



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 30, 2021
REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Ben Ewen-Campen	Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Vice Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	City Councilor At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Dan Bartman-OSPCD, George Proakis-OSPCD, Brad Rawson-OSCPD, John Fenton-DLJ Development and Rachel Burckardt-WSP.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Chairperson Ewen-Campen and adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Boynton MPD Amendments

212309: Requesting approval of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for MPD + Boynton Sub Area.

Chair Ewen-Campen stated many members of the public have been closely involved with this zoning amendment, which is relevant to a proposed development called Boynton Gateway. This current amendment was drafted in response to action taken by residents from 80 Webster and abutters, who had previously submitted a zoning amendment along with a hearing on this property, which led to a compromise on the proposed design for this development. Chair Ewen-Campen noted that there have been multiple successful negotiations between the developer and the abutters, and the Union Square Neighborhood Council.

Chair Ewen-Campen motioned to approve this item.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Broadway Star Market Site Redevelopment

212541: Comar Real Estate Trust proposing a zoning map amendment to re-zone their properties at 299 Broadway and 15 Temple Street from MR5, MR3 and NR Districts to MR6, MR4 and NR Districts.

Chair Ewen-Campen stated there is a slight change that was discussed at the last meeting. The proposed zoning change is attached to tonight's agenda.

Councilor McLaughlin motioned to amend by replacing the pedestrian street map with the one shared tonight removing the pedestrian street along the northern 50 feet of Temple Street. Mr. Bartman will make sure a clean copy will be sent to all before the next City Council meeting.
Councilor McLaughlin

Councilor McLaughlin motioned to approve this item.

RESULT:

APPROVED

Boynton Parking Maximum

212471: That the Zoning Ordinances be amended by striking all language from section 8.3.1.10.c to prevent parking maximums in Master Planned Development areas being exceeded by Special Permit.

The Chair stated the original submitted by the councilors focused on getting rid of the ability of property owners within Master plan from exceeding a certain number of parking spots by SP. This item is to make a set cap that cannot be exceeded by special permit.

Mr. Proakis presented a different approach that would set a ratio by 0.6 parking spots per 1,000 square feet of development. There are a number of questions from the councilors to the administration and the DLJ development team.

Chair Ewen-Campen went over the changes to the language "the maximum of 0.6 off-street parking spaces per one thousand square feet of gross floor area." He asked a question if the original 1500 was arrived by an analysis by what the street network can handle, or by analysis of a proposed build-out, or both. Mr. Rawson stated that they used a custom parking demand model by a parking specialist using for the Union Square neighborhood plan. He talked about all off-street parking as being public parking in Boynton Yards. The question was asked how does the city build safe and equitable streets for the community. A question was asked about a different ratio 0.5 for another project in Boynton Yards, and Director Proakis responded that that project also included an existing 200+ spot garage which allowed the developer to build less new parking. A question was asked about 100 South Street and the number of spaces of well above 0.6 and asked why can't the city reallocate that space. Mr. Proakis stated DLJ has a pending amendment for their master plan and will be at 0.6 overall, which would follow the new proposed language, and that this would be achieved by new buildings having ratios close to 0.2. Chair also asked what makes the city comfortable with the 0.6 and not push for 0.5. Mr. Rawson stated they keep in touch with national and local programs, and to stay on the cutting edge of pushing for traffic reduction.

Councilor Niedergang asked a number of questions of the DLJ Development and the administration. He received responses that will be circulated to the Land Use committee and attached to tonight's agenda and minutes. Councilor Niedergang stated that he wished to see a full build-out of Boynton Yards, with as little parking as possible. He asked for full data on Kendall Square parking which is 0.9 per 1,000, per Mr. Proakis, and 0.8 for new projects. Mr. Proakis stated that Boston built their parking ratio around transit access. Councilor Niedergang asked how many on-street parking spaces will there be once Boynton Yard is fully built out.

Councilor Davis stated he would be in support of a motion as proposed and get rid of the special permit. He's not convinced the city needs another 500 cars commuting in and out of Boynton Yards each day.

Councilor Niedergang sponsored John Fenton co-managing partner of the Boynton Yards team from DLJ Development and Rachel Burckardt, a civil engineer from WSP to speak at tonight's meeting. Mr. Fenton stated they can support the proposal that Mr. Proakis discussed, but it is really aggressive, and will be hard to do better than 0.6. He also stated part of the plan is to incentivize people to get on their bikes and to take public transit. Additionally, he talked about using private shuttles for the occupants, adjust the MBTA to go through Boynton Yards along with a commuter rail stop in the area.

Ms. Burckardt talked about future plans including the possibility of a new Commuter Rail stop from the Fitchburg line, located at Webster St and shared her screen to show a map with access points. She also described new connections to the Community Path, Grand Junction, and others.

Councilor Niedergang asked how DLJ Development can suppress automobile traffic. Mr. Fenton stated a big part of the solution is transit upgrades with MBTA. He believes the purple line will have a big impact on getting people out of their cars. Mr. Rawson talked about free costs for the railways for employees.

Councilor Niedergang stated he's prepared to support the amendment with the 0.6.

Councilor White stated he will not be able to vote to get rid of the waiver and would support the amendment.

Chair Ewen-Campen stated he would let all the councilors review the information from tonight's meeting and be prepared to make a decision at the next meeting on Monday, December 6th.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Rooftop Mechanicals

212308: Requesting approval of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Rooftop Mechanicals.

Chair Ewen-Campen stated the attach document was shared with the committee. Mr. Bartman highlighted the text of the two sections that he edited which is related to the two standards that have developers designing for the Somerville noise control ordinance.

The Chair will ask Mr. Bartman to submit all of the amendments discussed tonight.

Councilor Niedergang asked about MR4 district mechanicals that are allowed to 15 feet while others are allowed to be 10 ft. He proposed it be changed to 10 ft instead of 15 feet.

Councilor Niedergang motioned and it was approved for MR4 district commercial mechanical height be changed to 10 ft.

Chair motioned that revised draft rooftop mechanical include January 17th "effective date" and the new amendments around noise and special permit considerations.

The Chair asked for Mr. Bartman to provide a clean copy of the amendment for December 9th meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

McGrath Downzoning

212337: 18 registered voters requesting the adoption of a Zoning Map amendment to change the zoning district of 51 McGrath Highway (MBL 115-B-1 and 115-B-4) from HR to MR5 and 35 McGrath Highway (MBL 115-B-5, 115-B-11, and 115-B-12) from MR5 to MR4.

Chair Ewen-Campen recused himself from this item.

Vice Chair Davis led discussions for this item.

Mr. Bartman stated there's nothing substantive on this matter. There may be a phase 2 to adjust the step down towards Brick Bottom artist loft. He has a meeting tomorrow with the Brick Bottom artist community.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Reference Material:

- Boynton Parking (with 212309)
- 21-11-30_299 Broadway Proposed Zoning & PSD Changes (with 212541)
- Niedergang questions on Boyton Yards parking limits_DLJ Response (with 212471)
- Roof Top Mechanicals (with 212308)