



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 28, 2014

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

The Committee met as a Committee of the Whole.

Others present: Omar Boukili, George Proakis, Amanda Maher, Ed O'Donnell, Michael Glavin, Dana LeWinter, Eileen McGettigan

194361 - That the Director of SPCD prepare a written analysis for this Board comparing the 2010 federal census with the 2000 census and highlighting the important changes and potential impacts.:

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

195679 - That the Director of SPCD meet with this Board's Committee on Housing and Community Development to discuss #195571, a proposed \$500,000 bond to fund a major plan change to the existing Assembly Square Urban Renewal Plan.:

Mr. Glavin and Mr. O'Donnell spoke about urban renewal areas and changes that occurred at assembly Square. The request for \$500,000 in item 195571, is to allow the city to proceed to the next step in the overall project. Supporting documents were distributed and reviewed. This matter is opportunity driven, and with the Orange Line opening this summer, it would be best to take advantage of the circumstances as quickly as possible, hopefully within the next several months. A plan change could take 6-9 months to complete.

Mr. Glavin stated that SomerVision set out a plan and he believes that the Union Square launch was deliberately timed to coincide with the expansion of the Green Line. Assembly Square is now realizing some growth and expectations and the Inner Belt & Brickbottom areas will follow in the next 24-36 months. Mr. Glavin is confident that both the Union Square and Assembly Square projects can be pursued at same time. Alderman Lafuente spoke about the past work of the Mystic View Task Force (MVTF) and believes that they should be consulted about any plan change.

Members asked about the plan containing recommendations for eminent domain takings and Mr. Glavin stated that the plan would identify configurations of sites for the highest and best use of those parcels, noting that plans could be pursued by property taking and/or negotiations with property owners. Eileen McGettigan - outlined the steps needed for the plan to take effect, and told members that until a plan is in place, the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) can't take any property by eminent domain. She explained that in the case of Union Square, there was a MOA to acquire property by May 2013 and the city could do it faster than the MBTA.

Members questioned:

- How a plan change fit with other city initiatives
- What revenue is being generated from Assembly Square, Boynton Yards and Brickbottom
- The BOA's loss of plan control, developer selection, etc., once a plan is approved and turned over to the SRA.

Members of the public spoke on the subject.

Bill Shelton spoke about MVTF's vision from 15 years ago and how they negotiated a series of agreements with FRIT, some of which (although they have been not generally spoken about), have taken place. He feels that the current advisory committee is missing members and that it should be broader.

Tom Ross pointed out that there could be 50,000 people at Assembly Square, daily, yet there has been no talk about public safety. The city needs to start thinking about putting a fire station in Assembly Square and the other areas being developed. Also, consideration should be given to how streets are reconstructed to allow for timely responses for public safety vehicles.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

195248 - That the Director of SPCD appear before this Board to provide an update on the status of the Union Square renewal plan and any transactions that have taken place.:

Mr. O'Donnell stated that the plan implementation is moving ahead and that the mayor appointed an Advisory Committee to review the 9 developer respondents. Minutes of meetings have been presented to the public. At this time, the SRA has received a preliminary report from the Advisory Committee passing along 4 of the 9 respondents to the SRA for their final selection. The city has an obligation to demolish buildings in the D2 site this summer, per the MOA with the MBTA.

Members of the public spoke and expressed concern that tenants were being left out of the process. Mr. O'Donnell said that there have been a series of public meetings and that he is available to speak to anyone who wants to do so.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

195906 - That the Director of SPCD appear at this Board's next meeting on December 12 to explain the Redevelopment Authority's procedure for designating a developer and taking property for the Revitalization Plan for Union Square, and provide the members of this Board with written information about the Plan's costs and funding sources by December 10.:

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

196050 - Director of SPCD responding to #195906 re: the redevelopment of Union Sq.:

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE