

January 11, 2019

Board of Aldermen
City Hall
[93 Highland Avenue](#)
[Somerville, MA 02143](#)

RE: #206481, a proposed zoning amendment for open space requirements for mid-rise and high-rise buildings

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Aldermen,
(soon to be City Council)

I watched the discussion from the Board of Aldermen meeting last night regarding the citizen petition for a Zoning Amendment to Section 17 re: open space requirements for mid-rise and high-rise buildings (Item #206481). In response to this citizen petition proposed amendment, it appears that the City created its own Open Space Zoning Amendment that the Board only just saw last night, which would only slightly alter the percent of Useable Open Space by a fixed amount based on the total land area underneath a development (not square footage of building) in the Assembly Square Mixed Use District and Transit Oriented Districts. However, Bill Shelton pointed out last night that this is completely different from the initial citizen petition and completely insufficient in achieving the Open Space goals set out by my fellow residents and SomerVision.

I want to strongly state my support for the initial petition, which 1) increases the amount of open space required **for developments across the entire City** based on increasing square footage of developments with more stories, and 2) allows for payment in lieu of open space at a rate much larger than 5%, which I believe will ensure that larger pieces of open space can be bought by the City and created in Somerville. (While not directly related to this petition, I want to point out that the City should have already established an Open Space Land Acquisition Fund where such payments can be placed to ensure they are only used for creation of green and open space, just as the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is used to acquire funds for all types of affordable housing in Somerville.)

It is my further understanding from last night that there will be no permits or development plans approved before the Board of Aldermen plans to pass some form of the citizen petition after a required public hearing in late January.

I feel as though this item has been delayed for long enough, so I hope that after the next public hearing on this issue, the citizen petition will be passed without delay.

Sincerely,
Andrew (Andy) Greenspon
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