



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 1, 2014

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Dennis M. Sullivan	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: George Proakis

Approval of the Minutes of September 04, 2014 (#1)

RESULT:

APPROVED

Approval of the Minutes of September 04, 2014 (#2)

RESULT:

APPROVED

196899 - Amending the Zoning Code to protect and promote affordable housing.:

The committee disagreed with the Planning Board's recommendation to not approve the proposed changes and went on to make a case for approval. If, and when, the expected zoning code changes are approved, the item before the committee, now, would become moot. Members argued that the proposed changes puts no onus on the Planning or Zoning Boards, since it doesn't force a determination to be made. Even though the mayor has proposed an affordable housing program, that program may be tears away and there is no guarantee that the legislature will support those initiatives.

Mr. Proakis explained that one of the concerns of proposal is where an existing building has low market rental units and the owner/developer wants to remodel the building, consequently getting market rents and therefore losing affordable units. Mr. Proakis stated that it would be a big step if the city was able to secure permanently affordable units.

Mr. Fred Berman was invited to speak on the item. He explained that this item is an attempt to bring the affordable housing issue to the forefront. New housing development can add or take away from the affordable housing stock and Mr. Berman explained how the proposal should be a part of the normal decision making process by the Planning and Zoning Boards, albeit it, not a tipping factor.

The members reviewed the proposed amendments and made several changes to the language, as noted on the revised copy.

RESULT:

APPROVED AS AMENDED

197856 - Planning Board conveying its recommendations with respect to #196899, amending Zoning Ordinance Sections 1.2, 5.1.2, & 5.1.4 to address affordable housing.:

Mr. Proakis spoke on the item and stated that the Planning Department's focus is to find ways to protect the city's existing stock of affordable housing. The Planning Board voted to NOT recommend approval of the proposed changes.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE