

Madalyn Letellier

From: Thomas Scahill [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, October 21, 2023 9:51 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Fwd: I support legalizing triple deckers

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Forwarding my comments on the proposed zoning amendments to Somerville's public comments email address.

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

From: **Thomas Scahill** [REDACTED]
Date: Sat, Oct 21, 2023 at 9:37 AM
Subject: I support legalizing triple deckers
To: [REDACTED]

Dear City Council and planning department staff,

I fully support the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinances, Sections 3.1 Neighborhood Residence and 3.2 Urban Residence, to permit the house and triple decker building types without any conditions, and to repeal the lot depth, dwelling units per lot, and development benefits requirements. While Somerville obviously needs affordable housing, it needs additional housing of all types. Removing restrictions on building triple deckers and other 3-unit configurations city wide will be a major step in this direction.

I applaud this plan, and I hope it is passed and implemented as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,
Tom Scahill
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Daniel [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 5:51 PM
To: Public Comments; Planning1
Subject: My comments to Zoning Change Proposals to Meet MBTA Communities Requirements for Housing Needs

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Dear City Zoning Planning board and the City Council,

I watched the last Thursday's meeting virtually with questions and anticipation.

I fully support the proposed following zoning changes. I think that those amendments not only need to be made to meet MBTA Community requirements but also will enable NR and UR property owners to provide more housing and help address Somerville's acute housing shortage. So those changes are steps to the right direction, though a little too late, but definitely welcomed.

The changes I support are,

- 1) Remove the four-unrelated persons maximum occupancy rule on housing
- 2) Remove the Lot Depth requirements
- 3) Remove the affordable housing requirements
- 4) Allow Triple-decker by right and allow 4 units in NR zone by right when counting the backyard cottage.
- 5) Remove the special permit requirement for steep slope property.

I also would like to suggest that city consider the following minor modifications in align with the spirit of the MBTA community.

1. Remove the special permit requirement to the modifications to the existing non-conforming structure when it is not one of 5 allowed property types in NR zone. As the property owner has no control over what type their property was assigned to. The bylaw should allow modifications to those properties by right as long as no new non-conformities created.
2. Remove the special permit requirement to the modification to the properties with the existing non-conforming in USE. Particularly, remove the special permit when such properties increase the gross floor areas or increase the number of dwelling units.
3. Relax the personal tree ordinance
4. Relax the condo conversion restriction on the new units created due to the amendments. For example, if a two-family property has already got condo conversion removal permits for 2 units, then once it was modified to become a triple decker by right, the third unit should automatically inherit condo conversion removal permit.

5. Relax how basement, in some case will be counted as a story, particularly, when the property sits on a deep slope, that the cliff side of the basement likely going to make that basement a story, which limits the opportunity for that entire property to go through some most common modification by right. I think as long as on the front side (the street side, the basement floor above ground exposure is on par with other houses such as no more than 4-5'.

6. Relax the units orientation requirement in NR zone. For example, the call for stack one unit over another is reasonable, but sometimes, when the foundation is too big, you end up with having to combine the basement with the first floor as one unit, creating a unit in huge size and waste space. My proposal is to allow half of basement and first floor combined to create one unit, and another unit side by side in the same configuration, as long as there is the third unit stack on top of those two side-by-side units.

7. allow for rear lot split as long as there is a driveway leads to the rear lot.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Jilong Liu on behalf of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Kirin Kachroo-Levine [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 9:31 AM
To: Public Comments; Planning1
Subject: Land use committee comments 10/19/2023 - matter 23-1198

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Kirin Kachroo-Levine
[REDACTED]

Thank you to the planning board and city council for putting together such an informative presentation and reconciling the new state requirements with what's best for our city.

I am very supportive of all these changes to comply with the MBTA communities act. From removing red tape around lot depth (that blocks projects that are otherwise feasible) to allowing one of the dominant forms of housing in our neighborhoods - 3 families - by right.

There are several existing "barns" or existing rear accessory structures on my street that *could* become backyard cottages (additional housing units). Unless the max number of units allowed on the lot and unrealistic affordable housing requirement is removed (33% is clearly not viable), it's unlikely any of them ever will. Without planning reform, many historic, non conforming structures will become further dilapidated or stay as garages.

We need to be encouraging more housing units, and more affordable housing *where actually feasible*. By requiring affordable housing where *infeasible*, we're just building less housing overall and creating perverse incentives to turn 3-plexes into 2-plexes overall - cutting off our hand to spite our arm.

Thank you.

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jessica Shor [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 9:33 AM
To: Planning1; Public Comments
Subject: Public Comments re: Matter 23-1198 (10/19 Committee Mtg.)

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Hello,

My name is Jessica Shor. I live at [REDACTED]. I am enthusiastic about the proposed zoning changes to bring Somerville into compliance with the MBTA Communities Act and thank the planning department for the efforts they've dedicated to this update.

Creating new housing should be Somerville's top priority. Affordable housing is incredibly important, but **it's only as helpful as the number of units that actually get built**. Somerville's 2019 zoning update included affordable housing requirements that are overly burdensome and economically unviable, resulting in essentially zero affordable housing units getting built and far fewer market rate units being built than otherwise would have. You don't need to be an economist to recognize that increasing the total supply of housing - market rate or affordable - will bring supply closer in line with demand and help keep prices reasonable. The proposed zoning changes will eliminate regulations that sound good on paper but don't work in practice, allowing Somerville to increase its housing supply and better address the housing crisis in the city.

Thank you,
Jessica Shor