



City of Somerville  
**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION**  
City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

**MARCH 22, 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Cortney Kirk	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>
Cheri Ruane	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Houde	Alternate	<i>Present</i>

City staff present: Andrew Graminski (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)  
The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm and adjourned at 8:41pm.

**GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval**

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to approve the 8 March 2022 minutes with edits suggested by Member Talun.

**PUBLIC MEETING: 45 Broadway (P&Z 21-035)**  
*(continued from 8 March 2022)*

Member Arbaugh recused himself.

The applicant team presented updated renderings of the preferred façade design. Design updates included ground story revisions, the addition of masonry piers at the top of the building to add a lighter expression, and opportunities for community art. Several updates were made to the landscape plan: including a reworked ground floor egress plan, additional plantings at the corner, improved streetscape plans, and a pollinator garden.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the streetscape updates and how they suggest that the applicant team present the improvement ideas to the Planning Board when the times comes, how the base should be stronger at the corner where the art murals are planned to go, the possibility of increasing the size of the retaining wall to provide a larger space for art, the shade canopy above the planters along the storefronts, the plan for the exhaust system, and the opportunity for glazing on the side stair façade.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Houde, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to incorporate additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance summarized:

- Embrace the mural on the building: the team should look at making that a more solid component with the mural applied, instead of looking like windows

- Shade canopy for the retail components should remain open; canopy for lobby should be a transparent material that will not let water pass through
- Project should not preclude the completion of the streetscape along Lombardi Street
- Explore the opportunity to celebrate the stair core

**RESULT:**

**RECOMMENDED**

**PUBLIC MEETING: 51 Broadway (P&Z 21-034)**

*(continued from 8 March 2022)*

The applicant team presented the updated façade design; including a step back on the West side to create a separation from 53 Broadway, reduced width of the vertical panels at the upper façade, and masonry elements added to frame the entry. The team presented the elevations from various locations, the penthouse design, updated egress plan, and the updated landscape plan.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the grade change and retaining walls along Benedict Ave, the materiality of base of the building, the location of the entrance, and the relationship and space between this building and the adjacent building. The Commission was happy to see that the applicant team decided to leave the existing condition of the house next door, was pleased to hear about the proposed green roof that will be visible from the street, suggested introducing variation to the storefronts, and asked if there is a signage band designated along the storefronts. The Commission and applicant team discussed the signage band and loading area door. The Commission felt that the pattern of the façade could be more dynamic at the street front and that the penthouse should not have a lighting feature at night.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to recommend the preferred updated façade option 2.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to prioritize Guideline J as a priority design guideline.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Ruane abstaining, to incorporate additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance summarized:

- Upper zone of building should have more of a setback
- Enhanced gap and additional coordination between the building and 53 Broadway to ensure spacing is okay with the neighbors
- A gate or other mechanism should be installed between the building and 53 Broadway
- Incorporate more variation into retail storefronts
- The garage door should fit within the building design
- Logic of façade verticals should have a clear pattern and should have more dynamism at street level
- Clarification of brick articulation on piers as it turns the corner

**RESULT:**

**RECOMMENDED**

Member Arbaugh rejoined the meeting.

Member Valdes excused himself from the meeting early, after confirming there would be a quorum for the remaining cases.

### **PUBLIC MEETING: 620 Broadway (P&Z 21-145)**

The applicant team presented the site context, site plan, façade options with three storefronts, materiality choices, floor plan, as well as the landscaping plan, bike parking, and employee amenity area for the proposed one-story commercial building.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the proposed stamped concrete and permeable pavers with regards to accessibility, the sustainability goals of the project and the materials that would support those goals, the façade options and if there is an opportunity to open up the fence in the back of the building to view the trains going by, the lack of attention to the façade to the right of the café space and how that façade can be better integrated into the design, if there is an opportunity to add additional street trees, how the applicant team is reducing the curb cuts and proposing no parking or loading dock, and the heat-treated window film color and texture.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend the preferred façade option 1.

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Ruane, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to incorporate additional design guidance.

Additional design guidance summarized:

- Confirm that the chosen stamped concrete is compliant with ADA standards
- Better integrate the façade where people congregate outside of the café to ensure those spaces feel incorporated into the design, including the pavement in that area
- Add one more street tree along Broadway, if possible
- Work with PSUF on the relationship of the outdoor café space with adjacent open civic space lot

**RESULT:**

**RECOMMENDED**

### **OTHER BUSINESS: 3-5 Hawkins (P&Z 20-021) – Material Board Review**

*(continued from 8 March 2022)*

The applicant team presented higher quality renderings of the proposed materials for the building façade.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the possibility of exploring mitered detailing at the bays on the corners, how the applicant should aim to use good quality materials to prevent the building from looking cheap, and the brick selection and how the two options feel incompatible.

*NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at [planning@somervillema.gov](mailto:planning@somervillema.gov).*