

## COVER LETTER

**Robert Buchanan** | [REDACTED]

August 5, 2019

Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development  
City Hall  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

Greetings,

I recently learned that the City of Somerville is seeking residents to fill vacancies on several boards and commissions. I wish to apply for a full member position on the Planning Board. The opportunity strikes me as a great way to become further involved in planning and development issues in Somerville. I hope to convey a bit more about myself and my interest in serving below.

### **ABOUT ME**

I've lived in the Boston area for 19 years and moved to Somerville as a tenant in March 2009 and then lived on Walnut Street beginning in 2010—and now my house on Wesley Park since 2016. Somerville has been a great community to call home. Its diverse mix of residents from all backgrounds and its walkable neighborhoods and squares are what attracted me to living here. I've been deeply committed to helping our community. I was involved in Union Square Neighbors, a neighborhood group, as well as the formation of the Union Square Neighborhood Council. I also served on MassDOT's McGrath Boulevard Project Development Working Group. I currently serve on the Board of Trustees for Cambridge Health Alliance and the board of directors for Union Square Main Streets.

Given the explosive growth of development in Somerville and the Boston metropolitan area more broadly, I think it is vital that we double down on efforts to ensure our planning goals are achieved, rather than be merely aspirational. SomerVision set targets for increased housing, affordable housing, commercial development, and open space. The Planning Board has an obligation and a responsibility to ensure that the development projects that come before it for approval are consistent with our community's values and goals as defined in SomerVision and the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. In the past, I've been frustrated by the lack of engagement, substantive inquiry, and respect for community input that previous members of the Planning Board have shown. I'm glad to see the tone has recently changed, and I would hope to build on that momentum if appointed.

As a community advocate, I have been involved in many community planning meetings and have offered comments on a variety of projects and zoning proposals before the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the City Council (previously Board of Aldermen). I support mixed-use, transit-oriented development, particularly in our commercial corridor districts as well as "transformation areas." However, simply because a developer makes a "good pitch" does not mean we cannot or should not demand that they respect our community's planning goals and address our community's needs. Project details should be reviewed

thoughtfully and carefully to ensure they fully meet the requirements and expectations the Planning Board is empowered to carry out.

I am a strong supporter of affordable housing efforts and believe our community needs to make significant inroads to preserve housing options in Somerville for individuals and families of all income levels. Before moving to Massachusetts in 2000, I worked in a homeless shelter for families in Madison, Wisconsin where I was also as an appointee to Madison's Community Development Block Grant Commission. In Somerville, I continue to actively participate in community meetings and planning workshops. When the first iteration of the Union Square zoning was proposed, it did not include any provision for family-sized (3 bedroom) affordable housing units, despite being called for in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan. That was something we successfully added to the zoning. I also supported Somerville's Real Estate Transfer Fee Home Rule Petition as well as the redevelopment and addition of affordable housing units at Clarendon Hill.

I'm also enthusiastic outdoors person and have supported efforts to develop more and better open space for Somerville residents to enjoy and recreate. I was lucky enough to get a plot in a Somerville community garden (after a three year wait!), and now that I have a small yard, I'm slowly turning what was grass and asphalt into a perennial garden that includes native plants. When I volunteered for Big Brother/Big Sister, my "Little Brother" and I had fun playing at Foss Park, riding our bikes along the Mystic River path, and going to kid-friendly events at Trum Field and the High School.

Professionally, my background is in public policy and finance. I graduated from the Kennedy School of Government in 2002 with a focus on housing, infrastructure, and transportation planning. Since then, I've focused on health care policy and work as a consultant on issues centered on improving publicly funded health care for low-income people. My resume further summarizes my professional employment history and interests.

## **INTEREST IN SERVING**

I believe I am a good candidate to serve on the Planning Board first and foremost because I value the input, ideas, and contributions of other people in decision-making processes. Decision-making with regard to planning and zoning requires careful consideration and respect of a variety of stakeholders including abutters, neighbors, and the community at-large. I am also deeply interested in issues of planning, zoning, and urban design, and I have invested time in understanding the local development process and the City's zoning ordinance. I am thoughtful and pragmatic person, and I would bring these qualities to the role.

I've always been committed to helping out in my community and working on issues and efforts that seek to preserve and enhance the quality of our lives. The responsibilities of the Planning Board speak to my own interests, and I would gladly contribute my time and energy. In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to apply.

Sincerely,

Rob Buchanan

## RESUME

Robert Buchanan [REDACTED]

### Education

**Master in Public Policy**, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 2002.

Concentration in Housing, Infrastructure, and Transportation Planning

**Bachelor of Arts**, Political Science and Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, Wisconsin, May 1999

### Community

**Union Square Main Streets**, Board of Directors, February 2019 – present

**Cambridge Health Alliance**, Board of Trustees, February 2018 – present

**Somerville Health Foundation**, Treasurer, February 2018 – present

**Union Square Neighborhood Council Working Group**, 2016 – 2017

**McGrath Boulevard Project Development Working Group** (Advisory to MassDOT), November 2015 – March 2017

**Union Square Neighbors**, February 2014 – November 2017

**Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Massachusetts Bay**; Big Brother, June 2011 – July 2012

**Madison (WI) Community Development Block Grant Commission**; Member; 1999 – 2000

### Professional Experience

**HEALTH MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES, Boston, Massachusetts**

**Principal**, May 2011-present

- Provides strategic and regulatory consulting, policy analysis and assistance to states, health plans, hospitals, and health centers with emphasis on delivery system and quality-driven payment reforms for Medicaid and Medicare

**PARTNERS HEALTHCARE, Office of Clinical Affairs, Boston, Massachusetts**

**Program Director, Performance Incentives**, November 2009 – April 2011

**Manager, Hospital Quality Pay for Performance**, June 2007 – November 2009

- Administered a portfolio of quality financial incentives and provided analysis on performance measurement and quality benchmarking to contracting and clinical leadership
- Facilitated strategic decision-making among clinical executive groups on a variety of performance initiatives
- Designed and implemented performance incentive reporting processes and dashboards
- Supervised, managed, and evaluated analysts and project teams

**MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF MEDICAID, Boston, Massachusetts**

**Budget Director, Acute, Ambulatory and Behavioral Health Care**, November 2005 - June 2007

- Managed key financial components of the Commonwealth's 2006 health care reform effort
- Negotiated and resolved strategic finance issues with federal officials
- Forecasted and monitored over \$4 billion in Medicaid spending
- Identified and designed improvements to cost and financial reporting

**MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE, Boston, Massachusetts,**

**Fiscal Analyst**, July 2002 - May 2005

- Identified and monitored budget and policy issues on housing, economic development, and Medicaid programs
- Developed fiscal and policy recommendations for Governor's budget and appropriations bills
- Provided in-person presentations and analyses to the Governor and other senior administration officials

Robert Buchanan

Application

August 2019

**WISCONSIN STATE SENATE, Senator Gwen Moore, Madison, Wisconsin**

**Policy Analyst, May 1999 - August 2000**

- Provided budget and policy research to the Senator on proposed legislation
- Served as legislative aide for committees on Finance and Government Operations/Economic Development
- Liaised with lobbyists, agency legislative staff, and community leaders

**EMERGENCY FAMILY SHELTER – SALVATION ARMY, Shelter Case Worker, May 1997 – May 1998**

- Performed shelter intake and resource orientation for new families; oversaw shelter activities and games
- Responded to onsite safety crises including coordination with first responders and child protective services
- Maintained case file notes
- Provided coordination and supervision of Sunday community dinner