

CITY OF SOMERVILLE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: Katjana Ballanytne, Mayor

From: Catherine Lester Salchert, Acting Special Counsel

Re: Palmer Ave (Private Way) Discontinuance

Date: February 6, 2024

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Public Space and Urban Forestry is requesting the City formally discontinue Palmer Ave, a private way that has been abandoned. PSUF seeks to extend the community garden in the abandoned Palmer Ave. A public hearing held by the City Council is the appropriate mechanism to formally terminate the private way.

Palmer Ave is a short 20-foot-wide strip parcel, **approximately 90 feet in length**) seen on the attached aerial photo as a barren strip of land that connects to the western side of Franklin Street and dead ends at the rear of the Capuano School Property. As of 1914, there were two houses, 5 and 9 Palmer Avenue located on Palmer Ave, which was also designated as a Fire Lane to provide access for the fire trucks.

Over time, the City acquired all the parcels along Palmer Ave, the majority of the property having been acquired to build the Capuano School (built in 2002) and the Glen Street Park. As of 2018, only one 1800 square foot parcel along Palmer Ave remained in private ownership. In 2018 the City acquired the remaining parcel known as 5 Palmer Avenue (for \$500,000)<sup>1</sup> and in 2019 recorded a conservation restriction<sup>2</sup> held by Groundwork Somerville to use the land as an extension of the adjacent Glen Street Community Garden.

A public hearing held by the City Council is the appropriate mechanism to formally terminate the private way, pursuant to MGL c. 82, Section 21 and Somerville Charter Title 3, Section 17 (d). (See excerpts attached). Note that on November 23, 2023, the Somerville Traffic Commission formally terminated the Fire Lane that was still listed in the City Regulations. (See Letter from Chief Breen in support of terminating the Fire Lane).

Notice of the public hearing must be published no later than fourteen days (14 days) prior to the public hearing (MGL c. 82 Section 21).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> See Middlesex South Registry of Deeds Book 70678, P 253.

<sup>2</sup> See Middlesex South Registry of Deeds Book 73237, page 34.

Attachments

2018 Assessor's Map Showing 5 Palmer Avenue

October 2023-Nearmap Aerial Photo of Palmer Ave

Letter from Chief Breen to Traffic Commission Dated November 13, 2023

Excerpt MGL. c.82, Section 21 and MGL c.82, Section 32A (Notice)

Title III. Section 17 (d) Somerville City Charter