



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: ZBA 2019-85
Date: September 4, 2019
Recommendation: Conditional approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 31 Woodbine Street

Applicant Name: Fly Together Fitness
Applicant Address: 50 Hardy Avenue, Watertown, MA 02472
Owner Name: Rail and Glass, LLC
Owner Address: 55 Maple Street, Wenham, MA 01984
Agent Name: Angela Guo
Agent Address: 193 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446
City Councilor: Mark Niedergang

Legal Notice: Applicant, Fly Together Fitness, and Owner, Rail and Glass, LLC, seek a special permit under SZO §7.11.6.3.a to establish a commercial exercise facility in one of the storefronts of the newly constructed building. A special permit for parking relief under SZO §9.13 is also being sought. RC Zone. Ward 5. **After publication of this legal advertisement, it has been determined that a special permit for parking relief is not required.*

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – September 4, 2019

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is comprised of two parcels that total 22,985 square feet. The site is split zoned. The 6,347 square foot lot is in the Residence A district and the 16,651 square foot lot is in the Residence C district. Forty feet of the property is located on Lowell Street and the rest of the site fronts on Woodbine Street, which is a private way.

In February 2016, the ZBA approved (Case ZBA 2013-79) approved a proposal to demolish the existing structure and construct 3 buildings on the site with a total of 22 dwelling units, 2 commercial spaces, 31 parking spaces and 29 bicycle spaces.



2. Proposal: The proposal is to occupy the rear commercial space that faces Woodbine Street with a fitness studio. The proposed hours of operation are 6am to 10pm with classes anticipated to have between 2 to 12 persons per class.

3. Green Building Practices: None listed on the application form.

4. Comments:

City Councilor: Councilor Niedergang is happy to see one of the storefronts become occupied and has no objections to the proposal.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §7.11.6.3.a):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied:

The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: *The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."*

Article 7: Permitted Uses

SZO §7.11.6.3.a requires commercial exercise facilities under 5,000 square feet in the RC district to obtain a special permit.

Article 9: Off-street Parking and Loading

Existing retail	Proposed fitness studio
1 space per 425 n.s.f	1 space per 4 persons based on occupancy capacity of the largest assembly area
796/425=1.87	12 occupants expected in exercise area/4=3
2 spaces (rounded up from 1.87)	3 spaces

The proposed fitness studio use has a higher parking requirement than the previously approved retail space. Per SZO 9.4.1, when there is a change in use with no change in floor area and if the new use is calculated to require one more parking space, than no additional parking shall be required. **A special permit for parking relief is not required.**

3. Consistency with Purposes: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."*

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to encourage the

most appropriate use of land throughout the City; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the RC district, which is, “to establish and preserve a district for multi-family residential and other compatible uses which are of particular use and convenience to the residents of the district.”

4. Site and Area Compatibility: *The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The building on Lowell Street is compatible in scale with the newly constructed building at 235 Lowell Street and triple deckers on Lowell Street. The multi-family building has a large floorplate like many of the industrial buildings in the area. The third floor is setback so that it is not perceived on Woodbine Street. The VNA behind the site is at a higher elevation so the third floor will be visible but the overall building will appear lower in height from that building. The two-family house is 2 ½ stories to be compatible with the residential neighborhood that begins at the edge of this property.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The proposed fitness studio will not alter the design of the previously approved building. It will include a small sign applied to the main door.

5. Housing Impact: Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing. The development will directly increase affordable housing because two units will be deed restricted affordable units and there will be a fractional payout to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

6. SomerVision Plan: Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan, including the following, as appropriate: Preserve and enhance the character of Somerville’s neighborhoods.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under SZO §7.11.6.3.a:

Based on the materials submitted by the Applicant, the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes
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1	Approval is to establish a fitness studio. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.									
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date (Stamp Date)</th> <th>Submission</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>August 1, 2019</td> <td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>January 5, 2017</td> <td>Plans (1-A1.1, 1-A2.1, AS1.0)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 31, 2019</td> <td>Proposed signage rendering</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	August 1, 2019	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	January 5, 2017	Plans (1-A1.1, 1-A2.1, AS1.0)	July 31, 2019	Proposed signage rendering
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July 31, 2019	Proposed signage rendering											
Any changes to the approved elevations/use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
Construction Impacts												
2	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.									
3	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P									
Public Safety												
4	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau's requirements.	CO	FP									
Signage												
5	Signage will be limited in size and location to that shown in the elevation diagrams and lighting after 10p.m. facing residential property will be turned down or off.	CO/Cont.	Plng.									
Final Sign-Off												
6	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.									

