



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
*MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*  
JACOB D. WILSON  
MAYOR

THOMAS GALLIGANI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**MEMBERS**

MICHAEL A. CAPUANO, ESQ., *CHAIRPERSON*  
AMELIA ABOFF, *VICE CHAIRPERSON*  
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LUC SCHUSTER, *ALTERNATE*  
CORALIE COOPER, *ALTERNATE*

June 1, 2026

The Honorable City Council  
City Hall  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Honorable City Council:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Somerville Planning Board submits to your Honorable Council its recommendation on the following proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. On March 19, 2026, and April 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the City Council held a duly advertised virtual joint public hearing. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance and to evaluate the proposal in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the staff to the Planning Board. On May 7, 2026, and May 21, 2026, the Board convened their regularly scheduled meeting and discussed the following agenda items:

**PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. 26 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. (File#[26-0287](#)) .

The Board deliberated and solicited input from staff and made the following specific recommendations. Following due consideration, Chairman Michael Capuano made a motion to make **no recommendation** on the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The



motion was seconded by Vice Chairperson Amelia Aboff, and unanimously passed by the Board, **6-0**, with the following discussion:

- While the Board voiced appreciation for the work that has gone into this proposal and agreed that revisions to former amendments may be appropriate and timely, the Board recommends this be done through City staff, the City Council, and public engagement to ensure alignment with the long-term planning objectives of the City.
- The Board notes its general support for public-led amendments intended to improve upon the zoning ordinance or shed light on issues that should ultimately be part of City-led initiatives.

2. Union 2 Associates, LLC requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 2 and 9 Union Square, 286, 290, and 298 Somerville Avenue from Commercial Core 5 (CC5) to Mid-Rise 6 (MR6). (File#[26-0257](#))

The Board deliberated and solicited input from staff and made the following specific recommendations. Following due consideration, Chairman Michael Capuano made a motion to make **no recommendation** on the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairperson Amelia Aboff, and unanimously passed by the Board, **6-0**, with the following discussion:

- The Board discussed the complexity of the Union Square Neighborhood Plan, existing Master Plan, and numerous commitments made by and between the City, the Master Developer, and the Neighborhood Association with respect to plans for Union Square's redevelopment. The Board took the general position that any modifications to plans for Union Square should follow the model of previous planning efforts, focusing on continued community engagement and ensuring any changes contribute to the overall master plan objectives of the area.

3. 29 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend Zoning Ordinance Section 3.1.12 Backyard Cottage. (File#[26-0330](#))

The Board deliberated and solicited input from staff and made the following specific recommendations. Following due consideration, Chairman Michael Capuano made a motion to make **no recommendation** on the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairperson Amelia Aboff, and unanimously passed by the Board, **6-0**, with the following discussion:

- The Board discussed the proposed amendments and indicated that they raise valid concerns regarding lot splits and the size and ownership of ADUs and backyard cottages.

- The Board recognized that Planning and Inspectional Services staff are working on a different set of amendments to address the topics raised by items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this recommendation and which may address many, if not all, of the concerns raised in the competing amendments that are before the Board.

4. 14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinance Section 3.1.12 Backyard Cottage. (File#[26-0329](#))

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5. 14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend Zoning Ordinance Section 12.2.2 regarding affordable dwelling units. (File#[26-0328](#))

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- The Board recognized that Planning and Inspectional Services staff are working on a different set of amendments to address the topics raised by items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this recommendation and which may address many, if not all, of the concerns raised in the competing amendments that are before the Board.

6. 29 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend Zoning Ordinance Section 15.7.2.d Zoning Board of Appeals Board Rules.(File#[26-0327](#))

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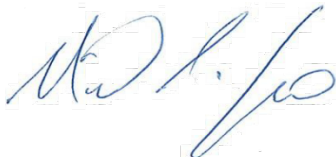
- The Board discussed the proposed amendments and indicated that they raise valid concerns regarding lot splits and the size and ownership of ADUs and backyard cottages.
- The Board recognized that Planning and Inspectional Services staff are working on a different set of amendments to address the topics raised by items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this recommendation and which may address many, if not all, of the concerns raised in the competing amendments that are before the Board.

7. Councilor Strezo, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Davis, and Councilor Sait requesting an amendment to sections 2.1.1 and 3.1.12 of the Zoning Ordinances regarding Accessory Dwelling Units. (File# 26-0234)

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- The Board discussed the proposed amendments and indicated that they raise valid concerns regarding lot splits and the size and ownership of ADUs and backyard cottages.
- The Board recognized that Planning and Inspectional Services staff are working on a different set of amendments to address the topics raised by items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this recommendation and which may address many, if not all, of the concerns raised in the competing amendments that are before the Board.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Capuano  
Chairman  
Somerville Planning Board