



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 6, 2015

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Dennis M. Sullivan	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	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: Mayor Joe Curtatone, George Proakis - OSPCD

1. Approval of the March 30, 2015 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

2. Approval of the April 7, 2015 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

198281: Requesting the adoption of a New Zoning Ordinance to supersede the current Zoning Ordinance as originally adopted on March 23, 1990.

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

198429: Requesting the adoption of a New Zoning Ordinance (updated) to supersede the current Zoning Ordinance as originally adopted on March 23, 1990.

Mayor Curtatone gave a brief presentation of the proposed comprehensive zoning overhaul and pointed out that the city's current zoning is based on a 1926 city map. The new code is based on

shared values, as outlined in SomerVision and will implement 182 of SomerVision's 584 goals, policies and actions and is built on a foundation of best practices to balance flexibility and predictability for implementation. Under the new code, 28 acres would be designated as a new fabrication district. The mayor reviewed a proposed timeline of meetings and actions culminating in a second draft of the proposal being produced by the end of 2015. Mr. Proakis continued the presentation and reviewed some of the prior feedback received. The Planning Department staff has estimated that 1015 individual comments, questions and concerns were submitted, with 45% of them relating to 4 of the fundamental goals of SomerVision.

Going forward, the plan is to:

- examine technical reviews and respond to comments,
- infill housing studies,
- review examples of non-conforming structures,
- examine data compiled by consultants and apply to previously asked questions,
- conduct six public meetings, each dealing with a particular topic,
- suggest a series of Land Use Committee meeting dates in conjunction with the six public meetings, to continue interaction with BOA and
- present an updated draft in December 2015

Mr. Proakis expects to have the staff responses available for the Board of Aldermen sometime in July, or sooner.

Alderman Rossetti asked that the BOA receive all relevant information (scheduled to be presented at the public meetings) in advance of said meetings and also followed up on her previous request for revenue data.

Alderman Heuston asked about the meeting formats and requested that there be at least 2 focus group meetings in Ward 2. She also expressed her thoughts that there should be a way for the Planning Department to create packages for the wards.

Alderman Ballantyne spoke about the prior requests for economic modeling and Mr. Proakis said he hopes to have them ready by September.

Alderman Connolly requested permitting data since the new zoning proposal was introduced and Mr. Proakis and the mayor gave assurances there has been no slowdown of interest and/or investment in Somerville.

Alderman McLaughlin stated that he thinks that the BOA should be advising the Planning Department what it wants changed before moving forward.

Alderman McWatters spoke about the need for neighborhood input and believes that the proposed zoning will effect neighborhoods differently.

Alderman White questioned how the information is going to get out to the citizens at large. Since most residents don't attend the public meetings. He suggested that a presentation of the current vs. proposed zoning should be made, pointing out the impacts in a concrete way.

Chairman Sullivan stated that the steps presented tonight will repair the disconnect that has been experienced over the last several months. He is not planning on scheduling Land Use Committee meetings during July and August, but will acquiesce to the BOA's wishes. One additional committee meeting is being scheduled for June 4th at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Proakis said that it would be helpful for aldermen to provide their initial reactions to the new zoning proposal at the next Land Use meeting so that a consensus may begin to be built.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198542: That the Director of SPCD apply an economic modeling construct to the proposed zoning ordinance to demonstrate the likely economic impacts on commercial development, jobs, housing, and other factors.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198638: That the Director of SPCD (Planning) inform this Board in writing by March 30 of the number of additional dwelling units allowed under the proposed zoning ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198639: That the Director of SPCD (Planning) submit a plan by March 30 that identifies how the proposed zoning ordinance will affect the zoning of city owned buildings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198640: That the Director of SPCD (Planning) submit by March 30 an implementation plan for how the new proposed zoning ordinance relates to water and sewer, other infrastructure changes, police and fire personnel capacity, and public safety buildings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198641: That the Director of SPCD and the City Solicitor advise this Board in writing by March 30 whether the proposed zoning ordinance complies with state law regarding the co-habitation of 4 unrelated adults and how much authority a municipality has in this regard.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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198707: That the Director of SPCD consider a 2nd written comment period for the new zoning proposal to allow for additional citizen input.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

198712: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #198429, requesting adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance to supersede the current Zoning Ordinance as originally adopted on March 23, 1990.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198922: That the Directors of SPCD and Traffic and Parking conduct a transportation and parking analysis of the proposed zoning ordinance and explain the impact of parking changes to residents.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198934: Assistant City Solicitor responding to #198707 re: an additional public comment period for zoning.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE