



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 6, 2018
REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Lance L. Davis	Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Vice Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: George Proakis - OSPCD, Alex Mello - OSPCD, Doug Kress - HHS, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:15 PM by Chairman Davis and adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Tonight's meeting was a joint meeting with the Planning Board, chaired by Mr. Capuano.

Approval of the May 1, 2018 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the May 15, 2018 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Approval of the May 23, 2018 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

PUBLIC HEARING regarding a proposed amendment to Zoning Ordinance 6.4 to establish new open space requirements for certain buildings in the Assembly Sq Mixed Use District.

205054: 22 registered voters proposing an amendment to Zoning Ordinance 6.4 to establish new open space requirements for certain buildings in the Assembly Sq Mixed Use District.

As one of the principle drafters of the proposed amendment, Mr. Bill Shelton presented on the intent and motivation behind its submission. He talked about the city of Somerville being the densest city in New England and noted that Somervision does not include specific plans as to how to achieve the stated goal of 125 acres of new open space. Mr. Shelton answered questions regarding sources on which the proposed amendment was based and noted that it was, in part, structured in a similar manner to provisions in place in New York City.

Mr. Proakis spoke to the discussions that related to a recently approved project in the Assembly Square Mixed Use District and answered questions as to how the conditions of that approval would compare to the requirements of the proposed amendment. He advised that the Administration recommends that it prefers a more holistic approach to open space together with other public benefits.

The public hearing started at 6:45 and ended at 7:10. All speakers were given 2 minutes to speak. There were approximately 13 speakers at this public hearing. Most of the comments were in support of the amendment. There were comments about how Somerville is booming and the need for open space. Other comments were about living spaces being too close to I-93. Other comments were about green, open space being vital to the earth, improve sleep and mental health, and increases mortality rates.

Chair Davis stated that the period for public written comments will remain open until September 28th at 12 noon.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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PUBLIC HEARING regarding a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinances by adding a new Ordinance 7.16 regulating certain buildings near heavily trafficked roadways.

205244: 15 registered voters proposing an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances by adding a new Ordinance 7.16 regulating certain buildings near heavily trafficked roadways.

As the principle drafters of the proposed amendment, Mr. Fred Berman and Mr. Wig Zamore presented on the intent and motivation behind its submission. They presented data on and answered questions regarding studies that link health concerns to proximity to heavily trafficked roadways. In addition, they presented data regarding the effectiveness of different methods of filtration.

Members asked questions regarding the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health Study ongoing through Tufts University and when a more complete set of recommendations will be available.

The public hearing started at 8:18 p.m. There were approximately 11 speakers who also given 2 minutes each to speak. Most of the speakers support the amendment. One speaker stated that the U.S. spends more monthly on medical care than any other country. Another speaker talked about how her health was affected by the Big Dig. Another speaker was disheartened that residential property is so close to the highway. She suggested that commercial buildings would be better suited along busy highways and roadways.

Public hearing closed for this item at 8:40 pm.

Chair Davis stated that the period for public written comment will remain open until October 12th.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING regarding Zoning Ordinance Amendments pertaining to Adult Use Marijuana Establishments

206285: City Solicitor submitting Zoning Ordinance Amendments regarding Adult Use Marijuana Establishments.

Alex Mello (spelling) city planner presented on the thought process behind the proposed amendment. There are 37 medical dispensaries in 35 communities in the Commonwealth. There are two in Somerville and one under construction. Mr. Mello (spelling) talked about the 2016 ballot question, new regulations in March 2018, establishing state level cannabis control levels. The Somerville community voted in support of this ballot. Somerville may enact 3% local tax option on adult-use marijuana. The funds could be used to host programs on safety awareness. Mr. Mello noted that the state regulations would require Somerville to allow not less than six recreational locations, based on the number of package stores in the city.

It was noted that there is a parallel proposal in the Committee on Legislative Matters that would establish a license procedure and other potential regulations. Ald. Niedergang stated that Legislative Matters Committee will be making this matter a top priority in the meeting with is either scheduled for September 20th or October 1st.

There was a question about the proximity of the marijuana overlay district to schools. Chair Davis stated that discussion of the proposed map and any other deliberation would be in order at a future meeting of the committee

The public hearing opened at 9:25 pm and there were only a small number of speakers for this hearing. One of the speakers stated that there were over 75% who voted yes on Question 4 for this matter and Somerville had the third highest votes in Massachusetts.

The public hearing closed at 9:30 pm.

Chair Davis stated that the period for public written comment will remain open until September 14th at 12 noon.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Handouts:

- Memo - Open Space (with 205054)
- Memo - Air Quality (with 205244)
- Memo - Marijuana (with 206285)
- Adult-Use Recreational Marijuana Presentation (with 206285)
- Zamore and Berman 2018 09 06 Air Filtration Ordinance.pdf (with 205244)