



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
***MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

GEORGE J PROAKIS, AICP  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**MEMBERS**

MICHAEL A. CAPUANO, ESQ., *CHAIR*  
AMELIA ABOFF, *VICE CHAIR*  
SAM DINNING, *CLERK*  
JAHAN HABIB  
ROB BUCHANAN, *ALTERNATE*

10 June 2021

The Honorable City Council  
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Honorable City Council:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Somerville Planning Board submits to your Honorable Council its recommendation on the following proposed amendments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (items 211170, 211433, 211693, 211611, and 211612).

On 29 April 2021, at 6:00 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the City Council held a duly advertised virtual joint public hearing. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the proposed amendments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance and to evaluate the proposal in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Staff to the Planning Board. On 10 June 2021, the Board convened at their regularly scheduled meeting to deliberate on the agenda items.

**PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

On item 211170 (a proposal by Sam Judd to re-zone his property at 256 and 278 Elm, 58 Day, and 7 Herbert Streets to a mix of Civic and CC4), following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion that the Board make no recommendation on the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and urge the City Council to take up map change requests for the Davis Square area after the completion and adoption of the Davis Square Neighborhood Plan. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and approved unanimously by the Board, 4-0.

On item 211433 (a proposal by City Councilors Matthew McLaughlin, Lance L. Davis, Wilfred N. Mbah, Kristen Strezo, and Jesse Clingan for amendments to permit payments in leu of providing civic space near the Interstate 93 Northern Expressway or Massachusetts Route 28 roadway), following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance be adopted by the City Council. On the suggestion of Vice Chair Amelia



Aboff, the Board also recommended that the proposal be revisited and potentially further amended to recognize the value of open spaces adjacent to highways, when planted with appropriate species, for providing air cleaning and filtration. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and approved unanimously by the Board, 4-0.

On item 211693 (a proposal by Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone to make amendments to the Zoning Ordinance at Article 8.2 - Small Business Overlay District, and to the Zoning Map), following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance be adopted by the City Council. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and approved unanimously by the Board, 4-0.

On item 211611 (a proposal by Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone to make amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Body Art Services use standards and at Table 9.1.1 Permitted Uses), following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance be adopted by the City Council. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and approved unanimously by the Board, 4-0.

On item 211612 (a proposal by Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone to make amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to regulate rooftop mechanical systems and mechanical penthouses), following due consideration, Chair Michael A. Capuano, Esq. made a motion to recommend that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance be adopted by the City Council. Following a proposal by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, the Board recommended that the proposal be revised to respond to issues raised by Board and public comments:

- That the exemption provided for photovoltaics be broadened to include other renewable utility technologies (e.g. solar thermal or wind systems),
- That the Council seek further expert testimony to assist in ensuring that the proposed regulations do not work at cross purposes with the City's other sustainability standards and guidelines,
- That the regulations be further calibrated to provide specific guidance based on the particulars of each building type permitted in each zoning district, and
- That the massing, material, and design implications of the proposed regulations be studied to ensure that the mechanical systems are well integrated into the design, resulting in buildings that are attractive, unified, and harmonious.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and approved unanimously by the Board, 4-0.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Capuano  
Chair of the Planning Board