

Christopher Allen



Appointments Advisory Committee  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

July 5, 2018

Dear Appointments Advisory Committee,

I am writing to express interest in the opening on the Licensing Commission. I believe my combination of a passion for vibrant walkable neighborhoods and data analysis skills can be of great use in helping the City best shape the activities of the businesses under its purview.

As an active member of the Somerville Pedestrian Transit Coalition, I worked with City datasets on parking, cross-correlating with the Assessor's database to find Residential passes issued to commercial or industrial addresses. I also created breakdowns of permits by ward and Census tract, to identify how permitting trends varied across the City. This skill set can be used to identify areas underserved in Somerville, and to better track trends of disturbances. If appointed, I would explore the feasibility of automating collection of 311 tickets by venue address, with a goal of identifying problematic spots without requiring a formal complaint to be filed with the Committee.

As a Union Square resident, I've seen a vibrant restaurant, brewery, and bar scene flourish, improving the quality of life of its residents and bringing in visitors from other parts of the metro area.

Firsthand, I have seen Bow Market take shape, talking to the small business food vendors for whom this will be their first brick and mortar establishment, and seeing that the Commission has been forward-thinking in adapting to these new business models. I hope to continue this trend of anticipating the future of Somerville neighborhoods and enabling their success.

Best,  
Christopher Allen

## Christopher Allen

---

Advocate for walkable and vibrant neighborhoods, with experience in data analysis.

### Community Activities

#### **Somerville Pedestrian & Transit Advocacy Group**

Lead on analysis of City-provided parking data.

- Provided analysis of per-capita use of parking by Ward and census district.
- Created toolkit for citizens to draw a geographic area in Google Maps and see how many permits were issued there.
- Created toolkits and scripts to lead hackathon for groups to further analyze data.
- Cross-correlated against the City Assessor's database to find commercial businesses that were claiming residential permits.

#### **Cambridge Explores the Universe – Science Education Outreach**

Annual community outreach event where astronomy staff create and run hands-on science activities for the community. Developed modules and ran a station.

#### **Somerville YIMBY**

Worked with Steering Committee to draft statements on zoning overhaul to the Board of Aldermen. Attended Union Square Neighborhood Council meetings on US2 and Bow Street development projects.

#### **King's Chapel, Boston – Head of Nominating Committee**

Responsible for tracking vacancies in all committees and recommending replacement committee chairs to the congregation.

### Professional Experience

#### **Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory**

**2013-Present**

*Software Engineer*

Worked on open-source toolset used by astronomy community, and developed the Level 3 Chandra Source Catalog. Worked closely with astronomers to develop requirements and algorithms from initial specs. Tasked with reducing time and space requirements for multiple pipeline tools, creating a robust testing framework, and providing options to science staff for addressing corner cases as they were encountered.

#### **EDUCATION**

**University Of Oklahoma, Norman, OK**  
Master of Science in Computer Science

**University Of Oklahoma, Norman, OK**  
Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics