



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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September 9, 2024

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 recommendations on the following proposed amendments to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance. On 9 July 2024, at 6:30 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 proposals in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Staff to the Planning Board. On 5 September 2024, the Board convened their regularly scheduled meeting and discussed the following agenda items:

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 14 registered voters requesting a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the Zoning Ordinances to add section 8.4.19, Somernova Innovation Sub-Area (File #24-0679).
2. 15 registered voters requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to include 8 Park Street, 10 Park Street, 504 Somerville Avenue, 7-9 Properzi Way, 15-27 Properzi Way, 29 Properzi Way, 26-32 Park Street, 8-14 Tyler Street, 40 Park Street, 15 Dane Street, 7-9 Tyler Street, 30 Dane Street, 24-28 Dane Street, 460 Somerville Avenue, 444 Somerville Avenue, 440 Somerville Avenue, and 502 Somerville Avenue in the Somernova.

The Board discussed both items together, deliberated and solicited input from staff and made the following specific recommendation. Following due consideration, Chair Michael Capuano made a motion to make **no recommendation** that the proposed amendment to the Somerville Zoning Ordinance but with additional



recommendations. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Amelia Aboff, and unanimously passed by the Board, **5-0**.

- Good development potential and beneficial ideas have been proposed and the board wants to acknowledge time and outreach/engagement done by the development team to the neighborhood.
- The proponent has voiced its commitments and intentions with respect to the neighborhood and the community, but it is important to note that zoning rides with the land itself, and therefore this zoning change would not codify those commitments. Therefore, the merits of the zoning change itself should be considered separately from soft promises made to the neighborhood.
- The board is in support of the Historic Preservation Commission's letter regarding the American Tube Works Company buildings (440, 444, 460 Somerville Ave; 24 Dane Street).
- The board is supportive of redevelopment and is generally supportive of re-visioning the area to maintain/expand arts spaces, expand tech uses, and increase housing. The concern for this proposal stems from the identification in the comprehensive plan, SomerVision, that the area is Enhance and Conserve rather than Transform.
- The public testimony has been split so the board recommends leveraging this background knowledge for an expedited city-led effort, ideally with a deadline. The broad idea is to work towards a comprehensive effort to be collaborative in scope and scale for the administration and the neighborhood to support, and which would be put forward by the City to ensure alignment with the City's comprehensive planning efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Capuano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent part.

Michael A. Capuano
Chair of the Planning Board