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Dear friends and neighbors,

I am writing to share the news that I will end my service as a City Councilor at the end of April. After April, my family will spend time in my hometown, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where we will be close to family.

I have been working for the City since 2004. I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had to contribute, while recognizing how much more work needs to be done. Since the early days of Mayor Curtatone's administration, I've had the chance to be part of teams that have taken on many challenges, and we (mostly!) had fun doing it. We launched SomerStat, 311, ResiStat, SomerPromise, and the Community Cabinet. We reworked the budget development process, reorganized systems, and rolled out district improvement strategies.

Then, as a City Councilor, I got to hear from thousands of residents. Those conversations shaped my more recent efforts. With co-workers and residents, I've worked to try to preserve affordability, build community, tackle quality of life and public health issues (traffic, rats, flooding, air quality, and noise), invest in civic groups and spaces, and pursue sustainability goals.

Though I've been working on Somerville challenges for almost 16 years, it feels like the work is just beginning. There's never a good time to step away from trying to create a community that's equipped to solve the problems of our time. Everywhere I go these days, though, I spot one and then another Somerville person who is on my list of Somerville heroes. I know that our city is in good hands. So many Somerville residents show kindness, work relentlessly, handle the details, befriend the newcomer, think up the best ideas, and, more often than not, do all of the above. I'm sorry that I won't be here with you in the near term, and thank you to all who work so hard to find solutions to the challenges that our community and world face.

As I've been getting ready to say goodbye (for now, anyway) to Somerville, I've been playing a slideshow of memories in my head: first and last days of school, funerals, cream of wheat under the grape arbor, stoop sitting and people watching, community meetings that went off the rails but eventually led to groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings, neighbors gathering during blizzards, wounds from community disputes that gradually healed over to become part of our shared story, and so much more.

My family is still figuring out the details of the next chapter of our lives. I expect, though, to keep working on my life-long goal to reshape government so that it supports integrated, healthy, connected neighborhoods, where each person can thrive.

Thank you to all my many colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family. Thank you to the thousands of constituents who have shared their unique stories and hopes for Somerville. I didn't realize how much my heart could expand as I got to glimpse the struggles that residents face. Thank you to ALL of you who use your many different gifts to make the community better.

Lots of love to Somerville and all the people in it, and thank you again for giving me a chance to be your friend and neighbor.

Stephanie

