



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Land Use Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 4, 2023

6:30 PM

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair McLaughlin and adjourned at 7:07 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Wilson, Ewen-Campen, Davis and McLaughlin), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Gomez Mouakad).

Others present:

Tom Galligani – OSPCD, Jenn Mancia – OSPCD, Greg Karcewski – US2, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Matthew McLaughlin, Vice Chair Lance L. Davis, Ben Ewen-Campen and Jake Wilson
Absent: Beatriz Gomez Mouakad

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0520](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Land Use Committee Meeting of March 30, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED
AYE: Chairperson McLaughlin, Vice Chair Davis, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen and City Councilor At Large Wilson
ABSENT: Ward Five City Councilor Gomez Mouakad

2. Order (ID # [22-0669](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services review the durability and structural stability of materials used to comply with Section 10.8 of the Zoning Ordinances and explore rewriting that section to provide more specific requirements.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Order (ID # [22-0050](#)) By Councilor Clingan and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Administration present specific plans to this Council to advance the long-awaited affordable housing components of the Union Square redevelopment on the "D2.4" and "D4.3" parcels.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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4. Order
(ID # [22-0567](#))
- By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Scott
- That the Director of Planning & Zoning update this Council on a proposed zoning amendment to "separate and define arts and creative workspace as an Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) use subcategory" as recommended in the Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
5. Order
(ID # [22-1593](#))
- By Councilor Ewen-Campen
- That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning update this Council on current draft zoning requirements of the MBTA Communities Act.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
6. Order
(ID # [23-0052](#))
- By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Kelly, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
- That this City Council's Committee on Land Use work with the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning to draft an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances to remove the prohibition on more than four unrelated adults living together.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
7. Mayor's
Communication
(ID # [23-0356](#))
- Conveying the Somerville Linkage Nexus Study Final Report.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
8. Order
(ID # [23-0458](#))
- By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
- That the Director of Economic Development update this Council on the implementation of the Union Square Covenant, which includes local and veterans preference in hiring.
- Director Galligani explained that the city entered into a covenant with the master developer of Union Square in 2017. Much of the covenant relates to development impact fees, but Section 5 has to do with hiring Somerville residents and veterans. Greg Karcewski, from US2 and Jenn Mancia from OSPCD addressed the committee on this matter.
- Mr. Karcewski said that building a diverse workforce takes a lot of resources and US2 has committed to reaching the goals set forth in the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) of trying to hire 20% residents, 20% people of
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color and 8% women to work on the project. City staff is provided with quarterly updates on these numbers and Mr. Karcewski reported that through January of 2023, 622,000 worker hours were expended, with 232,000 of that number have been performed by people of color, 42,000 hours by Somerville residents and 26,000 hours by women. Contractors have been employing veterans and there are now 20 on the job. US2 is sustaining effort with its partners and conducts monthly virtual meetings with them. Additionally, US2 performs outreach to trade unions, participated and/or hosted job fairs in 2021 and has conducted 4 engagement sessions with students at Somerville High School to show how their education fits into the overall project. A website has been created, in 4 languages, to encourage people to apply to work on the project. Mr. Karcewski also noted that walk-ins are accepted.

In 2020, a list of local contractors was compiled subsequently contacted to work on the project. Somerville Community Corporation’s (SCC) First Source has been collaborating since 2020 to identify construction candidates and US2 contributed \$100,000 to SCC to assist in this effort. One of the challenges faced is that each union has different criteria for entry to their trade. These have been documented for use by SCC.

Mr. Karcewski provided comments in letter form for inclusion in the record.

Councilor Ewen-Campen related that at least 1 contractor was requiring applicants to go to RI to apply for a job on the project and Mr. Karcewski explained that the company was headquartered in RI. That company has hired a significant number of people of color but has underachieved on the number of local hires. US2 will try to find a local contractor so that people can apply locally. Mr. Karcewski addressed efforts to hire veterans and he thinks that more emphasis can be put on this.

Ms. Mancia came on board in September, 2021, and her efforts led to a stronger relationship with SHS. She spoke about her work, including funding, programing, career navigation, and long term planning to better serve the local population. Meetings will reconvene with representatives from the School Department and unions, along with the Director of Veterans’ Affairs in conversations to grow participation numbers.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

- 9. Order (ID # [23-0459](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning update this Council on the status of the property on Palmer Court, purchased by the city for the purpose of creating green space.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

10. Order
(ID # [23-0503](#))
- By Councilor Scott
That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning and the City Solicitor assist the City Council to draft language requiring that departmental review conditioned by the Planning Board contains a requirement for public outreach when concerning modifications by private developers within the public realm.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
11. Order
(ID # [23-0505](#))
- By Councilor Scott, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Davis and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning assist the City Council in modifying the density incentives for NetZero/Passive House development in light of the recently adopted Specialized Stretch Code.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
12. Order
(ID # [23-0612](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Davis, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Ewen-Campen and Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Director of Planning, Preservation and Zoning draft an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances for transit oriented height and density bonuses for additional affordable housing and other enumerated community benefits.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

Referenced Documents:

- Land Use - 2023-05-04 Land Use Committee re Workforce to CITY (with 23-0458)