation districts and tech-focused economic zones. At WS Development I am responsible for a mixed-use and retail portfolio from New Hampshire to Florida, leading development and renovation efforts designed to ensure our properties are hubs of community activity as much as retail destinations. In this position I have often worked with local permitting authorities to discuss the impacts of proposed changes to the zoning text, resulting in revisions that meet the community's intent while ensuring desired economic activity will not be inadvertently prohibited.

It is my intention to remain in Somerville for the foreseeable future, and I can think of no better way to give back to my community than to leverage my energy and experience to ensure that new development activity is aligned with the City's vision for the future. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Amelia Aboff