

Taylor Alexander Perkins

Somerville, MA

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Dear Mayor Wilson,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Somerville Fair Housing Commission. Fair and equitable housing for all is a human right that must constantly and proactively be upheld. As the Associate Director of the Boston College Corcoran Center for Real Estate and Urban Action, I have dedicated the last 10 years of my career as a professor and administrator to teaching and research around ways to strengthen communities, increase access to opportunity, and solve the housing crisis. Much of this work has been alongside housing authorities, community groups, and other government agencies.

Furthermore, as a mixed race Somerville resident of color and a father raising a young daughter, I am acutely aware of the challenges and opportunities housing and associated services present in our city. I am committed to working with my fellow community members to drive continuous improvement in Somerville, and have recently served as a member of the Mayor's Public Safety for All Task Force and co-chair of the drafting subcommittee. I am excited by the potential to continue to serve my community in my area of professional focus.

In my professional career I have developed expertise in housing policy and current best practices around ensuring equal access, both within existing housing stock and when assessing and managing new developments. I have worked with the Boston Planning and Development Agency on its plan to transform into an organization that promotes Equity, Affordably, and Resilience, developing a scorecard to help ground their work in these principles. I regularly teach a course titled Urban Action Lab at Boston College offered through the Business Law and Economics departments.

In this course I lecture on the history of *de jure* and *de facto* housing discrimination and segregation in the United States, as well as the various pieces of federal legislation that has (and has not) attempted to address these factors. These lectures always highlight a highly salient truth, that many Americans do not understand the history and mechanics of housing discrimination or potential remedies available to them (such as the MCAD), and that raising awareness is a key tool to work towards remedying the continued effects of inequality.

I applaud the commission's existing outreach and education efforts, including sessions in schools to build students' knowledge early, and robust outreach and engagement on social media, and would welcome the opportunity to contribute further towards building additional community awareness.

I deeply value empowering all community members through my work, and strive to employ a strengths-based framework that emphasizes and amplifies positive aspects and allows them to flourish. I would bring this perspective to a role on the commission, seeking to support and empower residents. I appreciate your consideration of my interest and would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Taylor