



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 8, 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	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two City Councilor	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor at Large	Absent	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Absent	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Councilor-at-Large Will Mbah and Councilor-at-Large Mary Jo Rossetti were absent attending other meetings.

Others present: Planning Board members: Michael Capuano, Erin Geno, Jahan Habib, Rob Buchanan, Deborah Howett-Easton and Amelia Aboff. Dan Bartman-OSPCD, George Proakis-OSPCD, Sarah Lewis-OSPCD, Brad Rawson-OSPCD, Rebecca Cooper-OSPCD, Dan Mangino-resident, Tagore Hernandez-resident, Tori Antonino-resident, Bob Allen-Comar Real Estate Trust, Attorney Adam Dash representing Mark Development, David Roach-Mark Development, Robert Korff-Mark Development, Brendan McLaughlin-abutter, Ellen Blanch-resident, Hala Jadallah-resident, Jake Wilson-resident, Maryanne Walles-resident, Mary Jo Connelly-resident, Stephen Moore-resident, Seth Hurwitz-resident, Jennifer Merry-resident, Ari Neeman-resident, Mike Doucette-resident, Jessica Finch-resident, Steven Nutter-resident, Erika Tarlin-resident, John Fenton, Andy Greenspon, Stephen Mackay-Somerville Chamber of Commerce, Neil Nissenbaum-resident, Arthur Anthony-resident, Meredith Porter-resident, Ellin Reisner-resident, Derek DuPont-resident, Arah Schuur-resident and Bonnie Denis-resident.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by Chairperson Ewen-Campen and adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

Approval of the October 5, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:

ACCEPTED

Approval of the September 28, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:

ACCEPTED

Public Hearing - Prescott Street Map Change

212540: 10 registered voters requesting the adoption of a Zoning Map amendment to change the zoning district of 3 Prescott Street from UR to NR.

Mr. Dan Mangino, resident of 9 Prescott Street for 20+ years. He seeks to change the property located at 3 Prescott from UR to NR, with the intention to build a 2 family home. He stated their needs and wants have changed due to the Pandemic. They have kept their rents lower and do their best to not contribute to the higher rent in the city.

Mr. Tagore Hernandez, showed a map with the location for the lot requesting the change. The proposal would be to use the NR district to construct a "Passive House" two-family home.

Chair Ewen-Campen said that he had confirmed with Mr. Bartman and the planning department that NR building types are not allowed in UR, even though they are a less dense building type. Chair Ewen-Campen said that this may be a more general issue in the future to decide whether to allow NR building types in the UR district.

Public Hearing was open for the public.

Ms. Tori Antonino, resident at 65 Boston Street, spoke in favor of applicant and zoning change.

Public Hearing was closed and a public comment period will close Friday, November 12th at 12 noon.

The planning board will also close the public comment period at 12 noon, Friday, November 12th.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Public Hearing - "Star Market" Site

212541: Comar Real Estate Trust proposing a zoning map amendment to re-zone their properties at 299 Broadway and 15 Temple Street from MR5, MR3 and NR Districts to MR6, MR4 and NR Districts.

Mr. Bob Allen representing Comar Real Estate Trust and Attorney Adam Dash, presenting Mark Development LLC for the old Star Market site appeared before the committee. There were also two other representatives present from Mark Development. Attorney Dash stated Mark Development wants to do mixed development on this site. See attached slides. The liquor store on the corner and the property next to it are not part of the property for discussion. The project is still being designed and will require Site Plan Approval and a Residential Use Special Permit to proceed. Walgreens is willing to move back to their location on Broadway. Mr. Robert Korff principal from Mark Development, 26 Dartmouth Street, Newton MA spoke about the project. They presented to the community in July and came up with a plan that everyone was enthusiastic

about at the meeting. Mr. Adam Dash stated the city does have an approved Urban Renewal Plan for this site, so at any point if the City is unhappy with the proposed development they can exercise that option.

Mr. Proakis had comments on behalf of the administration. This had been zoned previously as a five-story, block-shaped building, which did not lead to a feasible proposal in the past. Stated the city is at a tipping point and have a developer who wants to take a shot at this location. Previously, there had been eight or nine developers for this site.

Councilor Clingan stated he has some specific concerns with changing the zoning, but has heard overall positive comments from the neighborhood process.

Councilor Scott asked about parcels that have more expansive zoning requirements. Mr. Proakis stated the difference in this case requires a special permit that opens up for the review board with the full set of options including denial of the permits.

Public hearing was open.

Mr. Brendan McLaughlin at Dental Practice adjacent at 281 Broadway, direct abutter who is in favor of the project and impressed with the outreach to the community.

Ms. Ellen Blanch lives in Ten Hills and has been following this project since she bought her house 10 years ago. She has met the owner is very impressed with the project. She asked what does MR5, MR3 means which stands for mid-rise and the size of the building.

Ms. Hala Jadallah, 66 Hall Ave wanted to make sure the buildings do not block their view. Difficult to visit her mother with parking on Langley.

Jake Wilson 83 Jake Street and has been part of the project for many years. He and neighbors have been wanting to see something done with the property. He has a concern about the open space in the center usable while making it ADA compliant.

Maryanne Walles, 46 Fremont Street, she is not opposed to the project and has concerns about developer backtracking and not keeping their words.

Mary Jo Connelly 36 Marshall Street stated they would like to hear from the developer bridging some of the concern's social economic statuses for affordable housing. How many affordable units will there be and job opportunities for the community.

Stephen Moore 36 School Street abutter to the vacant lot. He commented he will remain active to make sure its energy sufficient.

Seth Hurwitz 12 Maple Street down the street from this lot. He would like to see no surface parking and have underground parking, if needed. A robust plan for bike parking.

Jennifer Merry 18 School Street, also an abutter to the vacant lot. She expressed in support of the area being development and wanted for a long time. She is concerned about the stories behind her house.

Mr. Ari Neeman 24 Marshall Street spoke in support of the development. Wants to eliminate parking and wants clarity on affordable housing units.

Mike Doucette in support of the iron workers, hoping to see community standards and Somerville residents working on this project.

Jessica Finch 24 Maple Ave around the corner from the site. She is in support of the project and also raised the issue of the artists in Somerville. Also concerned about the standards for affordable housing.

Tori Antonino 65 Boston Street, she attended the meeting because this is a significant project in the area. She talked about healthy spaces for everyone.

Steven Nutter 24 Maple Ave and has lived here for more than 11 years.

Erika Tarlin main issue is affordability for the people who have lived here for many years. People who live here are getting priced out.

Closed Public hearing for the evening and keep public written comment until Friday, November 26th.

Ms. Amelia Aboff asked about site plan improvement and curious about considering the master plan overlay. Attorney Dash stated this was discussed with Mr. Bartman, and mentioned a single underground parking garage. Mr. Proakis stated the master plan strategy was for multiple developers doing multiple projects.

Rob Buchanan asked if the project is proposing a park and plaza. Does the zoning application include designating the space as a civic space? Mr. Proakis stated the MR districts to be a part of the project. He would not be opposed to idea of designing a civic space.

Councilor Clingan asked if there is a way the current owner could redraw the lines and designate civic space. Mr. Proakis stated this is a good idea and will look into it.

Councilor Strezo asked a question about the Temple Street entrance for a parking lot. She is concerned about the safety of the entrance of Temple Street. Mr. Proakis talked about curb cut and move the pedestrian street designation.

Mr. Rob Buchanan talked about the loading dock in the back of Star Market and dentist office. He had concerns about the amount of traffic in this area. Mr. Proakis does not believe it's wide enough for 2-way traffic, just one-way traffic. Attorney Dash stated they looked at the way the garage lays out. Mr. David Roach from Mark Developer talked about the possibility of the curb cut and probably no different than Temple Street.

Ms. Erin Geno from the planning board on land on Grant Street set up for a community patio. Attorney Dash stated the land is very small and the abutters would like to see a community garden space.

The Land Use committee will keep written comments will remain open until Friday, November 26th.

The planning board will keep the written comments open until Friday, November 12th.

Councilor Niedergang suggested completing this before he, Councilor White and Rossetti retire from this council.

Public Hearing - Boynton and Union Parking Maximums

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.

Ms. Amelia Aboff recused herself from this item.

Councilor Ewen-Campen introduced his motivation for this item, which is to reduce traffic congestion and to discourage workers at these new buildings to drive to work. Instead, he believes workers should take the Green Line, MBTA buses, walk, or bike. He is concerned that allowing a Special Permit will undo any central planning the City has undertaken.

Mr. Proakis presented slides on Boynton Yards Parking Cap and master plan districts. See attached slides. The origin of the 1500 space parking cap back in 2017, under an outdated model of how much development would be coming to Boynton Yards. In 2021 a proposal to remove the SP waiver of the parking cap. Mr. Proakis ultimately wants to proposed a blended .6 spaces per 10,000SF which is competitive with several areas in Cambridge and Boston. Councilor Scott had very strong concerns about the numbers.

Mr. Rob Buchanan asked for clarification the planning board reviewing the application using up parking for residential building. Could an applicant request to amend the special permit to move parking from one buiding with the district into a different building?

Ms. Debora Howett-Easton from planning, asked about the waiver in place and how to keep track of the numbers. Mr. Bartman stated OSPCD will keep track of the spaces.

Ms. Erin Geno asked about 1500 parking spaces was originally calculated and is there a different number calculated by the PRISBY plan, a street and traffic management plan created by a consultant on behalf of the Administration. Mr. Proakis talked about a lot of the pass-through traffic. Councilor Niedergang stated the waiver left the parking open-ended.

Open public hearing

Mr. John Fenton co-manager of Boynton Yard development and spoke against this project.

Mr. Andy Greenspon co-chair of Union Square Council have not taken a position yet.

Mr. Stephen Mackay with Somerville Chamber of Council could not be heard clearly and will submit his comments in writing.

Mr. Neil Nissenbaum 480 Columbia Street and his family has been here for about 100 years. Parking has become a major issue but the real problem is the amount of traffic that it creates.

Mr. Seth Hurwitz 12 Maple Avenue talked about the parking being built and not reaching full potential as stated by an earlier speaker. Need to plan for the future needs for Boynton Yards and the city at a whole by limiting the number of parking for this area.

Mr. Arthur Anthony stated the city needs a couple of buildings for the people to come to. Need to have the ability for cars to come in or you will limit the number of people to come to Somerville.

Jake Wilson 83 Jake Street, post pandemic, biotech workers will be working from home.

Mr. Meredith Porter a resident stated it may be necessary to make some further changes on how the parking is structured.

Ms. Ellin Reisner 51 Mt Vernon Street talked about the approach taking for Boynton Yards favored the developers first.

Ms. Tori Antonino 65 Boston Street echoed what previous speakers had to say. She is in favor of the cap and reallocating the parking spaces.

Mr. Derek DuPont Craigie Street in Ward 3 stated the city should step up.

Ms. Arah Schuur lives on Walker Street talked about adding parking spaces adds more congestion on the road. She is in favor of keeping the cap.

Ms. Bonnie Denis lives on Maxwell Street in Ward 5 she said the city should be looking at who needs parking and not leave to the developer who gets there first.

Closed public hearing tonight and keep open the public written comment until Friday, November 26th at 12 noon. The planning board would like to propose written comment remain opening until Friday, November 12th.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Public Hearing - Article 2 Amendments

212606: Requesting approval of amendments to Sections 2.1 and 2.4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Bartman has a presentation on this request. See attached. This proposal is for a number of clarifications to Article 2.1 and 2.4.

Councilor Scott had questions about abutting building item. Mr. Bartman has text to address the prior exemption.

Open public hearing.

Mr. Meredith Porter 104 Josephine Ave, these changes sound good to him.

Closed public hearing.

Land Use will keep open for this Friday, November 12th at noon

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Reference Material:

- Public Comment (with 212540)
- Presentation - Prescott St (with 212540)

- 211110 BY Mobility Playbook - Final_LR (with 212471) Received on November 12, 2021
- Fenton Land Use Public Testimony BYOD Parking Nov 8 2021 FINAL (with 212471) Received on November 12, 2021.