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April 11, 2017

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

RE: Zoning Amendment: 202864: Proposing an updated Article 16B in the city's Zoning Ordinances, with attendant Zoning Map changes, to establish a minimum mixed use ratio in designated areas.

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 establish a Minimum Mixed Use Ratio in designated areas.

On March 7, 2017, 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 amendment and to evaluate the amendment in the context of testimony received and information provided by the Planning Staff at the hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING

At the public hearing on March 7, 2017, Alderman White and George Proakis spoke of this ordinance and the changes from the original ordinance. Alderman White reminded the Board of the importance of commercial development for the future tax base of the City.



George Proakis, Director of Planning, provided the Planning Staff's perspective on the application. Mr. Proakis indicated that the staff supports the idea of a Mixed Use Ratio when applied to new growth districts like Boynton Yards and Inner Belt, and the ordinance has been updated to include hotel and maker spaces as a part of the mixed use ration, but still has concerns about the ordinance as written.

A number of members of the public spoke on the ordinance as well, generally expressing support for the concept, but suggesting adjustments in the proposed ratio and what should or should not be included in the ratio.

The Planning Board left the public hearing open for written comments until March 31, 2017.

FOLLOW UP MEETING

After the public hearing was closed, the Planning Board held a public meeting to discuss the amendment on April 6, 2017. After further discussing the ordinance, the Planning Board made a recommendation for the Land Use Committee to consider in their deliberations.

RECOMMENDATION

Following due consideration, at the meeting on April 6, 2017, Kevin Prior made a motion to

RECOMMEND CONSIDERATION OF THE ITEMS BELOW:

1. That the Board of Aldermen defer adoption of the Minimum Mixed Use Ratio and incorporate the concept into the full overhaul of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance;
2. That further study be completed to determine the appropriate percentage for the minimum mixed use ratio; and,
3. That some form of enforcement mechanism be included to ensure that commercial development is prioritized as development phases are built out.

Joseph Favaloro seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Sincerely,



Kevin Prior
Chair