



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 12, 2012

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Present	
Sean T. O'Donovan	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
John M Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
George Proakis	Director of Planning	Present	
Adam Duchesneau	Planner - OSPCD	Present	

192256 - Requesting an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance amending Zoning Districts for the areas consisting of Somerville Avenue from Wilson Square to the Somerville-Cambridge line at Porter Square, White Street, and Elm Street from White Street to Wilson Square, and amending the Floodplain Overlay District.:

Chairman White informed those present that Alderman Roche was unable to attend this meeting due to a scheduling conflict, however he did submit a communication on this matter, which was read into the record.

Mr. Proakis spoke about the Planning Board's recommendation to approve the proposed amendments, (as laid out in the Planning Staff Report of November 17, 2011), and explained the reasoning behind the initiative, providing comparisons between the present and proposed zoning requirements. A change to the zoning of the Elm Street corridor is being proposed so that both sides of the street would have the same zoning, i.e., RC. There was also some discussion about the proposed Transit Oriented District, specifically, TOD-70, and the possibility of air rights development above the commuter rail tracks. A representative from Transit Realty spoke about the importance of timing and said that a hotel would be the most beneficial use for this kind of development and that his company is actively marketing the proposal.

Members of the committee expressed concern regarding the lack of public support for the proposal, the possibility of dense residential development, vacant commercial space in the Porter Square area and the consensus that the plan needs to be re-worked.

Members of the public were given the opportunity to speak on the matter, with the vast majority speaking against the proposal. Among the concerns expressed were the devastating effects upon the neighborhood, loss of the neighborhood's character, traffic congestion and dismay that letters submitted to the Planning Board in opposition to the proposal were not included with the Planning Board's recommendation.

Members of the committee requested:

- That written testimony from the Planning Board's public hearing on this item be provided to the Committee
- That the Planning Department research zoning in the City of Cambridge
- That possible developers be invited to the next committee meeting

Alderman O'Donovan's motion *that the southerly side of Elm Street remains as RB zoning and not be changed to RC zoning*, was approved.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

192608 - Planning Board conveying its recommendation on a proposal to amend the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Districts for Somerville Avenue from Wilson Square to the Cambridge line at Porter Square, White Street, and Elm Street from White Street to Wilson Square, and to amend the Floodplain Overlay District.:

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
