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March 27, 2015

TO: George Proakis and Planning Staff, Somerville Board of Aldermen

RE: Zoning Ordinance comments

As I said in my testimony at City Hall a few weeks ago, I'm generally in favor of this form-based zoning overhaul and I greatly appreciate all the work that has gone into this.

However, I do have the following requested changes (I will not go into all the background for each as I believe you've heard more details on each, for example from Fred Berman):

SPECIAL DISTRICTS – It's great to see in the intent and other sections of the Special Language districts that there are incentives and requirements for developers to build or work with the City and/or adjacent property owners to permit or construct multi-use paths to connect with neighborhoods. Please insure that in the final zoning plan the City has the tools and proper parcels zone to require that developers help make the following path connections:

- Grand Junction/Twin City – from the Somerville Community Path and the North Point Path to the Grand Junction Path and the East Cambridge neighborhoods (note: the important connecting points are in Somerville)
- Assembly Square to Everett via the future Mystic River Crossing and Sullivan Square via the little used dual railroad tracks from the east end of Assembly Square that go under Sullivan Square to Inner Belt
- Inner Belt – Connections to the Community Path near the Harvard art storage building. Connections to Inner Belt from Assembly Square along the little used dual railroad tracks from the east end of Assembly Square.

SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) PROCESS – I'm not sure if this provides the right balance between predictability for developers and public input. While I think a small groups that is in , there should be a way to still allow the public, th to achieve small, affordable changes in the proposal.

TAX BASE - There is clearly not enough emphasis and incentives for getting the commercial office, R&D and lab development tax base that we need and too much allowance for and incentive for residential development, especially but not only in Union Square (which is a very time critical right now). For example, mixed-use buildings of between three and 10 stories are only allowed to have commercial space on the first floor with only residential above. Office and other commercial uses should be allowed, and in some areas (like the D2 and D3 blocks in Union Square) required, above the first floor in mixed-use buildings.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Everyone in the City agrees that we are in an affordable housing crisis and it will get worse with the Green Line coming. The proposed new inclusionary zoning numbers are not high enough to address this crisis and are also unnecessarily complicated. The City needs a 20%

inclusionary affordable rate everywhere in Somerville for new construction of more than three units.

GREEN SPACE and TREES -- There are not adequate requirements for green space in the City. We need more parks and playing fields. Although it will be challenging in the City to do this, we need to try. The City should establish a Green Space mitigation fund to which developers could contribute funds instead of putting a tiny plot of grass or shrubbery on a site. Also, possibly a linkage fee with a required contribution by developers. One large publicly-accessible green space is better than a dozen tiny little plots that may not even be accessible for public use. In the public interest in preserving the trees we have, on public and private property, property owner replace any trees four inches or larger that were cut down to expand or construct a new building and require that the City's Tree Warden, rather than a building inspector, to make determinations about the health of trees.

UPZONE WHITE STREET TO 4MU – I understand that all of the property owners on this street, beside the huge Porter Square shopping center parking lot, want the zoning to be 4-story mixed-use instead of 3-story mixed use as this is a prime location for business development. I live near here and this request makes sense to me.