



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 22, 2016

REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Lance L. Davis	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Absent	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Absent	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: George Proakis - OSPCD, Lori Massa - OSPCD, Ethan Lay-Sleeper - OSPCD, Fred Berman - Affordable Housing Advocates Group, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Alderman Davis and adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Document List:

- Mobility (with 198429)
- Residents' Proposed Ordinance (with 200102)
- Petition-1 (with 200995)
- Petition-2 (with 200995)
- Planning Bd. Recommendation (with 200995)

Approval of the February 23, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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198429: Requesting the adoption of a New Zoning Ordinance (updated) to supersede the current Zoning Ordinance as originally adopted on March 23, 1990.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

200102: 11 registered voters proposing a Zoning Ordinance for Inclusionary Housing, with a petition from 511 citizens supporting an inclusionary zoning ordinance amendment and a revised application process.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

200995: Planning Board conveying its recommendations re: #200102, a proposed Zoning Ordinance for Inclusionary Housing.

Mr. Proakis presented the Planning Board's recommendation and was asked by Chairman Davis to describe what is considered to be viable as per his presentation.

Members inquired about the bonus, additional units, construction costs, margin, remaining spaces that could accommodate building 120 units, commercial/residential adjoining units, rate of return, land cost, the assumption for reasonableness and land evaluation costs.

Alderman McLaughlin expressed concern about taking away the biggest area for the model stated in the presentation and said he thinks that the developers were taking their time in obtaining permits, adding that the rules keep changing for Assembly Row.

The Planning Board's recommendation noted that two items were "outside of the purview of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance" and could not be recommended due to provisions contained in MGL 40A, Section 5. As a result, Alderman Niedergang made a motion *to sever those two items, (Item 3 - Tenancy Preservation and Item 9 - Waiting List), from the Planning Board's recommendation and to refer them to the Committee on Legislative Matters.* The motion was approved.

Alderman White suggested that the rates of return be defined for the models discussed in the presentation and asked that the details be flushed out to determine what factors are considered in the models. Alderman White also asked for some due diligence to take a look at the assumptions from the developers as the risk is substantial with the city changing.

The committee discussed SomerVision's recommendation for 20% affordable housing and Alderman Sullivan referenced a conversation he had with someone seeking affordable housing who may have to wait a year or two to obtain it. He would like more information on the 20% affordable housing proposal.

Chairman Davis asked Mr. Berman to address the committee. Mr. Berman stated that apartment renters with incomes of \$95,000 cannot afford to purchase a home in Somerville, given that new housing and condo costs are approximately \$600K-\$675K. Housing in Somerville is being built for people with much higher incomes. Almost 18% of renters in Somerville are paying over half of their income for rent. Mr. Berman also spoke about his discussion with a parent liaison who noted families must leave Somerville because they cannot afford to live here. Somerville needs to think about who this housing is for. Mr. Berman said it's important to attract people who want to build a family here, adding that there may be a place for some micro units, but as the

exception, not the rule. He believes the inclusionary rate should be transparent. There was some discussion regarding what items should be included in affordable housing, e.g., hot water and parking.

A consultant, RKG Associates, Inc., was hired to work on the feasibility of inclusionary zoning. They developed a model/tool to allow for various financial and development data and assumptions to be entered to test different development scenarios. Chairman Davis asked if it would be possible for the members to have a first-hand look at the tool.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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