

John Long

From: Samantha Musher [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2020 4:38 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Cc: Jesse Clingan; Katjana Ballantyne; Mark Niedergang; William A. White
Subject: Public Utilities Testimony 9/30/20

To Chair Clingan, Vice Chair White, and members of the Public Utilities and Public Works Committee:

Hi, I'm a Somerville resident and an organizer with Mutual Aid Medford & Somerville (MAMAS). I'm writing to express my concerns with LaCourt Realty and their consistent mistreatment of tenants, negligence of their properties, and inability to maintain a livable standard for tenants. In the past year, there have been at least two documented cases in Somerville, at 2 Aberdeen Road and 21 Cherry Street, where LaCourt Realty has ordered tenants to leave their homes in order to proceed with development plans that would net a greater profit. Displacing tenants in order to increase your bottom line is immoral even during normal times, but is especially egregious during a pandemic where eviction is a public health hazard. LaCourt has gotten away with tenaning 21 Cherry St. before receiving a Certificate of Occupancy, which is a clear danger to tenants. If the city fails to come up with measures to enforce the necessity of a Certificate of Occupancy, and continues to accept LaCourt's account over that of the community, it will be responsible for endangering tenants. This is not the first time LaCourt has failed to adhere to building code during renovations, and unless action is taken, will likely not be the last. It is overwhelmingly clear that LaCourt Realty does not care about the health and safety of its tenants, and the city should be wary of incentivizing a landlord that so clearly prioritizes his net worth over thousands of Somerville residents who are at risk. I hope that the council and the administration will prioritize the health and safety of Somerville tenants and take action to hold LaCourt accountable.

Thank you,

Sam Musher
Ward 1

John Long

From: Thane Hale [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 2:30 PM
To: City Clerk Contact
Subject: Fwd: 200 North Street testimony

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Thane Hale [REDACTED]
Date: Wed, Nov 4, 2020 at 2:26 PM
Subject: 200 North Street testimony
To: <planning@somervillema.gov>, <citycouncil@somervillema.gov>

Hello,
I should be clear that I'm not a Somerville resident, but I have interacted with LaCourt realty in my capacity as an organizer of the LaCourt Tenants Union.

This is my testimony regarding the development at 200 North St: this is another example of LaCourt violating the law regarding planning and zoning ordinances, and then trying to circumvent the law after the fact by asking for forgiveness. The councillors should be aware, at this point, of LaCourt's numerous violations including (1) violating construction hours and (2) tenating a building with no certificate of occupancy at 21 Cherry St. Those are some of their violations which are clearly illegal.

But regarding their effect on Somerville and the surrounding community, they have kicked tenants out of their homes at both 21 Cherry St. and 2 Aberdeen Rd. They would have kicked out tenants at 34 and 36 Merriam St. to redevelop it, too, had the city not tabled their request for upzoning. The city has, so far, been unable to punish LaCourt for the violations which are clearly illegal. There is also little recourse to punish LaCourt for their harsh mistreatment of tenants and their attempt to gentrify Somerville and dispossess people of their homes.

These are reasons, I believe, to be wary of LaCourt's request for forgiveness regarding their willfully violating an approved plan at 200 North St. It's clear that this isn't any mistake on their part--LaCourt consistently ignores the demands of the city and its residents. They do everything they can to circumvent their need to acknowledge the common good in their rabid pursuit of profits. The city cannot allow this precedent to stand. Therefore, I'm asking you to deny LaCourt's appeal here and make them face the consequences which are due to them.

Regards,
Thane from LCTU

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Thane Hale
Tufts University | 2021
M.A. Philosophy

John Long

From: Nate Krinsky [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 2:57 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; Planning1
Cc: Ben Ewen-Campen; Lance Davis; William A. White; Matthew McLaughlin; Mark Niedergang; Wilfred Mbah; Mary Jo. Rossetti; strezoatlarge@gmail.com; JT Scott; Jesse Clingan; Katjana Ballantyne; All City Council
Subject: 200 North Street Testimony

My name is Nate, I am a Somerville resident living at [REDACTED] and I am writing in support of the LaCourt Tenants Union. As LaCourt tenants and their neighbors have pointed out, this developer is asking for forgiveness after willfully violating an approved plan, and only after being called out on it. It is dangerous to set the precedent for the next developer to ask for its own special exception to the law. We should make it clear, today and over the coming years, that development in our city is going to be genuinely regulated, by the zoning ordinance, to fulfill the intentions of community building and economic development that are set out in its first provisions.

If developers are allowed to bypass asking for permission and skip straight to applying for forgiveness, they will be the only ones who benefit from what could be a very productive next few years of growth in this area. What this developer is permitted to do will impact every renter living in Somerville. I urge the board to know that the public wants you to stand strong on this issue, deny the appeal, and enforce that this developer give you what they promised, or face the consequences.

Thank you,
Nate

John Long

From: Shane Woolley [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 3:22 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; Planning1
Cc: Ben Ewen-Campen; Lance Davis; William A. White; Matthew McLaughlin; Mark Niedergang; Wilfred Mbah; Mary Jo. Rossetti; strezoatlarge@gmail.com; JT Scott; Jesse Clingan; Katjana Ballantyne; All City Council
Subject: 200 North Street Testimony

Hello,

My name is Shane Woolley, and I am a Somerville resident and member of the Greater Boston Tenants Union living at [REDACTED]. I am writing in support of the LaCourt Tenants Union.

As LaCourt tenants and their neighbors have pointed out, this developer is asking for forgiveness after willfully violating an approved plan, and only after being called out on it. It is dangerous to set the precedent for the next developer to ask for its own special exception to the law. We should make it clear, today and over the coming years, that development in our city is going to be genuinely regulated, by the zoning ordinance, to fulfill the intentions of community building and economic development that are set out in its first provisions.

If developers are allowed to bypass asking for permission and skip straight to applying for forgiveness, they will be the only ones who benefit from what could be a very productive next few years of growth in this area. What this developer is permitted to do will impact every renter living in Somerville.

I urge the board to know that the public wants you to stand strong on this issue, deny the appeal, and enforce that this developer give you what they promised, or face the consequences.

Thank you,
Shane W

John Long

From: Margot Richardson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 2:46 PM
To: City Clerk Contact; Planning1
Cc: Ben Ewen-Campen; Lance Davis; William A. White; Matthew McLaughlin; Mark Niedergang; Wilfred Mbah; Mary Jo. Rossetti; strezoatlarge@gmail.com; JT Scott; Jesse Clingan; Katjana Ballantyne; All City Council
Subject: 200 North Street Testimony

My name is Margot Richardson and I am a Somerville resident living at [REDACTED] and I am writing in support of the LaCourt Tenants Union. As LaCourt tenants and their neighbors have pointed out, this developer is asking for forgiveness after willfully violating an approved plan, and only after being called out on it. It is dangerous to set the precedent for the next developer to ask for its own special exception to the law. We should make it clear, today and over the coming years, that development in our city is going to be genuinely regulated, by the zoning ordinance, to fulfill the intentions of community building and economic development that are set out in its first provisions. If developers are allowed to bypass asking for permission and skip straight to applying for forgiveness, they will be the only ones who benefit from what could be a very productive next few years of growth in this area. What this developer is permitted to do will impact every renter living in Somerville. I urge the board to know that the public wants you to stand strong on this issue, deny the appeal, and enforce that this developer give you what they promised, or face the consequences. Thank you.
Margot Richardson