



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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LUC SCHUSTER, *ALTERNATE*

May 28, 2024

The Honorable City Council
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Honorable City Council:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Somerville Planning Board submits to your Honorable Council its recommendation on the following proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. On 4 May 2024, at 6:30 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the City Council held a duly advertised virtual joint public hearing. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance and to evaluate the proposals in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Staff to the Planning Board. On 23 May 2024, the Board convened a Special Meeting to discuss the following agenda item:

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

1. Mayor Ballantyne requesting ordainment of an amendment to Article 2, Article 3, Article 4, Article 5, Article 8, and Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinances to remove conflicts with the State Building Code. (Mayor's Request ID #24-0416)

The Board deliberated and solicited input from staff and made the following specific recommendation. Following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, **with the modifications recommended by Staff** following the public testimony at the joint hearing, **be adopted** by the City Council. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Aboff, and unanimously approved by the Board, **6-0**.

The modifications recommended by Staff in discussion include the following:

- Retention of the density bonus in all sections where striking the density bonus or references thereto was previously proposed;
- Addition of LEED language.



In their motion, the Board included the following discussion of their concerns relative to the amendment:

- The Board expressed their concern for the applicants who are midway through the development application process, whose rights with regard to zoning have not yet been vested, and whose projects may be substantially impacted by a change to the requirements to qualify for a density bonus.
- The Board suggested that the effective date of the amendment be modified to be further into the future to mitigate the impact on developers.
- The Board asked Staff to ensure that the members of the developer community who testified at the joint hearing, and moreover the applicants who may be impacted by the amendment, be kept apprised of amendment process and how it impacts their required application materials.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. A. Capuano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michael A. Capuano
Chair of the Planning Board