

Outline suggestion

Prompt: Such other materials evidencing the council's commitment to the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and participatory democracy, including its efforts to seek out and listen to a broad array of community opinions with regards to policy and practices that may affect the neighborhood and its residents and businesses;"

Dear Somerville City Council,

The Davis Square Neighborhood Council exists to support Davis Square as an increasingly inclusive, vibrant, and accessible neighborhood and commercial center representing the creativity, diversity, interests, perspectives, and values of the people who live and work here.

1. DSNC Mission Statement
2. DSNC formation timeline
3. 3 selected examples of outreach
4. 3 selected examples of "transparency and participatory democracy" (probably with links to our Google Drive)
5. Who our current board members are?
6. What we plan to do with city council recognition
 - a. Whatever happens with Copper Mill
 - b. Future developments, balancing the needs of current and future residents, as well as business owners, employees, and visitors from outside the square
 - c. Act as a community forum to bring together neighbors (3x other projects we've got going on!)

Letter to the City

Dear President Davis, Vice President Mbah, and City Councilors Clingan, Ewen-Campen, Hardt, Link, McLaughlin, Sait, Scott, Strezo, and Wheeler,

Please accept this application for the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) to be recognized as a Community Benefits Neighborhood Council as defined by Chapter 7, Article IX, of the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances.

The objective of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council is to support Davis Square as an increasingly inclusive, vibrant, and accessible neighborhood and commercial center representing the creativity, diversity, interests, perspectives, and values of the people who live and work here. We are driven by the values of accessibility, freedom, inclusion, interdependence, stewardship, and transparency.

The Davis Square Neighborhood Council began in early 2024 with just a few members of the neighborhood who exchanged contact information after a City of Somerville meeting at the West Branch Library about plans for Davis Square. In the following months, that initial group of neighbors publicized meetings and recruited more people while discussing plans for improvements to Davis Square. Over the past two and a half years, DSNC members have written governing documents, held dozens of community meetings and online forums about many topics concerning our neighborhood, elected our first and then our second board of directors, undergone the process of becoming an incorporated non-profit, and grown to nearly 500 verified voting members.

If granted recognition by the city of Somerville, the DSNC will continue working to improve Davis Square. The DSNC has been involved in coordinating the conversation around the proposed Copper Mill project, and we have begun preparing to engage in a community benefits negotiation with the developer. The DSNC is also eager to solicit input for the upcoming Davis Square Neighborhood Plan, and we look forward to working with any future developments to balance the needs of current and future residents, as well as business owners, employees, and visitors from outside the square. Finally, we view the DSNC as a forum for building community. Some of the many initiatives started by our members include organizing trash cleanups in the square, re-imagining how our streets could be repurposed to be safer and more accessible, and growing more plants in public spaces in the square.

We have worked diligently to prepare our organization for recognition by the City of Somerville, and we humbly present the following information and evidence of our dedication to both the requirements of the ordinance and to the betterment of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,
The Board of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council

Compliance with Recognition Qualifications

Please accept the following evidence of our compliance with the recognition qualifications.

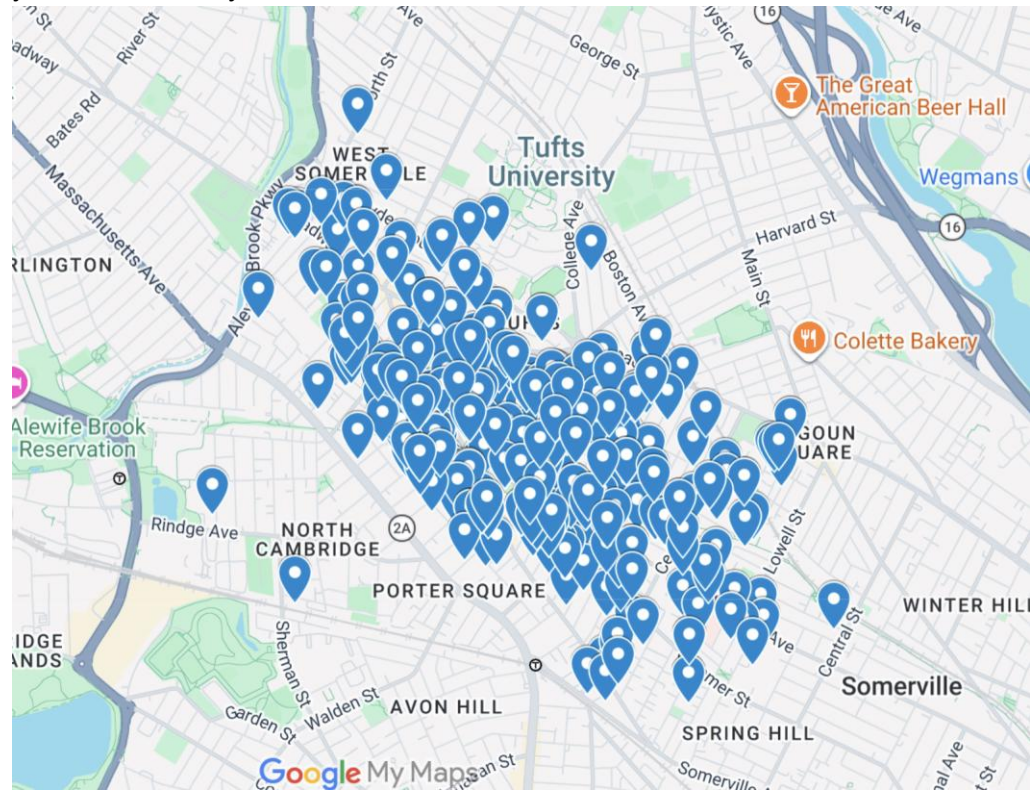
- A neighborhood council shall be an open, inclusive, and duly democratic non-profit organization.
 - The DSNC has held two [democratic elections](#) for its board, with a significant focus on making our process transparent and inclusive to all eligible voters.
 - The DSNC is a [registered](#) 501(c)(4) non-profit.
 - The DSNC bylaws require our meetings to be open to the public. Section 3.1, Membership Eligibility includes that non-members are specifically allowed to join and participate fully with the exception of voting.
 - The DSNC has adopted a [Code of Conduct](#) to encourage civil discussion in our community.

- The geographic boundaries of a recognized neighborhood council shall be reasonable and a description and map of the neighborhood included within the bylaws.
 - Please see [Bylaws](#) Appendix A. Neighborhood Boundaries Map.
 - No other recognized Neighborhood Council covers the same area.

- Membership shall be open to all persons who reside within the boundaries of the neighborhood, or own a place of business or work or attend school within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Membership shall not be limited by race, creed, religion, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, age, heritage, national origin, or income.
 - Please see [Bylaws Article 3, Section 3.1: Membership Eligibility](#)

- A neighborhood council shall make a good faith effort to have its membership distributed throughout the neighborhood,

- This is a map of where our verified voting members who are residents live. As you can see, they are distributed across our catchment area.



- All members must be allowed to stand for election to hold any officer position within the council.
 - Bylaws Section 4.6.2: “Candidates who aren't eligible Members [...] at the time of the election are eliminated immediately.”
- The bylaws shall expressly identify the process of succession when an officer steps down voluntarily or is removed, and how vacant positions will be filled.
 - Bylaws Section 4.2: Officers, Duties, and Powers details the process of succession for the Presidency as going to the Vice President, and a process for filling vacancies for board members and officers.
- The bylaws shall clearly identify how membership and voting rights are established. Only those persons within the boundaries of the neighborhood who have affirmatively joined the council may be counted as members.
 - Bylaws Section 3.1: Membership Eligibility
- Payment of dues may not be a prerequisite of membership or voting rights in the council.

- Bylaws Section 3.1 Membership Eligibility: “Members shall not be charged dues or any other membership fees.” Any revenue we raise is sourced from voluntary donations from local residents and businesses.
- The council shall hold at least one regularly scheduled meeting of the general membership per year...
 - DSNC has been meeting monthly since April 2024.
 - DSNC bylaws Section 6.2 specifies that our “Annual Meeting” is the April General Meeting.
- ...and shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of all meetings two weeks in advance to all households and businesses within its boundaries, to encourage the fullest participation reasonably possible. Notice may be accomplished through two or more of the following: U.S. Mail; Delivered or posted flyers; Website or social media posting; or, E-mail, text message, direct message through social media, or other form of electronic messages delivered to the last known contact address of each member.
 - DSNC maintains an email list, a website, several social media accounts, and has grown to include an Outreach committee, as well as a [“Publicity Checklist”](#) to ensure we’re promoting our activities to the broadest audience possible.
 - The DSNC sent out mailers prior to our most recent election to inform residents that they were eligible to vote.
 - The DSNC extensively flyers the area, both in public bulletin boards and local businesses prior to every other monthly meeting.
 - The DSNC has met with Tufts students, residents of Clarendon Hill, and residents of Weston Manor to increase participation in our organization.
 - The DSNC has tabled in Davis Square, and plans to participate in local festivals.
- The council shall not hold a vote of the general membership on any question or candidate(s) unless it is advertised through the methods described in subsection (a)(5) above, at least seven days in advance.
 - DSNC bylaws section 6.5 provides our policy for circulating a tentative agenda at least 7 days prior to every meeting.
- The bylaws shall identify an orderly and democratic process for decision making.
 - The DSNC bylaws specifies our process for decision making.
 - For conditions not specified by the bylaws, our meetings follow Robert’s Rules of Order.
- Observe all laws, regulations, and ethical standards adopted by the neighborhood council, including recusal of any member who may have a direct or indirect conflict of interest, whether personal, financial, or organizational.
 - The DSNC bylaws Section 8.2 specifies our conflict of interest policy.

- Submit to the city council an annual report, within 30 days of May 1st of each year subsequent to recognition
 - A preliminary annual report with the required information has been [prepared](#).

Copy of Letter to the City

Dear President Davis, Vice President Mbah, and City Councilors Clingan, Ewen-Campen, Hardt, Link, McLaughlin, Sait, Scott, Strezo, and Wheeler,

Please accept this application for the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) to be recognized as a Community Benefits Neighborhood Council as defined by Chapter 7, Article IX, Section 7-220 of of the City Of Somerville Code of Ordinances.

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We have worked diligently to prepare our organization for recognition by the City of Somerville, and we humbly present the following information and evidence of our dedication to both the requirements of the ordinance and to the betterment of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,
The Board of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council

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 - The DSNC has held two [democratic elections](#) for its board, with a significant focus on making our process transparent and inclusive to all eligible voters
 - The DSNC is a [registered](#) 501(c)4 non-profit
 - The DSNC bylaws require our meetings to be open to the public. Section 3.1, Membership Eligibility, includes that non-members are specifically allowed to join and participate fully with the exception of voting
 - The DSNC has adopted a [Code of Conduct](#) to encourage civil discussion in our community

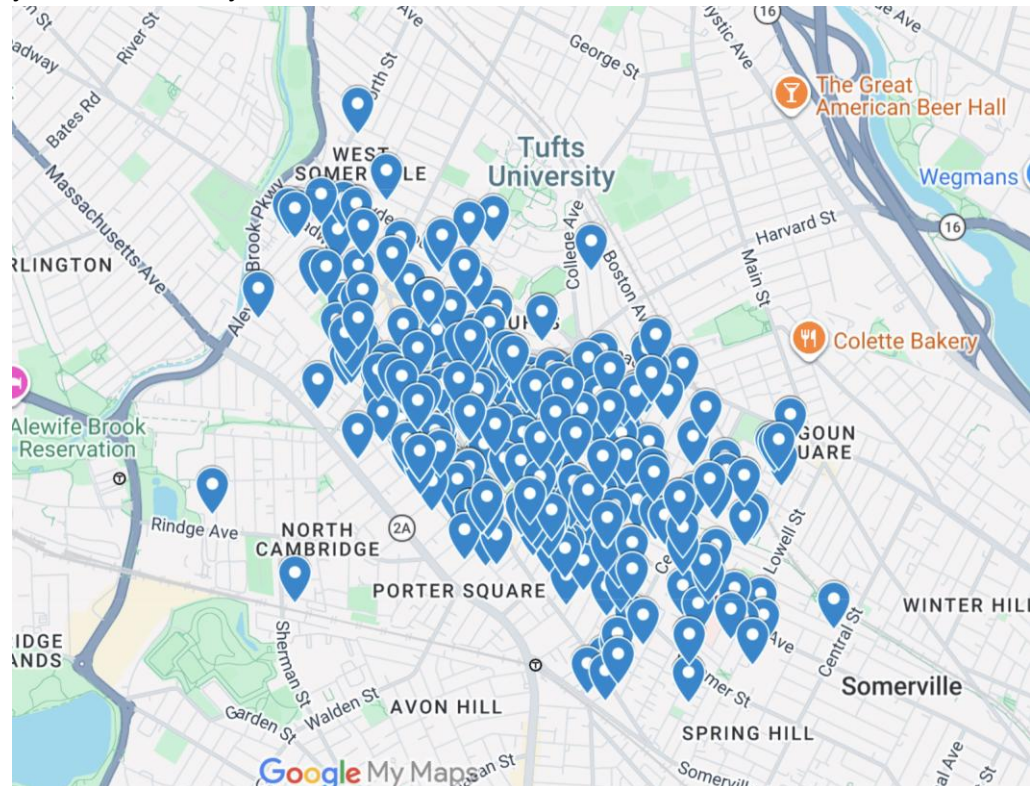
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- The recognition of a neighborhood council does not preclude individuals or other organizations from advocating for their interests or the interests of their community.
 - DSNC not only does not dissuade members or neighbors from other organizations, but our Values statement includes acknowledgement of our interdependence, and names that in practice we “collaborate with and represent Members in other groups—including the Somerville City government and the media.”

- Membership shall be open to all persons who reside within the boundaries of the neighborhood, or own a place of business or work or attend school within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Membership shall not be limited by race, creed, religion, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, age, heritage, national origin, or income.
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- A neighborhood council shall make a good faith effort to have its membership distributed throughout the neighborhood,

- This is a map of where our verified voting members who are residents live. As you can see, they are distributed across our catchment area.



- All members must be allowed to stand for election to hold any officer position within the council.

These requirements shall not preclude a neighborhood council from, at their discretion, expanding their membership criteria to include other groups with close connections to the neighborhood.

- Our Board has the ability, under our Membership Eligibility, to vote to allow people with a “genuine local interest” to become voting members.
- The bylaws shall expressly identify the process of succession when an officer steps down voluntarily or is removed, and how vacant positions will be filled.
 - Bylaws Section 4.2: Officers, Duties, and Powers details that the Presidency passes to the Vice President, along with a process for filling other vacancies.
- The bylaws shall clearly identify how membership and voting rights are established. Only those persons within the boundaries of the neighborhood who have affirmatively joined the council may be counted as members.
 - Bylaws Section 3.1: Membership Eligibility
- Payment of dues may not be a prerequisite of membership or voting rights in the council.
 - Section 3.1 Membership Eligibility: “Members shall not be charged dues or any other membership fees.

- The council shall hold at least one regularly scheduled meeting of the general membership per year...
 - DSNC has been meeting monthly since April 2024
 - DSNC bylaws Section 6.2 specifies that our “Annual Meeting” is the April General Meeting

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- The bylaws shall identify an orderly and democratic process for decision making.
 - The DSNC bylaws specify our process for decision making
 - For conditions not specified by the bylaws, our meetings follow Robert’s Rules of Order

- ... Be organized with a corporate purpose to maintain and improve the health, safety and welfare of all residents within the neighborhood council's boundaries, with special attention given to the members of the community for whom quality of life and permanence in the community may be harder to attain, including environmental justice populations and residents facing mobility, age and/or other personal and family challenges;
 - The DSNC bylaws Section 2.2 specifies or organization’s values, which center around making the DSNC an inclusive organization

- Observe all laws, regulations, and ethical standards adopted by the neighborhood council, including recusal of any member who may have a direct or indirect conflict of interest, whether personal, financial, or organizational.
 - The DSNC bylaws Section 8.2 specify our conflict of interest policy

- Submit to the city council an annual report, within 30 days of May 1st of each year subsequent to recognition
 - A preliminary annual report with the required information has been [prepared](#)