



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 6, 2021
REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Ben Ewen-Campen	Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Dan Bartman-OSPCD, Polly Pook-resident and Kim Schmahmann-resident.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chairperson Ewen-Campen and adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Approval of the November 22, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the November 16, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Boynton Parking Maximum

212471: That the Zoning Ordinances be amended by striking all language from section 8.3.1.10.c to prevent parking maximums in Master Planned Development areas being exceeded by Special Permit.

The Chair stated that at the previous meeting, the administration and Councilor Niedergang and Councilor White spoke in favor of creating a 0.6/1000SF development ratio. The proposal under consideration is to amend the item before the committee with a 0.6 ratio per 1,000. The updated amendment would add the clause “up to a maximum of 0.6 off-street parking spaces per one thousand square feet of gross floor area” to 8.3.1.10.c.i.

Councilor Niedergang read a statement outlining his support for this amendment with 0.6 proposal, which he explained would likely allow a total of ~2040 car spaces if the Boynton build-out is indeed 3.4 million square feet, meaning it would allow approximately 340 above the

current limit He stated that Kendall Square is currently at 0.9 ratio, with new projects being approved at 0.8. He believes that the developer DLJ's mobility management plan could be a good model to reduce traffic in other areas of the City of Somerville.

Mr. Bartman stated that the Planning Board discussed the proposal at their most recent meeting and recommended against striking the Special Permit entirely. The 0.6 ratio proposal was not directly before the Planning Board for discussion. They discussed the ratio and feel that some conditions have changed in what was in the Union Square Neighborhood plan.

Chair Ewen-Campen stated currently, under the present zoning, there is no limit on parking spaces that can be granted via Special Permit. He co-sponsored this amendment because there needs to be a cap in Boynton Yards, and he believes that cap should be decided on by elected officials, following a public process like the one that has been undertaken. The chair also stated that 0.6 ratio is a huge improvement over the original plans for the area, and estimated that the percentage of employees driving to work will be ~20%, which is nearly half what was expected under the Neighborhood Plan, and is therefore a big improvement. He also stated it's important to note that City of Somerville does not allow the cost of pricing for incentive for employees and all parking will be market rate.

The Chair motioned and it was approved to replace the original language with "up to a maximum of 0.6 off-street parking spaces per one thousand square feet of gross floor area" in the Parking Relief section.

RESULT:

APPROVED

35-51 McGrath

212337: 18 registered voters requesting the adoption of a Zoning Map amendment to change the zoning district of 51 McGrath Highway (MBL 115-B-1 and 115-B-4) from HR to MR5 and 35 McGrath Highway (MBL 115-B-5, 115-B-11, and 115-B-12) from MR5 to MR4.

Chair Ewen-Campen recused himself from this item. Vice Chair Davis led the discussions on this item.

There have been several discussions in committee. Mr. Bartman stated that they met with Councilor Scott and proponents from Brickbottom artist lofts and discussed shadow on their areas and the potential amendments, and had come to a solution that was supported by Brickbottom residents and the Administration. The Committee was provided by the proponents a revised version. Some of the proponents were in the audience tonight, and thanked Ward 2 Councilor Scott and the Administration for working together on a solution. They have amended their proposal from what was originally submitted to maintain a step-down HR to MR5 and MR6. Vice Chair Davis stated the administration is in support of this change, which is very similar to what was done previously to the Star Market site. There is a document attached to the agenda displaying the replacement as recommended by the proponents.

Councilor Niedergang asked if there was typo on the numbers of 35 and if it should be 85.

Mr. Bartman stated that 51 McGrath is a generic term that includes the parking lot at 85 McGrath which is how it's used at the assessor's office.

Polly Pook stated they do agree with everything and ready to move forward.

Kim Schmahmann thanked the Land Use, Councilor Scott and Mr. Bartman for their help and are prepared to move forward on this matter.

Vice Chair Davis motioned and it was accepted to replace proposed amended zoning map with the revised proposed amended that is attached in the agenda this evening.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Rooftop Mechanicals

212308: Requesting approval of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Rooftop Mechanicals.

Chair Ewen-Campen motioned and it was accepted to replace the amendment with the updated draft that was sent previously by Mr. Dan Bartman.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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211612: Requesting approval of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to regulate rooftop mechanical systems and mechanical penthouses.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211349: That the Committee on Land Use consider regulating the height of rooftop mechanicals on commercial buildings that abut Neighborhood Residence and Urban Residence districts.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Reference Material:

- 2021-12-02 Shadow Study McGrath Highway (with 212337)
- Rooftop Mechanicals - 2021 12 06 Update (with 211349, 211612, 212308)