



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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November 14, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City Hall
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: Adoption of a new Somerville Zoning Ordinance to supersede the current zoning ordinance as originally adopted on March 23, 1990.

Dear Honorable City Council:

In keeping with its lawful responsibilities, the Somerville Planning Board submits to your Honorable Council its recommendation on the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance (ID# 21576), as submitted to City Council on August 22, 2019.

On September 19, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. the Planning Board and Land Use Committee of the City Council held a duly advertised joint public hearing in the Council Chambers in Somerville City Hall. The purpose of the hearing was to solicit public comments on the 4th Version of the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance and to evaluate the proposal in the context of testimony received and the findings and analysis of the Staff to the Planning Board.

The Planning Board met on November 7th to discuss the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance and the public feedback received both at the joint hearing and in written format provided by the noon November 1, 2019 deadline.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Following due consideration, Michael A Capuano, Esq made a motion to recommend that the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance be adopted by the City Council, following consideration and potential amendment of the proposal to address the concerns identified by the Planning Board. Amelia Aboff seconded the motion, which was approved 3-0. Dorothy Kelly Gay and Gerald Amaral were not present.

The Planning Board requests that the City Council consider the following items prior to adoption of the proposed new Somerville Zoning Ordinance:

1. That all new driveways be designed with porous asphalt, pervious concrete, or pavers and that impermeable driveways only be permitted to address specific site conditions upon approval of the City Engineer. Board member Aboff supported a further requirement that all new driveways be installed as ribbon driveways, with similar requirements as detailed above for all other types of driveway design (fully paved requires a waiver; permeable or impermeable).
2. That a Special Permit be required for Cannabis Cultivation uses due to odor impacts on abutting properties.
3. That buildings in the Fabrication and Commercial Industry districts be required to be LEED certifiable similar to requirements for other buildings types in other districts (removing the exemption in Section 10.11.1).
4. That buildings greater than 25,000 square feet be LEED Gold Certifiable and buildings greater than 50,000 square feet be LEED Platinum Certifiable.
5. That properties in the commercial core of Davis Square be rezoned to the MR4 or CC4 until other amendments to the Ordinance can be explored to address resident concerns addressing the preservation of Davis Square’s small and local business character.
6. The centrally located properties in the core of Davis Square be rezoned for commercial development, with residential and mixed use development permitted on the perimeter of the core business area adjacent to properties in the NR and UR districts.
7. That the parking maximums required in Transit Areas be supported by restrictions on the availability of on-street parking permits for residents of new development in those same areas to ensure that new development is actually “transit-oriented.”

Sincerely,



Michael A. Capuano
Chair of the Planning Board