



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 10, 2016

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Lance L. Davis	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Absent	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Absent	

Others present: George Proakis - OSPCD, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:30 PM by Alderman Davis. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Document List:

- Economic Impact Study (with 198429)
- Zoning Overhaul presentation (with 198429)

Chairman Davis stated that items 2 through 12 and 14 through 17 on this meeting's agenda will be placed on file since they all were in reference to an inclusionary housing item that was dealt with by the Board of Aldermen on May 9th. Item 13 on this meeting's agenda will be kept in committee.

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

Mr. Proakis discussed the 30,000 jobs goal and also the difference, from a tax revenue perspective, of lab jobs vs. office jobs, i.e., labs are assessed a personal property taxed on their equipment. SomerVision statistics, jobs and floor space per job, grades and uses of office space were also discussed.

Alderman McWatters inquired about the number of hotels planned and expressed concern about building heights in the development of Union Square. Mr. Proakis stated that Washington Street (in Union Square) is slated to be in a 4 story district.

Alderman Heuston spoke about the possibility of pursuing taxes from Air B&B renters. Mr. Proakis stated that Air B&B is addressed in the zoning overhaul and there needs to structure a system for units being rented vs. rooms being rented. The key areas of opportunity are Assembly Square and the Inner Belt.

Alderman Heuston discussed current day family housing vs. family housing of years ago. Units are designed differently, with some people having a shared outdoor and play space. Alderman Ballantyne spoke about people wanting to live in an urban setting. Alderman Connolly spoke about people using home offices. Alderman White spoke about families wanting 3 bedroom apartments and he also said that maintaining the school age balance is important. Chairman Davis relayed his intention to discuss this aspect at future committee meetings during discussions regarding residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Proakis wants to create 5 jobs per housing unit and a 60/40 commercial/residential split. He also wants large scale development issues to stick with the proposed numbers. RCLCO, a company that specializes in urban communities, looked at parcels in the city and their potential. There are 221 development sites, consisting of about 11,439 square feet. The zoning proposal was discussed, including special permits, mixed use districts, special districts, neighborhood retail vs. formula retail, Brickbottom development, Boynton Yards, types of buildings and the 6,000 vs, 9,000 number of units. Infrastructure improvements are needed in certain areas and Davis Square is in need of office development. Mr. Proakis stated that the Assembly Square district would not be changed intentionally.

Alderman White spoke of the importance of shadow studies in districts with “as of right” solutions and he stressed the need for commercial development, noting that new residents put a strain on the taxpayers. He prefers holding off on residential development until commercial development happens. Mr. Proakis explained that some residential may be necessary in order to attract commercial. Alderman Heuston added that there needs to be an incentive for developers, especially for commercial development. Alderman Niedergang asked for data on the impact of residential vs. commercial development.

The owner of Grand Junction, in the Twin City Mall, is interested in doing a mixed use development. Alderman White requested a map showing the Somerville/Cambridge border. The cores of Davis and Union Squares could be tight little commercial districts. Alderman Niedergang suggested having penthouse residential units on the top floors. Alderman White discussed the residential exemption numbers that are dropping and said that there is a \$350 - 400 increase in taxes, now. He spoke about the loss of 2-3 bedroom housing and the decrease in rental units.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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195811: That the Director of SPCD and the City Solicitor present a report to this Board on

what may be done to improve upon Section 13 of the Zoning Ordinances (Inclusionary Housing).

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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198558: That the Director of SPCD hire an independent consultant to conduct and provide to this Board an expedited economic analysis of the impacts of a range of potential inclusionary zoning affordable housing percentages from 12 1/2% to 25% on affordable and market-rate housing.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200827: Planning Director submitting a preliminary memo on the financial feasibility of amendments to the inclusionary zoning requirements.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200123: Fred Berman submitting comments re: #200102, the proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200583: Simon Thompson submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200584: Lee Palmer submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200585: Rahul Bhargava submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200586: Rebecca Schofield submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200677: Betsy Lenora submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing

ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200678: Libby Mahaffy submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200679: Delia Marshall submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200688: Planning Director submitting the Housing Needs Assessment required by Zoning Ordinance 13.8 as a pre-requisite to the completion of any amendments to the Inclusionary Zoning requirements.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200739: Patricia Wild submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200761: 24 residents submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200768: Somerville Chamber of Commerce submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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200842: Viesia Novosielski submitting comments re: #200102, a proposed inclusionary housing ordinance.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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