

Madalyn Letellier

From: Becky Donner [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 4:26 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor
Cc: [REDACTED]; Ami Bennitt; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; Gregory Jenkins
Subject: 321 Washington Street: Don't F With FAB!

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

March 1, 2024

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Becky Donner. I'm a resident of Somerville living on [REDACTED] (Ward 4), as well as a practicing artist renting studio space at Milk Row Studios (Ward 2), another FAB-zoned parcel. I'm deeply involved in creative economy work in the Boston region both professionally and personally. I volunteer for the City of Somerville through serving as a Board member of the Somerville Arts Council, as well as a member of the Anti-Displacement Task Force for the Creative Economy. I'm also a member of the Steering Committees for volunteer advocacy organizations Art Stays Here and Don't F With Fab.

The FAB district is the unsung hero of Somerville's zoning ordinance, protecting the uses and businesses that contribute to the soul and identity of our City and our creative economy, yet would otherwise be priced out of Somerville. FAB was implemented in 2019 to address and protect community needs, and has widely been lauded as one of the region's most forward-thinking creative economy protections via zoning. Though only 50 acres (or 2.6%) of our entire City, FAB is home to the vast majority of creative economy spaces and workers in Somerville.

If we lose the protections of FAB zoning, we will lose all that it was created to protect. We've already lost so much - and we'll lose more of the people who make the things we love most, who contribute to the economy and vibrancy of our City, who drive the biggest and most beloved events (and tourist attractions) in Somerville like Porchfest and Somerville Open Studios, and who contribute in ways beyond what's measurable. By chipping away at FAB, we chip away at the ability of our neighbors, colleagues, businesses, and the creative spirit that is integral to Somerville's identity to remain here and thrive. Somerville's creative economy needs FAB to survive and to preserve any shred of equitable access to its arts spaces.

FAB was designed through much public process and community conversation in direct response to community needs. Changing FAB zoning would set a dangerous, threatening precedent for the remaining tiny sliver of FAB parcels in the City. It would also indicate the City's lack of concrete protections and support for its creative community and residents.

I'm asking you to keep FAB fab, and let it do what it was designed to do - protect and preserve our culture and creative economy. I'm asking you to respect the collective community process and effort that culminated in the creation of the FAB district in 2019. I'm asking you to consider the needs of your

creative economy constituents, who contribute to not only the City's identity and soul, but also its economy and vibrancy.

I strongly oppose the proposed amendment to change FAB zoning at 321 Washington Street.

Please protect what little of the FAB district we already have. Don't F With Fab.

Thank you,

Becky Donner

Becky Donner | Pronouns: she/they

www.beckylonner.com



Madalyn Letellier

From: Daniel Coughlin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 4:48 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt [REDACTED]; Ethan Dussault; Ami Bennitt; Becky Donner; Ajda the Turkish Queen; jenn harrington
Subject: Somerville Rezoning - Don't F With FAB

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello,

My name is Dan Coughlin. I'm a homeowner at [REDACTED] and a tenant at Joy St. Studios. I'm an active member of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and I'm on the Somerville Open Studios planning committee, in charge of registration. I volunteer with the Art Stays Here Coalition and their Don't F With Fab advocacy campaign to protect art spaces in Somerville. I work as an architect and artist and I'm writing in opposition to the proposed rezoning at 321 Washington St.

In 2019 a new Somerville Zoning Ordinance established Fabrication Districts throughout the city in response to the rapid rate of new development. The city recognized that without protections, many spaces important to arts and creative economy and ultimately the spirit and soul of Somerville would be at risk. The intent was simple, "to protect buildings that are key assets to the creative economy of Somerville from residential conversion, preserve existing workspace, and retain incubator spaces for start-up, entry-, and mid-level businesses." In 2022 a report from the MAPC and Somerville Arts Council found that "buildings that house creative uses facing high and the highest exposure to development represent more than 3 million sq/ft of total building area." This number, while staggering, doesn't include the dozens of buildings that are considered low risk, which according to the report includes Joy St Studios. 86 Joy St was bought in 2019 by New York based developer Northriver and is absolutely at risk. In all reality there are almost no buildings in Somerville that aren't at risk for development and millions of sq/ft of creative space could soon be gone.

In the face of this stark reality the question becomes why not simply enforce the zoning? The creation of the FAB district was intended to protect these spaces, explicitly from residential development, and yet each time a new development is proposed the arts and creative economy is asked to compromise and forced to defend a position that the city themselves created. And while there may be a need for more housing units in Somerville, despite being the most densely populated city in New England, there is NOT a need for more residential zoned parcels. Housing stock and residential zoned parcels are not the same and should not be conflated. The Somerville Zoning Map is overwhelmingly yellow and orange, meaning the city is overwhelmingly zoned Neighborhood and Urban Residential. Why even consider chipping away at the FAB District, which makes up only 1-2% of Somerville land? There are surely other ways to address housing without compromising the most at risk zones in our city. We need to stop pitting the most vulnerable communities against each other. Along with 321 Washington St, proposals to rezone Somernova and the entire Brickbottom neighborhood show the risks to FAB are not slowing down.

In an attempt to offset these losses the city of Somerville has introduced "Arts and Creative Enterprise (ACE) as a principal use category and established set-aside requirements of 5% of commercial floor area for ACE uses in new development across the city in mixed use and commercial districts." Unfortunately, even with set-aside requirements the overall numbers don't look good. According to the MAPC/SAC report, "Twenty-two (22) not-yet-permitted developments on record with the City of Somerville would collectively provide about (only) 275,000 sf of space dedicated to ACE uses if built to the square footage estimates currently on record." These numbers DO NOT make up for the potential loss.

If proposals to rezone 321 Washington St, Somernova and Brickbottom are allowed to move forward the FAB zone may not survive. The precedent for developers will be set, FAB will be compromised, and every building in a FAB zone will be targeted as a high-profit asset. Please consider the long term implications of these zoning proposals and what it will mean to artists and creatives who currently call Somerville home. We aren't Boston and we certainly aren't Cambridge. We know what they've lost. Please ensure the future Somerville will continue to be a safe haven for arts and culture and Don't F With FAB.

Thanks for your consideration,
Dan Coughlin

Madalyn Letellier

From: DWJ Creative [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 3:19 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; d [REDACTED] Ami Bennitt
Subject: Letter about the Fab District.

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

March 1, 2024

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Duncan Wilder Johnson (he/him). I have been a part of the Somerville community for 5 years, renting a studio space in the Milk Row Studios building.

I am a photographer, videographer, writer, and musician at the New Alliance Gallery. I am writing to tell you how much Somerville's current and future artists and residents need the Fabrication District.

I utilize my space primarily to work. I create photographs, videos, animations, and designs for clients such as Sarepta Therapeutics, Whole Foods Market, Massachusetts College of Art & Design, Wentworth Institute of Technology, and Century 21 Cityside.

I also use my space to play: write monologues and music, as well as rehearse for performances such as our sold-out benefit show for the Stand Up and Shout Cancer Fund, which took place last month at Sonia in Central Square.

I use my space to develop outside-the-box activities for kids. I teach in an after-school program in Newton one day a week.

Our space also serves as a bridge for student artists at the college level to gain real-world experience curating and exhibiting in our gallery.

Because my space is housed in the Fabrication District, I have the unique opportunity to collaborate, hire, be hired, help, and receive help from my fellow creative professionals. Everything from fixing a guitar amp on the cheap to getting my next photo/video job happens due to my relationships in the Fabrication District.

I have been associated with 3 different Arts organizations that have been displaced a total of 4 times within the last 26 years: New Alliance (now in our third location in Union Square), Bad Girls Studios (Jamaica Plain), and the ONI Gallery (Chinatown). Each time, it feels like a punch in the gut. Then the search continues to find a new space, build it out with our own money, create community and culture for the area, and then hope that you get enough use out of it before the cycle repeats.

Affordable, long-term space for artists is important, and Somerville needs more. Please help us preserve and grow our city's culture.

DON'T F WITH FAB!

Thank you for your consideration.
Duncan Wilder Johnson

--

DUNCAN WILDER JOHNSON (he/him)
DWJ CREATIVE - PHOTOGRAPHER & VIDEOGRAPHER

[REDACTED]
I respond to texts faster than emails.

Please TEXT for time-sensitive communication.

[DWJcreative.com](https://www.dwjcreative.com) - company website and portfolio

Madalyn Letellier

From: Dawson, Schuyler T [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 2, 2024 12:27 AM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED]
Subject: In support of Fab
Attachments: Dont-F-with-FAB-Somerville-Arts-Advocacy_Sample Letter.pdf

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Hello,

I apologize if I am late to submit, but if I am not please find my letter of support to keep 321 Washington Street as zoned under Fabrication attached.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Schuyler Dawson

Schuyler Dawson (he/him)
schuylerdawsonart.com
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



February 28, 2024

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Schuyler Dawson. I have been a part of the Somerville community for 3 years. I am an artist at 6 Vernon Street Studios and I am here to tell you how much current and future artists and residents of Somerville need the Fabrication District.

As most artists can attest to, it has become increasingly difficult over the years to find affordable space to create art and build community. I have spent a long time searching for a community I can call home, and I have found that in the Vernon Street Studios. I have recently had to move into Boston to be closer to work, but I have intentionally kept my studio space in Somerville because of the city's unique support for its artists, commitment to the arts in general, the community that has made me feel so inspired and welcome, and my love for Somerville as a whole. I have lived in a lot of places and this is the first city I was able to find affordable art spaces and have a studio among a community of artists. I had almost given up on having a proper studio space, but thanks to Somerville's network of artists and makers I was able to get my first ever studio outside of a school setting. The landscape for artists is dire out there and most art studio spaces have waiting periods of YEARS with prices that are completely untenable for countless artists and makers. As you can imagine, that is enough to make many artists give up on their practice, either out of necessity or discouragement.

Somerville, with its FAB district designations, has established itself as a model for how a city can support the arts, and in turn how important the arts are for the soul of a city. Somerville should be EXPANDING its FAB zoning and further commit to supporting the arts and bolstering resources, as the arts are essential to what makes it such a special city. Don't let Somerville fall prey to the destruction of culture in the name of industry, keep 321 Washington Street zoned as Fabrication District and protect Washington Street Arts Center.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Schuyler Dawson

Madalyn Letellier

From: Ellen Rounseville [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 12:40 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED] Ben Ewen-Campen
Subject: Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee Joint Meeting with the Planning Board:
Attachments: Fabrication District-Rounseville.pages; Fabrication District-Rounseville.pdf

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

March 1, 2024

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Ellen Rounseville, and I want to share my experience of living and working in Somerville as one illustration of how important it is to current and future artists and residents of Somerville to preserve the Fabrication District.

I have written a lot of words and listed many details in case they are useful and/or interesting. Read them if you like, but most importantly, please register my strong support for maintaining the Fabrication District and for keeping it strong by not allowing exceptions or overrides.

About me and my relation to our city: I live at [REDACTED], APT 3 in Ward 3. I am a painter and have a studio at 6 Vernon Street.

I have lived in Somerville for 35 years. My daughter spent her childhood here. In 1975, I moved to my first apartment on Hall Street. Shortly after that, I spent 4 years at the Museum School studying painting, and ever since then I have continued making and sharing my art in Somerville. Although I had to move to a neighboring city for a few years, Somerville has always been where my heart is. Even while I was no longer living here, I continued to have a studio and make my art in Somerville. About ten years ago, I was lucky enough to find a place to live I could afford and moved back. I don't want to ever leave again, but if I lose my studio space and am unable to find another in the city, I will have no other choice.

My studios: I have had 8 different studios in the city. Each move represents a disruption in my art-making and added expense.

Studios 1-3: 20 Vernon Street

I moved into my first studio at Vernon Street while I was still in art school. It was a storage space filled from floor to ceiling with large, heavy wooden molds used in the fabrication of I'm not sure what. I transferred all of the odd-sized blocks to another storage area, and thus created my first space in which to make my large oil paintings. I moved twice more within the building for happy reasons: to have a bigger studio with better light to create my artwork under improved circumstances. While at Vernon Street, my daughter was born. Eventually, I had to give up my studio because of parenting expenses.

I tried to work at home but realized that was really not an option for me. I couldn't concentrate, and worse, there was not enough space to create my large paintings. Even though I used relatively non-toxic materials, they were still a danger for a small child. After trying but not succeeding for several years to work at home, I managed to find a new studio space.

Studio 4: I found a sublet in the warehouse building behind Market Basket. It was spacious and sunny, and I happily stayed there for several years. I painted a large mural and other narrative works there, some of which I consider the best of my portfolio. But it was a sublet, and eventually I had to leave. Again, my art suffered because I was without a place to work. I produced almost nothing for a few more years.

Studios 5-7: During Somerville Open Studios, I met an artist at Joy Street Studios who was looking for a studio mate. I applied and was happy to move in shortly afterwards. However, heavy fumes from the auto repair shop directly below us invaded our space. We had to move to another location within Joy Street. Meanwhile our rents kept going up. My studio mate left because he could no longer afford the space, and I rented a smaller studio at Joy Street. It was perfect. The landlords repainted it for me; I rebuilt my storage structure; there was a skylight; and best of all, it had an exhaust system, so I could use the media, solvents and varnishes I needed. I stayed, as long as I could, but my rent kept going up much faster than the inflation rate. And then, we were told that our multi-year leases would now be one-year leases. Very soon, the building was sold.

I attended on-line meetings with the new owners. Although they seemed willing to keep artists in the building at least for now, it seemed clear to me that rents would rise in tandem with the value of their real estate. In addition, to the insecurity of not really knowing how long artist spaces would remain there, I was already priced out of Joy Street, and it clearly wasn't going to get better. The fate of Joy Street studios had become and continues to be precarious.

Almost Studio 8: Central Street Studios

Mid-pandemic, I started looking for another studio. I found one at Central Street Studios across the street from my apartment. The price was good, the space OK, so I said yes, I would sign the lease. But then I learned it would be only a one-year lease, not the multi-year leases the artists had signed in the past. I had heard this before—at Joy Street. To me it meant that the owners intended to sell. Sure enough, shortly afterwards, "for sale" signs appeared on the building. I'm not sure whether the owners found buyers. The signs have disappeared, but it is still an uncertain situation for the artists who remain.

Studio 8: 6 Vernon Street

At last I found a small studio sublet at 6 Vernon Street. It is more expensive than Central Street but less than Joy Street. I am very happy to have it, and I hope to stay a very long time, and yet, insecurities remain. Although Vernon Street Studios are in a Fabrication District which ensures the continuation of space for artists, the rents have been going up at rates much higher than before. In addition, my studio is a sublet and worse, the Fabrication Zone seems subject to appeal.

I want to remain in Somerville for the rest of my life. However, if I were to lose my current studio and if I were not able to find another here, I would have to move. I have neither the time nor the means for a long commute, and I cannot give up my art. My studio is where I tell my stories in paint; it is where I show and sell my work; it is essential to my life and art.

Every studio we lose, makes Somerville's arts community, my community, smaller and threatens my way of life. People don't move here because it's fancy. They move here because of what happens here and

who lives here and has lived here. Somerville's growth from the city once derogatorily nicknamed Slummerville to acceptance as one of the best places to live in America comes in great part from its vibrant community of artists. Since the creation of the fabrication zone, Somerville has shown that it cares about this community and realizes its value. But, every time a landlord wins an override to this protective zoning, Somerville loses another piece of its character, I lose another collaborator, and real estate in Somerville loses value, maybe not so much in immediate monetary terms but in its desirability as a place to live and work. The threat is real. Just look at what has happened in neighboring communities.

The fabrication zone is essential not only to Somerville's creative community but to everyone who loves Somerville. We are lucky to have it, but we must remain vigilant that it does not lose its effectiveness through the incremental erosion, by not enforcing it or by allowing exceptions.

Every override to the Fabrication District zoning puts more studios at risk and changes the character of our city, lost studio by lost studio. Every artist in Somerville has a similar story, perhaps not in the details of their lives but in the importance that art and a place to make that art has in and on their lives. Please listen to us.

Please keep the Fabrication District strong. Do not allow it to be watered down by allowing overrides.

Thank you.

Ellen Rounseville
www.ellenrounseville.com



From: Ellen Rounseville, [REDACTED], Somerville MA 02143, [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: March 1, 2024

Subject: Somerville City Council's Land Use Committee Joint Meeting with the Planning Board:

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Ellen Rounseville, and I want to share my experience of living and working in Somerville as one illustration of how important it is to current and future artists and residents of Somerville to preserve the Fabrication District.

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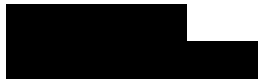
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Please keep the Fabrication District strong. Do not allow it to be watered down by allowing overrides.

Thank you.

Ellen Rounseville
www.ellenrounseville.com



Madalyn Letellier

From: Emily Gronlund [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 2, 2024 12:35 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED] Ellen Waylonis
Subject: Protect Somerville Art Spaces

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Emily Gronlund, she/her/hers,

I have been a part of the Somerville community for 4 years since moving to Boston in 2020.

I am a student at Esh Circus Arts, located in a FAB district on Park Street. Esh has been a home for recreational and professional circus artists for more than 14 years, and has been in Somerville for more than 10 years. I am writing to tell you how much current and future artists and residents of Somerville need the Fabrication District to protect spaces like this one.

Affordable, long-term space for artists is important, and the unique culture of our city depends on maintaining the spaces we have. The City of Somerville has said that it values the arts and artist - please show that now by preserving FAB and keeping the arts in Somerville.

Thank you for your consideration.

Emily Gronlund

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Pronouns: She, her, hers

Madalyn Letellier

From: JT Bullitt [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 4:39 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED]
Subject: Please protect the Fab zoning at 321 Washington!

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Attn: Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board

Greetings!

My name is John Bullitt. I am an artist with a studio at Joy Street Studios in Somerville, where I have been working for the past 4 years. I am writing to tell you how important it is to me that the Fabrication District be preserved so that current and future artists like me can continue to thrive.

My studio space at Joy Street is an essential part of my life. It is where I work, creating drawings and paintings, and designing sound installations. My work reaches well beyond Somerville and has been shown in galleries in New England and heard on National Public Radio. The community of like-minded artists at Joy Street provides an essential support to my creative process. Without that community, my creative life would wither.

I am not alone. Many Somerville artists like me depend upon the creative community that affordable art space attracts. The unrelenting pressure of upscale development in areas like 321 Washington, threatens not only the Washington St Art Center; it threatens all of us.

Affordable, long-term space for artists is crucial for keeping artists in Somerville and for fostering the city's vibrancy and cultural health. Please help us preserve and grow our city's culture by preserving the Fabrication zoning at 321 Washington.

In other words, please DON'T F WITH FAB!

Thank you for your consideration.

John Bullitt
Joy Street Studios #9
86 Joy Street, Somerville MA 02143
www.jtbullitt.com

Madalyn Letellier

From: Kerrie Kemperman [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 9:32 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED]
Subject: Don't F with 321 Washington Street

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Kerrie Kemperman, and I moved to Somerville in the fall of 2000 while I was a grad student in writing at Emerson. My boyfriend and I moved into our apartment on [REDACTED] never expecting to still live here 24 years later. My involvement in the local arts scene those early years was mainly as an attendee -- ArtBeat, SOS, SomerStreets, and occasional exhibitions at the Somerville Museum... I loved the quirky "Tiny Museum" in Union Square, and all the cool happenings that popped up around town. Artists made Somerville interesting.

Eventually, I applied for my first LCC grant and co-taught some memoir writing workshops through the Somerville Council on Aging. I met seniors who had been here for generations and others who had moved or immigrated and raised their families here. We produced free booklets of the participants' writing, and offering community readings. I felt like I was finally getting to know people outside of my own circle, but this was only the beginning.

In 2017, I attended a packed reception for a feminist fiber art exhibition at Washington Street Art and felt an immediate connection to the space. I loved the energy, the art, and the event organizers seemed like people I wanted to know. In 2018 I visited Washington Street again, this time as an artist in the Somerville Toy Camera Festival, and chatted at length with Gretchen about the darkroom and our mutual love of b/w film photography. The next year I joined the collective as a darkroom member, and am currently a studio member, participating in SOS, Yart Sale, the Somerville Toy Camera Festival, and many other local events and exhibitions.

I received another LCC grant last year, this time for my pinhole photography work. I made zines and left them in Little Free Libraries all over the city. Now, I'm working toward an exhibition at the main branch of the public library of Somerville solargraphs -- super-long-exposure pinhole photos of sun's paths above various streets and corners of Somerville. The purpose is to show the city another side of itself... the passage of several months of time captured in each still image.

I give back to the Somerville community in a variety of ways -- from working elections to teaching memoir writing to seniors to co-organizing an exhibit in Davis Square in 2020 about Somerville's trees to helping coordinate the Toy Camera Festival to interviewing local artists for "Somerville Artist of the Month". Now I ask for Somerville to help me and my colleagues at Washington Street studios, as well as those in the other local studio buildings... help us save the city's Fabrication districts and artist studios/maker spaces.

If FAB zoning is rescinded and Somerville loses Washington Street Art Center, that will mean 12 fewer studio spaces, the loss of a gallery and event space, and the loss of the only studio b/w photography darkroom in Somerville.

If we lose Washington Street Art Center, the Somerville Toy Camera Festival (now in its 11th year) will lose 1/3 of its free exhibition space.

If I lose my studio at Washington Street, I will lose my creative community, work space, exhibition space, and darkroom access. I won't stop making art, but it will make it much more difficult, will impact how much I can produce, and may push me out of Somerville entirely. I'm just one artist, but losing Washington Street will affect our 20 members directly and will ripple out from there.

Artists need rough-around-the-edges spaces in which we can make messes on the way to making art that will enter the public sphere via exhibitions, permanent installations, art markets, etc. If you want art for the walls of your high rise, or the walls of your office, or for the plaza or local park, you need to leave artists space to work -- and affordable space to live. If you want street festivals and art markets and performers and puppet shows and murals and darkroom photographers and free or affordable workshops for yourself or your kids to learn pretty much any art form, you need to leave artists space to work and space to live.

At the end of the day, developers don't care about the community -- Somerville could be Any-ville. They may give lip service to building community centers or kids programs, but developers aren't the ones that serve the community, that work with kids, that offer free performances, concerts, exhibitions, or classes. Artists and other community members do that. WE make our community, not developers.

If it's not worth it to you to keep artists around for all of the ways we support the community and make Somerville interesting, then why did you choose to live in Somerville over Malden, or Quincy, or Waltham, or Newton, or Brighton, or any other neighborhood in this region? What was special enough to bring you here but is not special enough to save?

Don't F with FAB!

Thank you for your consideration,

Kerrie Kemperman
Studio Member, Washington Street Art Center
www.kerriekemperman.com

Madalyn Letellier

From: Rebecca Scott [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 4:17 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED]
Subject: Regarding The Washington St Art Center, 321 Washington Street, Somerville

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March 1st, 2024

For the attention of:
Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board-

My name is Rebecca Scott, owner of Shepherd's Run Jewelry, which operates out of Joy St Studios in the Brockbottom neighborhood. I have been a part of the Somerville community for about 25 years. I live in North Cambridge but commute to my studio in Somerville's Joy Street Studios on an almost daily basis, where I have been a renter for close to 20 years. I consider myself both a craftsperson and jeweler and being a part of the greater Somerville creative community is essential to both my business and overall wellbeing. I am here to tell you how much current and future artists and residents of Somerville need the Fabrication District.

The rapidly shrinking availability of spaces designated for creatives to work safely in appropriate spaces presents an existential danger to both artists and the overall community. I am both a business but also a customer for many of the other small and local businesses that operate from buildings such as Joy Street and the Washington St Art Center.

If people like myself lose the Fabrication zoning, I will have nowhere to work safely. I work with flame (an open torch), use various chemicals, and produce both noise and dust in my daily operations. It's invaluable to protect spaces suitable for this kind of work, which cannot safely be done in a home or standard office environment. If I lose my space, I'm faced with either shuttering my business or trying to find a suitable space in another town. The loss of this kind of space will cost Somerville tax dollars and lessen the draw of consumers to visit the city on a regular basis. It will also massively impact the draw for events such as the well-respected Somerville Open Studios. I would lose access to a large percentage of my in-person customers if I lose my space. Another great loss would be the loss of community that exists within each studio building- we are creative microcosms that feed and support each other. Operating in a vacuum is not good for most of us and having the opportunity to be surrounded by others with whom we can relate, collaborate and work through business and artistic issues is what helps many of us not just survive but thrive. I firmly believe that if the creative sector thrives, so does the city- especially one with as deep and established artistic roots as Somerville.

I have looked, over the years, for suitable facilities in surrounding towns, and have found nothing that compares to what can be found in Somerville. We need MORE, not less, of the protections that will keep the artistic and creative sector growing. We also need the guarantee that these spaces will be long-term and protected so artists and craftspeople can feel secure in building their footprints here.

Please, please keep the zoning for 321 Washington as Fabrication and strengthen protection for this zoning designation overall.

In succinct summary- DON'T F WITH FAB!

Thank you for your consideration.

Rebecca S. Scott

www.shepherdsrunjewelry.com

Modern metals, made by hand in Somerville, MA



Madalyn Letellier

From: stina simmarano [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 1:54 PM
To: Public Comments; All City Council; Planning1; Mayor; Gregory Jenkins; Michael Rosenberg; Rachel Strutt; [REDACTED]
Subject: In Support of Washington Street Arts Center

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Dear Somerville City Council and the City of Somerville Planning Board,

My name is Stina Simmarano. I have been a part of the Somerville community for about 15 years and I live at 9 Medford Street. I am a local artist and I want to tell you how much current and future artists and residents of Somerville need the Fabrication District and urge you to preserve this zoning for the arts center at 321 Washington Street.

I have been a resident artist at [REDACTED] for the past 8 years and I know how crucial it is for artists to have an affordable space to work and live. If it weren't for my status as a resident artist, I would have left Somerville years ago due to rapidly rising rents both in housing and studio space so I'm very grateful to have found a way to stay in Somerville. If I lost this space, I honestly don't know where I would go and how I would maintain my creative practice. One of my favorite things about living and working on my craft in Somerville is the vibrant creative community here and I sincerely hope that Somerville doesn't go the way of neighboring communities in Boston and Cambridge and continue to push artists out.

Affordable, long-term space for artists is important, and Somerville needs more. Please help us preserve and grow our city's culture.

DON'T F WITH FAB! Thank you for your consideration.
stina simmarano