

Date: May 12, 2021
To: Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
From: Appointments Advisory Committee
CC: Jennifer Mancia
RE: Recommendation for Appointment to the Planning Board (PB)

The Somerville Appointments Advisory Committee (“AAC” or the “Committee”) recommends Robert Buchanan, Erin Geno, Deborah Howitt-Easton, and Russell Pildes for appointment to the vacant positions on the Planning Board (PB).

The Committee was impressed with Rob Buchanan for his continued commitment to the City and willingness to serve the public good. His experience as an Alternate Member to the PB for the past year has been well-received. He spoke to the AAC about continually learning from all different perspectives to inform his diligent review of cases.

We recommend that Rob be appointed to the Full Member position for a full 3-year term that expires or is up for renewal in 2024.

The Committee was also pleased with our discussion with Erin Geno. Her background includes logical and analytical systems thinking which would provide a different perspective to the board. We believe she will bring a strong set of new skills than traditional applicants but will fit well. The Committee recommends that Erin be appointed to the Full Member position with a staggered term of 2-years expiring in 2023.

The AAC recommends Debbie Howitt-Easton to an Alternate Member position. She is an attorney with a background real estate and long-time resident of the city. While working and raising a family here, she has been committed to giving back to the city in various ways, and even participated in first SomerVision process.

The AAC recommends Debbie to the Alternate Member position with a 3-year term expiring in 2024.

The AAC was also impressed by Russell Pildes. He is under 30, currently a renter, and showed good energy and enthusiasm for the position. As a transportation planning professional, he has a good technical background and has studied many aspects of land use planning too.

We recommend Russell to the Alternate Member position with a 2-year term expiring in 2023.

We had terrific conversations with all the candidates and were genuinely awed by the qualifications presented so it was a difficult deliberation. Please let us know if we can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,