



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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JAMES KIRYLO
ELIZABETH MORONEY
GERARD AMARAL, *ALT.*

August 22, 2013

The Honorable Board of Aldermen
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: An ordinance amending the zoning map to place additional land in union square and on prospect hill into the ccd-55 zoning district. This amendment, submitted by Sonoco Inc and Kristco Realty LLC, will change the zoning of parcels along the western side of McGrath Hwy from Washington St to Greenville St from Business B to CCD-55 and along the south side of Somerville Ave from Church St to Dane St from Business A and Industrial A to CCD-55.

Dear Honorable Board of Aldermen:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Planning Board submits to your Honorable Board its recommendation on an ordinance to extend the CCD-55 zoning district on the western side of McGrath Highway to Greenville Street and the southern side of Somerville Ave from Church to Dane Street. This amendment was addressed in a staff report provided to your honorable board dated August 21, 2013. Planning Staff also submitted this initial staff report to the Planning Board.

On May 16, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen jointly held a duly advertised public hearing in the Aldermanic Chambers in City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments and to evaluate the amendments in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Planning Staff.

This report from the Planning Board to the Board of Aldermen will focus on the discussion at the May 16, 2013 meeting and its final recommendation on August 22, 2013.



DISCUSSION DURING HEARING

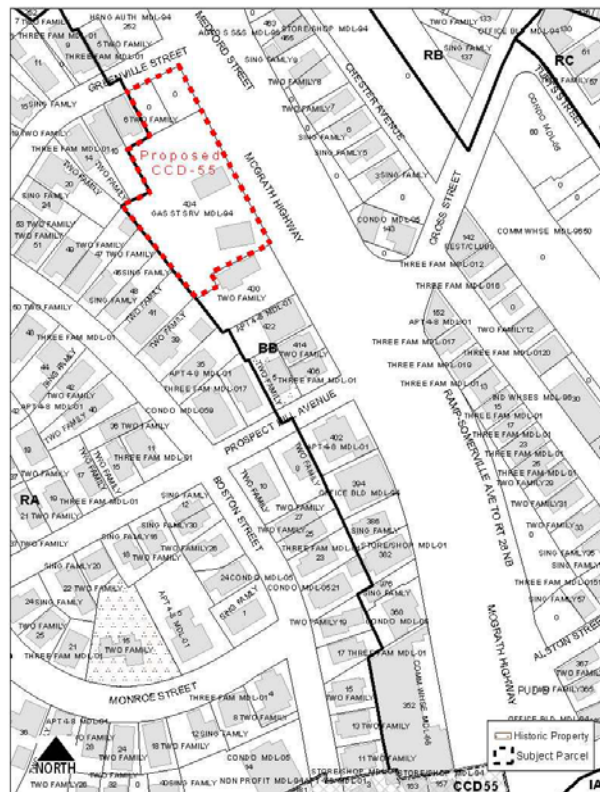
At the public hearing on May 16, 2013, George Proakis briefly summarized the rezoning process of Union Square to the CCD-55 district in 2010, the goals of CCD-55 district which is to create vibrant walkable urban neighborhoods, and the zoning review that developments in the CCD-55 district must undergo. In addition, the current zoning districts, Business A, Business B, and Industrial A, were explained as outdated districts that allow for suburban development.

The Board and Committee discussed how the CCD boundary was determined established in the Union Square rezoning and what could be built under the current zoning district. They also discussed how the focus of the McGrath Highway change would be on the gas station a much larger area would be rezoned under this proposal.

Agent Richard D. DiGiralamo spoke about the proposal on behalf of the Applicants. Two people spoke in support of the zoning with a caveat that a greater urban design process should occur. Seven people spoke against the rezoning ordinance for a variety of reasons including, the height around Prospect Hill, expansion of commercial areas before businesses in Union Square are successful, impact on the existing neighborhoods, density and parking. In general, people were not opposed to redevelopment of the Sonoco site but had concerns about rezoning the entire area on McGrath Highway. Written testimony was left open for 30 days.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Since that public testimony, a potential developer of the Sunoco site met with the neighborhood. As a result of those meetings, nine neighbors sent supportive letters to rezone only the 434 McGrath Highway site (the Sunoco Site) and approximately 85 neighbors signed a supportive petition. Planning Staff evaluated the idea of rezoning the property at 434 McGrath Highway and removing from the proposal the area from Washington Street to 434 McGrath Highway. The resulting map change proposal can be seen in the map below and was given to the Planning Board prior to the meeting on August 22, 2013.



PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Following due consideration, Kevin Prior made a motion to **RECOMMEND APPROVAL** the proposed amendment as laid out in the Planning Staff Report of August 22, 2013. Gerard Amaral seconded the motion, which carried 3-2 with James Kirylo absent and Elizabeth Moroney and Michael Capuano opposed.

The Planning Board members that voted in opposition to the proposal gave an explanation of their reasoning for doing so. The CCD zoning district was recently approved after significant community involvement. A few recent development proposals met the intent of this district but were opposed by several Aldermen. In light of these contentious proposals, these Planning Board members would like the Alderman to have an opportunity to discuss the district before supporting the expansion of it. Michael Capuano is supportive of the rezoning of the Sunoco site; however, the vote for both sites was taken together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Prior". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Prior
Chair