Madalyn Letellier

From: Patrick Brand [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2026 8:38 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: comment re: item 26-1165 for the 9/8 committee on DSNC recognition

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello,

I wanted to write in and express my support for the City's formal recognition of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council. I joined a couple months ago, having lived in the catchment area for many years now, and I've been impressed by the seriousness, warmth, and inclusivity of the way that the Board leads the group. The Council is doing a good job trying to fairly represent the priorities of the neighborhood and it would be in the City's best interest to recognize it.

Thank you!

Patrick Brand
[redacted]

Madalyn Letellier

From: David Booth [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2026 8:59 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Vote on Davis Square Neighborhood Council

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Having been involved in the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) for almost a year, I have been impressed with how diligent volunteer members have been, in encouraging all voices in the neighborhood to be heard.

Please vote to recognize the DSNC.

Thanks,
David Booth
[redacted], Somerville

Madalyn Letellier

From: Kathryn Kinder [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, September 2, 2026 11:20 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: DSNC recognition

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good morning,

I understand that the DSNC recognition is on the agenda for next Tuesday's Legislative Matters Committee. (Item 26-1165)
I would urge you to recognize the coalition. I think they've done a good job of being inclusive and fair. And, they communicate (quite a lot) about the time and place the meetings will occur and always have zoom available.
I've attended meetings in person and online and I think they are extremely patient in trying to get as many voices as possible to participate.
It's been a tremendous amount of work to get this far and it's clear that a number of people have put in many, many hours of effort.

Thank you,
Kathryn Kinder

--
Kathryn Kinder

Can a cookie be bad, ever?
- Edwin Henneken -

Madalyn Letellier

From: Crystal Huff [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2026 4:09 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Support for Recognition of the Davis Sq Neighborhood Council

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Apologies for the tardiness of my email. Please add this to the other comments on item #26-1165, Davis Square Neighborhood Council recognition.

Please add my name to the list of those who support formally recognizing the DSNC. The DSNC has now had 2 election cycles and has gone through a couple of rounds of bylaws drafting. They continue to iterate, but the current version of bylaws is functional. On the whole, the DSNC has tried to be very responsive to contradictory concerns and positions from members of the board and general body. The DSNC is not perfect, but nothing ever is.

Having a more localized, formal entity that can help surface and talk through challenges in the neighborhood seems way better to me than raising each of these discussions to the City Council level every month. As a city, we delegate authority to the members of the School Committee, who have specialized knowledge and skills to address issues in Somerville schools. We also already recognize the USNC and the GSNC. The Davis Square Neighborhood Council seems like a natural step to me.

Best,

Crystal M. Huff

Editor of Recognize Fascism
Gardening Collective Coordinator, Mutual Aid Medford And Somerville ("MAMAS")
MA candidate in Tufts University's UEP Program
– I use they/them pronouns. –

Madalyn Letellier

From: Alyssa W <[redacted]
Sent: Thursday, September 3, 2026 10:52 AM
To: Madalyn Letellier
Subject: Re: Pro DSNC recognition

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I hear the Davis square neighborhood council is up for recognition. I just wanted to write in and voice my support - I'm a big fan of what USNC has done for union and I'm excited Davis will hope soon have the same opportunities
Best
Alyssa Wilk
Ward 6

(Hopefully third time's the charm!)

[redacted]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Marilyn <[redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2026 8:32 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Davis Square Neighborhood Council recognition hearing (9/8/26 Item 26-1165)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Legislative Matters Committee,

This email is in support of the city formally recognizing Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) as a neighborhood council under the city's Code of Ordinances. I am a 40 year resident of Davis Square and believe the officers and members of DSNC will do an excellent job of negotiating Community Benefits Agreements for any future project. I am continually impressed by the creative ideas and seemingly unlimited areas of expertise expressed by the membership. The outreach efforts of DSNC have truly created a diverse team that cares about the residents of the square. The group will be made even better as it matures. The arguments of those few individuals against recognition would be best addressed if they were members and helped create positive change from within. All voices are welcome.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Schachter
[redacted]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Meredith Porter <[redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2026 11:47 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Davis Square Neighborhood Council not ready for recognition: bylaws in flux (ID # 26-1165)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear members of the city council:

Here is one reason why I believe that the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) should not be recognized by the city council at this time. (I am submitting another reason as a separate comment, to avoid confusion.)

The DSNC bylaws are in a state of change, with pending amendments affecting important matters such as quorum for meetings and for CBA votes, threshold for approval of CBAs, and many others. The version of the bylaws that's been submitted to the city council doesn't reflect the latest changes. Under the current bylaws, these matters are to be voted on at the following meeting after they've been introduced, but that hasn't been possible, and consideration has often been delayed for many months. Discussions of parliamentary procedure and Roberts Rules of Order have consumed time at recent meetings. Seemingly endless hours have been spent in email discussions about the bylaws and in bylaws committee meetings, and most of the time at the past couple of general meetings has been devoted to bylaws amendments on important matters such as quorum, with limited progress.

For example, at the August 31 meeting, 1 hour and 25 minutes of the 2 hour meeting was devoted to bylaws amendments. On the agenda were CBA-related amendments 18A1.2-4 and 18C1 (both announced in June but not taken up in July or August), quorum-related amendments 60, 32.5.1, Q1, QX (with several different variants), and Q2, and miscellaneous amendments D, 16G, and 54. Amendments 60 and 32.5.1 were relatively simple and passed quickly; after a lengthy discussion including consultation with the parliamentarian over the order in which the amendments should be discussed, Q1 was passed and QX was discussed, but the meeting was adjourned in the middle of that discussion. 18A1.2-4 and 18C1, Q2, D, 16G, and 54 were not taken up at all.

At the July 27 meeting, 59 minutes of the 1 hour and 50 minute meeting was devoted to bylaws amendments. It's hard to count exactly how many more bylaws amendments are pending, but there appear to be dozens, including some affecting voting and elections.

It can be hard to get community members interested in attending meetings with so much time devoted to procedure and bylaws. People have been doing good work behind the scenes to get this under control, but it is a problem, and I don't believe that the DSNC should be recognized until after the bylaws are in a stable state and a copy has been submitted to the city council.

Thanks very much for your careful consideration and for all your efforts.

Best regards,
Meredith Porter
[redacted]
Somerville, MA 02144
[redacted]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Meredith Porter [redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2026 11:51 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Davis Square Neighborhood Council not ready for recognition: bylaws violate ordinances (ID # 26-1165)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Dear members of the city council:

Here is one reason why I believe that the Davis Square Neighborhood Council should not be recognized by the city council at this time. (I am submitting another reason as a separate comment, to avoid confusion.)

The DSNC currently allows all residents of Cambridge, Arlington, and Medford living within 1/2 mile of Davis Square to be voting members. I believe that this is a serious problem and is in violation of the neighborhood councils ordinances, and that DSNC should not be recognized until this is corrected.

My intent is not to be exclusionary. Many people living just over the line in Cambridge, for example, are more connected to Davis Square than others living farther away in Somerville, and it would be great if they could participate, but I don't see how they can be voting members of DSNC by virtue of their residence.

By comparison, neither USNC nor Gilman Square Neighborhood Council extend voting rights on the basis of residence to anyone living outside of Somerville. They encourage non-members to participate fully, with the exception of voting.

The City of Somerville gives neighborhood councils special recognition that confers influence that can have important effects on the city and all of its residents, including rights to negotiate CBA's. Their plans and recommendations affect not only the neighborhood, but also the city as a whole, in terms of infrastructure, resources, allocation of revenue, etc. While it’s crucial that a wide pool of neighborhood residents, workers, and business owners have input and share ideas about how the neighborhood should be, it’s also important to limit the power to vote to Somerville residents, given the effects these resolutions can have on the city as a whole.

When people offer public comment in Somerville public hearings, they're asked for their addresses. Sometimes business owners speak up, identifying their place of business. Anyone is free to comment, but there's a presumption that comments from residents or Somerville business owners carry more weight. Comments from a recognized neighborhood council may be viewed as carrying more weight than those from individuals.

Here are more details on why I believe the current bylaws violate the ordinances in this regard:

The DSNC bylaws allow all residents of Cambridge, Arlington, and Medford living within 1/2 mile of Davis Square to be voting members. This is because while the Neighborhood Boundaries are limited to Somerville, Section 3.1 of the bylaws extends membership eligibility to any person who resides within ½ mile of the Neighborhood Boundaries.

It seems clear to me that this violates §7-221(a)(4), which states:
"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," where the definition of neighborhood council in §7-220(b) is with regard to "a specified geographic boundary **within the city**."

§7-221(a)(2) states: "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," while §7-221(a)(2)b adds: "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."

It has been argued that this latter clause justifies extending eligibility to those living nearby based on their residence, even in other municipalities. However, the recognized neighborhood councils Union Square Neighborhood Council and Gilman Square Neighborhood Council have not done that. They have restricted membership on the basis of residence to those within Somerville. The clause does allow others within the neighborhood, such as those regularly volunteering there and those who lack a permanent address but receive support services there. Those people are within the boundaries of the neighborhood and accepting them as members complies with §7-221(a)(4), unlike admitting those outside of the city on the grounds that they live nearby.

Another resident and I asked Councilor Lance Davis to request an opinion on this matter from the City Solicitor, and he did so on August 4. As far as I know, thus far there has been no response.

Thanks very much for your careful consideration and for all your efforts.

Best regards,
Meredith Porter
[redacted]
Somerville, MA 02144
[redacted]

Madalyn Letellier

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 11:24 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Lance Davis
Subject: In re: Legislative Matters/DSNC (revised)

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

Below is an expanded version of an email sent to Lance Davis for consideration at today's Legislative Matters meeting.

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2026 9:50 PM
To: Lance Davis [redacted]
Subject: In re: Legislative Matters/DSNC application

Dear Lance,

As I am not able to sit in on tomorrow's Legislative Matters Committee discussion of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council (DSNC) request for formal recognition, I would appreciate your sharing with other members my reasons for proposing that recognition be delayed:

1. **Over-extension**. The DSNC's proposed catchment area-- a 1/2- mile circumference beyond the City-defined area of Davis Square-- is too great. It includes areas of surrounding towns and of Somerville itself that have little organic connection with Davis Square, or that overlap unproductively with other neighborhoods. The City Council can and should require a less inflated catchment area as part of a resubmission. The DSNC already has in place provisions to welcome participation by people outside the catchment area, on a case-by-case basis, so that more realistic boundaries need not exclude anyone with a genuine interest in Davis Square.
2. ***Legal compliance.*** The question of whether non-Somerville residents within the catchment area, however it is defined, should have voting power awaits, as I am informed, an opinion from the City Legal Department that you have requested. As you have elsewhere observed, the role of the DNSC to serve as a vibrant forum for neighborhood concerns goes well beyond the formality of voting on CBA proposals.
3. ***Fluid bylaws.*** While many of us who are regular attendees at DSNC meetings appreciate the hard work that has gone into the submission, we are also aware that the submission was rushed to prepare for what seemed an imminent application by Copper Mill for a 40b project. This time pressure no longer exists. Meanwhile, the main business of the DSNC in recent months has been prolonged consideration of amendments to the now outdated bylaws submitted to Legislative Matters. This fluidity combined with any changes under points 1 and 2 above counsels delayed consideration on purely technical grounds. The City and Davis Square can only benefit by taking the time to put the DSNC on a firm footing.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Lee

_____

Josiah Lee Auspitz
[redacted]
Somerville, MA 02144
[redacted]
Phones do not receive text messages

Madalyn Letellier

From: Jack Connolly [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 3:14 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Lance Davis
Subject: Fwd: Davis Square Neighborhood Council not ready for recognition: bylaws violate ordinances (ID # 26-1165)

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Dear City Councilor Members
My apologies.

I cannot participate in tonight's meeting due to a long-planned family birthday event.
Please be advised I am in complete agreement with Mr. Porter and his comments to why it is not time to recognize the DSNC, especially since the DSNC is still trying to make bylaw amendments, and resolve outstanding issues of membership voting, and other procedural matters that will certainly be noted by others active and involved with, or participating directly; I'm opposed to non-Somerville residents voting in DSNC matters.

I request the Legislative Matter Committee NOT vote on this matter on Sept. 8th, since there's no immediate need to negotiate a community benefits agreement, with the Copper Mill LLC matter now completely out of the discussion.

I would suggest taking as much testimony this evening as possible, and leave the matter in the Legislative Matters Committee until a substantial review of all concerns express at this meeting both in person and in writing (suggest allowing additional time for comments to be sent to the Legislative Matters Committee) , and

answers to questions raised by interested and active Somerville residents who are interested, and/or who have been active DSNC members.

Thank you for any and all consideration.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Meredith Porter** [redacted]
Date: Tue, Sep 8, 2026 at 12:17 AM
Subject: Davis Square Neighborhood Council not ready for recognition: bylaws violate ordinances (ID # 26-1165)
[redacted]

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Meredith Porter** [redacted]
Date: Mon, Sep 7, 2026 at 11:51 PM
Subject: Davis Square Neighborhood Council not ready for recognition: bylaws violate ordinances (ID # 26-1165)
To: [redacted]

Dear members of the city council:

Here is one reason why I believe that the Davis Square Neighborhood Council should not be recognized by the city council at this time. (I am submitting another reason as a separate comment, to avoid confusion.)

The DSNC currently allows all residents of Cambridge, Arlington, and Medford living within 1/2 mile of Davis Square to be voting members. I believe that this is a serious problem and is in violation of the neighborhood councils ordinances, and that DSNC should not be recognized until this is corrected.

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Thanks very much for your careful consideration and for all your efforts.

Best regards,

Meredith Porter
[redacted]
Somerville, MA 02144
[redacted]

--
Jack

John M. Connolly
[redacted]
Somerville MA 02144
[redacted]