



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 29, 2016

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Lance L. Davis	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: George Proakis - OSPCD, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:09 PM by Alderman Davis and adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Chairman Davis gave a brief overview of the agenda and noted that most of the items are comments related to the same topic. Mr. Proakis spoke about what he prepared for this evening's meeting. Alderman Ballantyne expressed concern over not having the financial analysis from the MMUR. Mr. Proakis said he would provide it but explained that a fiscal impact analysis is difficult without a timeline and as such, it would only be speculative. Mr. Proakis explained how bonds impact the expenses.

Alderman White expressed concern over negative results of reports and about estimates being based on the assumption of full a build-out, and feels the analysis and assumptions are just wishful thinking. Mr. Proakis stated that we can look at the sensitivity analysis of the project and take those factors into consideration. Alderman Lafuente said that he just expects information to be provided so that informed decisions may be made. He thinks the people in the city are upset and he is upset because the BOA doesn't have a great deal of power, yet it gets blamed for the problems. He stated that he would not vote for anything until he has the right answers and that he would not vote for anything that puts the city at risk of bankruptcy.

Alderman Heuston said there are 2 items before the BOA, i.e., Union Square and Alderman White's amendment for increased development. She spoke about the benefit of Boynton Yards being included in the Union Square plan and asked if the city considered encouraging development in Boynton Yards. She explained that Boynton Yards is simpler and creates a different picture, as it lends itself to more commercial development. Union Square, on the other hand, is complicated.

Alderman Niedergang feels Mr. Proakis is being treated unkindly and unfairly and said that the Mayor has done a great job. He wants to do a comprehensive overhaul and doesn't see doom and gloom.

Alderman White spoke about a risk analysis and asked if the zoning requires a DIF to be effective. Mr. Proakis doesn't have the answer but believes that there will be a need for infrastructure in parts of the Union Square development. He will get a better understanding and answer to the question. Alderman White also asked if the reason that the zoning is being rushed has to do with the SRA's agreement with the selected developer.

Alderman McLaughlin is concerned about people being displaced and sees nothing in the zoning plan that benefits the city. He feels it benefits the developer and said that the developer shouldn't be driving the development. He wants to look at it more harshly and will not support it if the community isn't getting what it needs. Alderman Rossetti asked if RKG was awarded a contract.

Alderman Lafuente said the city has \$110 million in bonds. The SHS, GLX and other projects brings it to \$350 million in bonds. He said the city wish list could place an additional ½ billion dollars of cost on the backs of residents. The city isn't growing with commercial development. He went on to say that he isn't talking about doom and gloom - he's talking about reality. He said that he is not here to make friends - he's here to do a job. Not getting the info requested is concerning. He said the budget is growing every year and the city is getting zero from Partners. He believes that the Partners building could be paying for the new high school.

Alderman Connolly said the SomerVision Plan set parameters and that everyone new density would have to be created if the Green Line comes to the city. He said the fabric of the city changes around T stops. It happened in Davis Square. Alderman Sullivan said people are genuinely concerned. He is in agreement about a new high school and is concerned if the city can afford it. Residents are afraid and the financial impacts on the average tax payer must be looked at.

Alderman Heuston asked where the I-Cubed funding discussion sits and Mr. Proakis said he will have a written response submitted. Alderman Heuston said many topics are coming up and the BOA needs to know when and where they will have those discussions. Chairman Davis said he will be hoping to advance his understanding of the documents before him. Alderman McWatters said the city needs the development however he agrees that more analysis and data is needed.

Mr. Proakis spoke about core area goals and explained what is in the most recent version of the amendment, spoke about a holistic development strategy, explained the details of each TOD and spoke about the reasoning behind TOD heights. Alderman Heuston asked if the high rise on

Prospect Street is the highest building in the area. Mr. Proakis said that, according to the proposal, the tallest building allowed to be built would be 220 feet or 20 stories. Alderman Heuston said the tower could dwarf the neighborhood and said that the Reliable market is far from a residential area. She would like to trade heights in other neighborhoods. Mr. Proakis said the Kawasaki block lends itself to a commercial building. He is reluctant to reduce height in some spaces in favor of others. Alderman Heuston stated that she is here to advocate for her constituents. Mr. Proakis said there is no intention to do wholesale changes in the Allen Street and Meriam Street neighborhoods, adding that transformational development is difficult.

Alderman Rossetti asked about extending the required 300 foot notice area for neighbors. Mr. Proakis said the 300 foot requirement usually notifies 25-30 houses. He said the proposed Union Square development would hit about 300 houses. The committee discussed the difficulty of notifying tenants about public hearings and Alderman Heuston would like to look at that. Alderman Niedergang wants to down zone an area near Prospect Hill. Alderman White said that the SRA can take a property by eminent domain if a property owner doesn't want to go along with the plan. Mr. Proakis said the Assembly Square PUD caused Central Steele to move along with another company. Their land was purchased by the developer and the companies moved and are still in business.

Alderman White noted that he voted against Assembly Square development. He wants to hear from the developer before giving up leverage and wants a commitment from the developer as well as plans, potential tenants, etc. Alderman White thinks the process is being done backwards and said that once the zoning is passed, it is in the hands of the SRA. Alderman White would like more concrete examples of build outs under current zoning versus proposed zoning. Mr. Proakis stated that if the city holds the zoning until a tenant is secured, a tenant may not be found. Mr. Proakis went over the presentation slides so that the BOA could review them on their own at their leisure. The committee discussed proposed building heights, open space and landscape percentages. The CCD has no commercial requirement. The Planning Board can determine the commercial split.

Approval of the November 1, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:

ACCEPTED

200787: Proposing a new Article 16B in the city's Zoning Ordinances, with attendant Zoning Map changes, to establish a minimum mixed use ratio in designated areas.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

201843: Requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to create a new "CCD-55 Commercial" subdistrict, a new "CCD-45 Commercial" subdistrict, a new Section 5.8: Coordinated Development Special Permit, a new Section 6.7: Union Square Overlay District, and to make related changes to Article 5 and the Zoning Map.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202235: 138 voters requesting a Public Hearing on Community Benefits Agreements and their potential to address displacement and uphold community values.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202410: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #201843, a proposed Zoning Amendment for Union Square.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202409: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #200787, a Zoning Amendment to establish a minimum mixed use ratio.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202357: That the City Solicitor appear before the Land Use Committee to explain the threshold that would require a new notice and hearing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202358: That a formula business restriction be added to the Union Square zoning amendment.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202303: Union United submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202304: Bill Cavellini submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202320: Ed Marakovitz submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202392: Melissa Lowitz submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202393: 24 Action Network members submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202394: 12 Union Square business owners and 1 resident submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202395: 115 signers to a Chamber of Commerce petition submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202396: Green and Open Somerville submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202397: Union Square Main Streets submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202398: State Representative Denise Provost submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202399: Wig Zamore submitting comments re: #201843, Union Sq zoning.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Handouts:

- Documents for 11-29-16 Land Use Meeting
- Union Square Neighbors