



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

The City of Somerville Design Review Committee held a public meeting on **Wednesday, May 9, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.** in the **Aldermanic Chambers, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA**

The purpose of the meeting was to review and make recommendations on the following proposals:

1. Approval of Minutes/recommendations from the March 29, 2017 meeting

These minutes were approved.

2. 5 Middlesex Avenue (XMBLY):

a. The Project:

- i. Project Description: The Redevelopment of approximately 408,643 s.f of the site with approximately 1.5 million s.f. of pedestrian and transit-oriented mixed-use development that consists of five buildings including the existing 162,000 s.f. office building organized around a new central publicly accessible civic open space and framework on new roadways.
- ii. Applicant: CDNV Assembly, LLC.
- iii. Project Team: Ed Nardi, John Sullivan, and Andrew Aubach presented on the Project.
- iv. Project Highlights by the Project Team:
 1. Block 21 will have a building lobby and active uses/retail to activate the pedestrian link to/from the T and Kensington Underpass to East Somerville.
 2. Building height – 250' tallest like Partners building
 3. Residential located further from highway and parcel size was well suited to multi-family use.
 4. 20% of +/- 300 total units are affordable. 20 units are 3 bedroom; others are 1 or 2 bedroom. Unit mix led to programming for family/children; large parks (Baxter and Draw 7) have athletic and active uses.
 5. Block 26 is commercial building at corner of Mystic and Revolution. Some internal parking but is considered transit-oriented and could be a hotel with shared parking.
 6. Elevation level set above floodplain and grove with wall to filter air pollutants.
 7. 1600 total spaces with a podium but articulated as building elevation so it is open for ventilation. Mechanical ventilation for garage is a large cost.

b. DRC Comments:

- i. Connectivity: *The Applicant should incorporate greater pedestrian and bike connectivity and access for streets within the Project.*
 1. Foley Street is important to larger connections, and so there should be a dedicated lane on Foley Street for bikes.
 2. Bike lanes should be striped on all new streets, because this would be consistent with the larger design goals of Assembly Square.
 3. The Applicant should consider mid-block crossing at Road L across Grand Union because this is a major connection point.
- ii. Buildings:
 1. The DRC is comfortable with the overall disposition of buildings and streets insofar as the Applicant has designed buildings and landscape to block highway particulates.
 2. The Applicant should upgrade the entries and façades of existing buildings wrapping the central lawn.
 3. DRC encourages the Applicant to expand more modern styles at the edges of Assembly Square.
 4. **The Applicant needs to provide** DRC with greater architectural detail – especially at Block 23 – so that the DRC can see how the Applicant will bring the exterior of the buildings down to a pedestrian scale.
 5. **The Applicant needs to verify** that the Fire Station as proposed can be integrated into the building, and that it can be accommodated from a building code standpoint.
- iii. Parking:
 1. The DRC finds that the proposed 4-story parking podium, with open facades, will be detrimental to the pedestrian experience at street level. Precedent imagery demonstrating successful implementation of this idea **needs to be provided to the DRC.**
 2. **The Applicant needs to provide** DRC with analytical diagrams showing where parking is exposed at the façade versus screened by programming.
- iv. Sustainability:
 1. The DRC requested confirmation from the Applicant that the performance thresholds will be refined for resiliency issues with each SPSR.
- v. Open Space:
 1. **The Applicant needs to provide** DRC with further details regarding the use of the Open Space, and how the use of the space will be programmed and determined in the future with City’s Transportation and Infrastructure parks.
 2. The DRC expects that the art be locally sourced or produced from local artists.

Other Business

There was no other business.

NOTICE: While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided in these minutes, do not rely on this information as the complete and accurate portrayal of the events in the meeting without first checking with the Planning Division staff. If any discrepancies exist, the decisions filed by the Board serve as the relevant record for each case. The Planning Division also maintains audio recordings of most Board meetings that are available upon request.