

Madalyn Letellier

From: Allie Girouard [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 3:05 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED]com; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; Mayor; [REDACTED]; Ben Ewen-Campen
Subject: Prioritize investment towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello,

I'm writing to urge you to support greater Somerville budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. Our city is in a crisis, and I am especially worried about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire.

I've lived in Somerville my entire adult life and would like to continue living here - something that is becoming increasingly unlikely due to rising prices and unappealing due to the displacement of my friends and neighbors.

As our neighbors continue to be displaced, we need the Mayor's budget to go further than it has before for housing stability.

Thank you,
Allie Girouard
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Amanda Tragert [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 10:54 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED] Mayor; [REDACTED];
[REDACTED]; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; Naima Sait
Subject: Somerville budget funding

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello,

My name is Amanda Tragert, and I've lived in Somerville for 8 years. I'm currently at [REDACTED] near Porter Square.

I've volunteered with CAAS for the last year, and have been excited to see how city budget funds were directed towards housing justice during the pandemic. I am testifying to support greater Somerville budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. Our city is in a crisis, and I am especially worried about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire.

I work at UMass Boston, and have been lucky to be able to find housing in Somerville near the Red Line which makes my commute possible. However, even with the salary raise that this position gave me, I still cannot afford to stay in Somerville without roommates. I worry about how sustainable this will be long term. I want to stay in the Somerville community that supports me in so many ways, and I don't want to see my lower income/immigrant neighbors (who Somerville government often celebrates as "a key part of the community") be forced out as they lose the resources Somerville had used to ARPA funding to support.

Although the Affordable Housing Trust Fund will provide some rental assistance funding, it is unlikely to fully replace the ARPA funding. For this reason, I urge the City to allocate from the general fund to make up the difference. I urge the City to incorporate the following programs currently funded by ARPA into the City's general budget:

- FLEX-ARPA rental assistance
- Municipal Voucher Program (currently funded through 2027)
- Funding for tenant organizing
- Legal support for low-income tenants
- Other programs that provide direct assistance to working-class Somerville residents, such as the Somerville Cares Fund, T-Pass programs, and child care and food supports

Please prioritize **funding for our community** over development projects and bond ratings.

Thank you for your time and hard work,

Amanda Tragert

Madalyn Letellier

From: Amy [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 7:30 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED] Mayor; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; [REDACTED]
Subject: Finance Committee hearing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Finance Committee:

As a Somerville resident, I am writing in support of greater budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. Our city is in a crisis, and I am especially worried about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire.

As a transplant who has lived in the Boston area since 2016, it has been disheartening to watch friends and neighbors be priced out of their own communities. Who is being prioritized with new development? Certainly not the longtime residents and working-class individuals and families who make our city what it is.

As my neighbors continue to be displaced, we need the Mayor's budget to go farther than it ever has before for housing stability. I urge you to put people over profit and familial stability over bond ratings. We must fight for *all* Somerville residents--not just the wealthy few.

Thank you for your time.

Amy

Madalyn Letellier

From: Eric Robsky Huntley [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:10 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Organizing Program; Mayor; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Wilfred Mbah; Naima Sait
Subject: Comment in Support of Housing Affordability in the Budget Process

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Eric Robsky Huntley and I am a renter in ward 5, living at [REDACTED]

I am writing to support an expansion of Somerville's funding of deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance. There is no ambiguity at this point: we are deeply entrenched in a housing crisis and I join many others in my concern regarding what will happen to programs that are crucial for supporting housing stability in our city once ARPA funds expire, including the Municipal Voucher Program and tenant organizing. These are directly impactful programs that support working-class residents of Somerville, and they must not only be kept in place but expanded.

Currently, I serve as the co-chair of the City of Somerville's Anti-Displacement Task Force Residential Subcommittee, a task force that I have previously served for two-and-a-half years as a member (including its previous iteration as the Fair Housing and Anti-Displacement Task Force). I am also the lead author on a 2022 report on statewide eviction filings in Massachusetts, written with La-Brina Almeida, Shep Heaton, and Andrea Moon Park of the Homes for All Massachusetts for All Coalition. Finally, though I write in my personal capacity as a concerned resident of Somerville, I am also a Lecturer in Urban Science and Planning in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Founder & Principal of OGRAPHIES Research & Design, LLC.

I've lived in Somerville for almost 7 years and I've been so inspired over the years by the strenuous efforts made by the city on behalf of tenants. One key support of these efforts is about to vanish; but it is absolutely crucial that the city find creative ways of financing and expanding programs that are only becoming more crucial with each passing day.

Thank you for your time.

Be well,
Eric

--

Eric Robsky Huntley, PhD | they/them | [Meet with Me \(Office Hours or Otherwise...\)](#)

Lecturer in Urban Science & Planning // MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning // [REDACTED]

Chair // Digital Geographies Specialty Group // American Association of Geographers

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jenna DiNovis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED] Mayor [REDACTED];
[REDACTED] Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; Naima Sait
Subject: Public Comment on Affordable Housing Crisis

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Jenna DiNovis, and I live and work in Somerville at [REDACTED] and East Somerville Community School, respectively.

I am testifying to support greater Somerville budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. Our city is in a crisis, and I am especially worried about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire.

Unaffordability of rents in Somerville is higher than ever and unregulated rent increases cause the displacement of my students and their families. I've taught multiple students each year over the past 12 years whose families have been forced to leave Somerville against their will, despite having a strong support network and community in place here. Being forced to move due to lack of affordable housing options has had devastating impacts on my students' growth, both academically and socio-emotionally.

Additionally, unaffordability of rents in Somerville is impacting public school educators themselves. It is becoming harder and harder for public educators to afford living in this city where we teach. There are numerous benefits to living near work, including improved health, reducing your carbon footprint, and being able to connect with students and families outside of school. I would love to continue living in Somerville for the rest of my life, but I don't see how I'll be able to afford it on a public school teacher salary with exponentially rising housing costs!

As my neighbors continue to be displaced, we need the Mayor's budget to go farther than it has before for housing stability.

Thank you for your time.

--

Jenna DiNovis (she/her/ella)
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Nina Foushee [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 3:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED]; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; [REDACTED] Mayor; Matthew McLaughlin
Subject: Needed investment for rental assistance and affordable housing

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

My name is Nina Foushee and I live and work in Somerville at [REDACTED], near the Somerville bike path. I am firmly in support of allocating more of Somerville's budget towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. I am profoundly concerned about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire. As Somerville rents continue to rise, I am seeing more essential workers (including social workers like myself) be forced to leave Somerville. It is vitally important that the Mayor's budget to go farther than it has before for housing stability. Thank you for your time.

Best,
Nina

--

Nina Foushee, LCSW
Therapy Fellow at Emily Pilowa, LICSW
For appointment availability, [REDACTED]
[Psychology Today profile](#)
She/Her

Madalyn Letellier

From: Pamela G [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 4:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: [REDACTED] Mayor [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah
Subject: More funds for housing in the upcoming budget

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

My name is Pamela Gudino. I moved back to Massachusetts in the summer of 2022 after living in the Bay Area. I am a nurse practitioner and had a job starting at a family practice in Somerville. I work full-time, but I could not afford to rent in Somerville where I was going to be working. The rents were as high (or higher) then where I moved from and were out of reach despite working full-time in a relatively well paid job. At the practice, I met with many patients who were former Somerville residents who had been forced to move due to rent increases and the lack of affordable housing though they were still coming back for medical care. I commuted to work and every day walked by people without housing looking for support. Though I ended up moving to a different clinic after about a year, I still want to write in support of greater Somerville budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds. I urge you to support key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents. As patients continue to be displaced, we need the Mayor's budget to go farther than it has before for housing stability. Thank you for your time.

Pamela Gudino, FNP, MPH, RN, MSN

--

Madalyn Letellier

From: Sydney Moyer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 12:24 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Organizing Program; Mayor; [REDACTED]; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; Judy Pineda Neufeld
Subject: Budget for affordable housing

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hi there!

My name is Sydney Moyer and I'm a homeowner in Somerville's Ward 7.

I'm writing to support greater Somerville budget funding towards deeply affordable housing and flexible rental assistance funds.

I know that our city is in a crisis, and has been for a long time. I am especially worried about what will happen to key programs including rental assistance, the Municipal Voucher Program, tenant organizing, and other programs that directly support working class Somerville residents once ARPA funds expire.

I've only lived in Somerville since I bought my condo in 2021, and I enjoy a lot of relative privilege as a homeowner. But I'm worried that the community where I've chosen to build my life is letting my friends and neighbors fall through the cracks. I worry that at some point my friends will have to move away, and that no one my age can envision a future where they are still able to live in Somerville. What kind of city will we be when only the very few and the very wealthy are able to continue living here?

We need all types of people to create a thriving city – young, old, service workers, artists, parents, blue-collar workers, immigrants, and middle class workers. I am a homeowner, and I worry that unless Somerville takes drastic action to ease this crisis now, that I've picked a decaying city to call my home.

As my neighbors continue to be displaced, we need the Mayor's budget to go farther than it has before for housing stability. So please, allocate all the possible budget funds towards alleviating this crisis – so we can envision a real future for Somerville together. Thank you for your time.

--

Sydney Moyer
[REDACTED]
Somerville MA 02144
[REDACTED]