

Virtual Neighborhood Meeting

28-44 Broadway, Somerville

August 4, 2020 7pm

Sign in List

Ben Rogan – Owner

Sean ODonovan – Project Attorney

Bill White – City Councilor

Rebecca Cooper – Senior Planner City of Somerville

Phil Sima – Project Architect – Balance Architects

Bill OConnell – 9 Mt Vernon

Mike OConnell – 9 Mt Vernon

Jim OLeary – 9 Mt Vernon

Jesse Musse – 25 Mt Pleasant St

Devon Musse – 25 Mt Pleasant St

Elio LoRusso – 11 George St

Toni Brogna – 21 Mt Vernon St

Lael Kassis – 4 George St

Adi Nochur – Austin St

Barbara Castro – Mt Vernon St

Matt McLaughlin – 28 Mt Vernon St

Mary Jo Rosetti – City Councilor

Greg Demerjian – Project General Contractor

Scott Anderson – Project General Contractor

Ellin Reisner – Mt Vernon St

Meeting Discussion

Rebecca Cooper – Ward Planner for the project introduces the project and explains the required process.

Sean ODonovan – introduces the project team and states that the project team is seeking a new approval for the previously approved project under the new zoning.

Phil Sima – gives an overview of the location and describes the various elements of the design and presents the changes from the previously approved project. States that the building is fully compliant with the MR6 zoning.

Chat Room Notes

19:13:34 From Mary's iPhone : Mary Anderson 13 Mount Vernon Street

19:16:51 From Rebecca : Somervillezoning.com for the text of the Ordinance, and the Development Review tab has further information. If you have comments, you can email them to planning@somervillema.com with the address of the project in the subject line

19:31:34 From Mary E. Anderson : How do you plan to mitigate traffic. Even without these additional 26 or so parking spaces there are days I cannot even get into or out of my driveway.

19:32:01 From Mary E. Anderson : on Mount Vernon Street

19:34:32 From Maria R. : What are plans for both large construction vehicles and worker's vehicles during construction? Will this spill over to side streets, or will the construction vehicles be parked on Broadway at the site? -Maria Read, Lincoln Street

Sean ODonovan – we will do everything we can to keep vehicles on site and that there will be a Construction Management Plan that will be submitted and approved by the City prior to Construction.

19:34:48 From Ellin Reisner : the volume of traffic on Mt. Vernon is high. According to city data there are at least 5000 cars on Mt. Vernon and that is why the traffic backs up at Broadway.

19:35:48 From Adi Nochur : Adi Nochur from Austin Street here. Can you provide more details on 1) the planned streetscape improvements; 2) affordability for the retail/commercial spaces?

Retail is committed to fitting in to the neighborhood. We are going to keep existing healthy trees and that we will integrate new landscaping and allowing for permeable pavers for outside seating on both ends of the building. Will relocate the BlueBike station to directly in front of the building. Phil described the various landscaping improvements.

19:37:06 From Adi Nochur : Also, are there any plans for Spanish language presentations and translations of materials?

Sean ODonovan – something we can do

20:00:15 From William OConnell : I can't determine the new buffer distance between the building and 9 mt Vernon.

5' path and then a 5' landscape edge on the lower levels. On levels 4 and up the setback is 30'.

20:02:31 From Devon and Jesse Moos : what was the unit break down previously (studios, 1 br, 2 br) in the prior plans versus the new plans? do you mind walking us through that?

20:02:52 From Lael Kassis : Will there be a screen for the transformer on 4 George? Will there be any noise cancellation for the air conditioners and transformers

20:03:52 From Lael Kassis : How will trash pickup be handled for the building?

Rodent Control Concerns

- The Owner has taken a very aggressive approach to rodent control to include frequent baiting of poison and also the implementation of rat dogs used in the elimination of rats.

20:05:38 From Mary E. Anderson : I am concerned about the rodents that are in the currently in the buildings. What are the plans to prevent infestation in the neighborhood when the demolition begins?

20:10:59 From Devon and Jesse Moos : I think William has a question

20:11:33 From Mary E. Anderson : Will this PowerPoint be available on the City of Somerville website?

20:14:09 From Lael Kassis : Thank you for the presentation. I need to leave but appreciate the information

20:16:59 From Mary E. Anderson : Thank you for listening to our concerns.

20:17:19 From Bill : I have a question

Topics discussed by attendees

Lael Kassis

- Was concerned about the location of the residential entrance. He was happy to learn that the main residential entrance to the building will be located on Broadway not on George St.
- Concerned about vehicular traffic down George St exiting the building and asked if the team had considered a drive-thru through the building (entering on George St and exiting on Mt Vernon St)
- This concept was explored and presented to the City and the City was not in support of vehicles exiting onto Mt Vernon St into the traffic stacked at the intersection of Mt Vernon and Broadway
- Asked for a projected start date. Demolition is scheduled to begin in October.
- Asked if the project could potential

Jesse Moos

- Spoke in support of the project. He was glad to hear that the design has included a 6th floor.
- Mr Moos stated that the project will be really beneficial to the neighborhood.
- Mr Moos stated that we have had our 5th or 6th meeting on this project and that he wants to make sure that the project gets off the ground and gets going.

Mary Jo Rosetti – City Councilor

- Suggested that we review the comments in the Chat Room

Mary Anderson – 13 Mt Vernon St

- Concerned about people cutting down Mt Vernon St to get to I-93

Ellin Reisner – 51 Mt Vernon St

- This building will not have a lot of parking for residents, it is a transit oriented development and she expects that it will not have a lot of people driving to and from the building during rush hour.
- Ellin likes the new design. It will be so nice to have an attractive building here other than the currently vacant buildings. It will be good for the neighborhood and will block a lot of the air pollution coming from the highway

Sean ODonovan – Phil Sima

- The building will be held by the Rogan family. Ben will be around the building actively managing the property which will be a rental. It is expected that the majority of the traffic that will come to the site will be on foot and on bicycle. People attracted to the building will most likely not have cars.
- We will be conducting a Mobility Management Plan which will study traffic patterns around the building and it's affects on the surrounding neighborhood. We will implement suggestions and findings.

Elio LoRusso

- Mr LoRusso agreed that not many people are driving these days and are using bicycles but there is no guarantee that will not be a traffic surge coming down George St.
- Mr LoRusso stated that he was not ever against the project but that he is worried about the design and that it is not a good fit for the neighborhood.

Lael Kassis

- Is there any reason why the parking entrance is not located on Broadway.
- Parking entrance in and off of Broadway seems like the best solution

Sean ODonovan/Rebecca Cooper

- Stated that code does not allow a curb cut on Broadway
- Review Boards are not inclined to grant variances except under exceptional hardship

Jesse Moos/Devon Moos

- Asked if it is possible for this building to have no parking

Mary Anderson/Elio LoRusso

- Let's ask for a variance for parking entrance off of Broadway

Sean ODonovan

- Asking for a variance is out of the question, not something that we want to pursue

Matt McLaughlin

- Easiest solution is to not have parking. Residents of the building will not be allowed to obtain parking permits. We are trying to attract people to the neighborhood who do not have cars.

Elio LoRusso

- That sounds great. If we can figure that out we're on the path to breaking ground.
- Mr LoRusso is concerned about the contamination and the back wall of his building.

Sean ODonovan

- Mr Rogan will remediate the contamination and is available to meet re: Elio's wall

Mike OConnell

- We have talked about the traffic now at a few meetings. Mr OConnell doesn't see 26 cars being a problem. Not all cars will leave at the same time

Virtual Neighborhood Meeting #2/3

28-44 Broadway, Somerville

January 25, 2021 7pm

[Sign in List](#)

Ben Rogan – Owner

Bill White – City Councilor

Rebecca Cooper – Senior Planner City of Somerville

Phil Sima – Project Architect – Balance Architects

Bill OConnell – 9 Mt Vernon

Jim OLeary – 9 Mt Vernon

Jesse Moos – 25 Mt Pleasant St

Devon Moos – 25 Mt Pleasant St

Toni Brogna – 21 Mt Vernon St

Lael Kassis – 4 George St

Adi Nochur – Austin St

Barbara Castro – Mt Vernon St

Matt McLaughlin – 28 Mt Vernon St

Marty Scott

Elisabeth Davis

Karen Spinali

Arton Tutter

Kat

Marty Scott

Jennifer Atwood

May Anderson

Tori Antonio

May Auduon

Monica Wang

Cory Mian – Austin St

Meeting Discussion

Rebecca Cooper – Ward Planner for the project introduces the project and explains the required process in the MR6 district. Ms. Cooper stated that the project requires a Special Permit.

Phil Sima – gives an overview of the location and describes the various elements of the design and presents the changes from the previously approved project. States that the building is fully compliant with the MR6 zoning.

Chat Room Notes

0:11:26 Cory Mian: i'm confused why a special permit is needed for residential use in a MR district?

00:23:46 Cory Mian: loving the at grade bike parking.

00:26:02 Lael: Is there a rendering or view from George street?

00:34:08 matthewmclaughlin: I have to run to a school committee meeting.

00:54:56 Cory Mian: I need to go tag into bedtime for my kiddos. thanks, everyone for a great meeting. i'm looking forward to see this project move forward as soon as possible.

00:58:42 Tori Antonino: Rat terriers work! Wow

01:05:13 Jennifer Atwood: Thank you for the meeting! Have a good night!

Topics discussed by attendees

Karen Spinali

- Wanted to make sure that a gate will be installed to prevent people from hanging out behind the building.
 - Mr. Rogan agreed to install a gate at the rear of the property to prevent loitering.

Cory Mian

- Stated that the building looks great. Asked if there would be bike parking at grade. Also wanted to understand the permitting process.

William Oconnell

- Stated that he likes the new building.

Matt McLaughlin

- Mr. McLaughlin stated that he would like to see the building not have any parking.
 - The drawings currently include 26 residential spots, a portion of which will be adapted for charging electric vehicles.

Barbara Castro

- Ms. Castro stated that she is in favor of the design. She stated that the developer has done a great job working with the neighbors. Overall, she is very happy with the design.
- Barbara stated that the process to procure the permits for the project is taking way too long.

Jeese Moos

- Mr. Moos asked what area the commercial tenants would use as a loading zone.
 - Mr. Rogan informed him that deliveries would be curbside or take place in the garage.
- Mr. Moos inquired about the projected construction schedule.
 - Mr. Rogan replied that this will be a 24-month development period and demolition is anticipated to start this winter.
- Jeese stated that the project has his full support.

Jennifer Atwood

- Stated that the project has her full support.
- Ms. Atwood stated the neighborhood needs to be revitalized and that this project was an important step. Looking forward to seeing the project get started.

Lael Kassis

- Mr. Kassis asked about the duration of construction, specifically in regards to noise concerns.
 - Mr. Rogan stated that the construction schedule will be distributed to residents via email or access to the project website.
- Lael also expressed concern for the preservation of existing trees, especially matured trees, and air and noise pollution.
 - Mr. Rogan responded saying his team is working with researchers at Tufts to minimize factors of environmental degradation and pollution.

Tori Antonio

- Ms. Antonio voiced concern regarding the zoning requirements of new versus existing tree pits on the sidewalk.
 - Mr. Sima confirmed that the development team is working closely with the city arborists regarding urban landscaping.

Karen Spinali

- Ms. Spinali reiterated her request to include a 6' gate and wanted to know what will be done about the rat infestation/rodent issue in the area.
 - City Councilor White assured her that demolition permit approval pends on an adequate rodent control plan.

Corey Mian

- Corey inquired about special permitting and residential versus commercial regulations.
 - Councilor White and Ward Planner Cooper answered her questions.

Mike OConnell

- Mr. OConnell asked which street the utilities would be coming from.
 - Mr. Rogan responded by saying utility plans have not yet been drawn.

Monica Wang

- Ms. Wang asked if vertical green vines could be planted to grow on the façade of the building.

Tori Antonio

- Tori also expressed interest in the green score of the building and wanted to know how green materials, native plant species, and green roofs fit into the score.
 - Mr. Rogan stated that he does not intend to have vines growing on the building to preserve structural integrity but will evaluate different environmentally-benefitting factors to help the building achieve LEED certification.

Monica Wang

- Monica supported Ms. Antonio's appeal for a green roof and thought it would be an innovative and progressive design feature for Somerville.
- Ms. Wang also had concerns about rats.
 - Mr. Rogan shared a potential solution involving bringing dogs to the site which are trained to hunt and kill vermin.

Lael Kassis

- Mr. Kassis raised attention to groundwater table levels. He stated another project in the area caused flooding in his basement in the past and would not like to have this happen again.
 - Mr. Rogan ensured Lael the design and construction team will be working closely with Mass DEP to prevent disturbing the natural water table.

Ben Rogan

- Mr. Rogan emphasized his team's priority to provide adequate vibration monitoring in the area and offered pre-construction evaluations for residents with concerns.
 - Karen Spinali stated interest in having this done for her property.

Rebecca, Bill, and Ben provided their contact information for further questions.