



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Auditorium, Somerville High School, 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA
Thursday, June 13, 2019
6:00 P.M.
Gerard Amaral was absent

Previously Opened Cases Continued to a Future Date

176-182 Broadway (PB 2017-22)	
Applicant:	Yihe Patsy's Corporation
Property Owner:	Yihe Patsy's Corporation
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo
Legal Notice:	Applicant and Owner, Yihe Patsy's Corporation, seeks a Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) to construct a 26-unit mixed-use building with commercial space along the street frontage and residences above. CCD-55 zone. Ward 1.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	6/21, 8/23, 10/4, 11/8, 11/29, 12/13, 1/9, 1/24, 2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/21, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional approval
PB Action:	Voted on May 16, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Current Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

346 Somerville Avenue (PB 2019-08):	
Applicant:	346 Somerville Avenue, LLC
Property Owner:	Palmac Realty Corp
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo
Legal Notice:	Applicant, 346 Somerville Avenue, LLC, and Owner, Palmac Realty Corp, seek Special Permits and Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) to construct a 100-unit residential structure with inclusionary housing. SZO sections and articles including §4.4.1, §8.5, §7.11, Article 9, Article 13. CCD55 zone. Ward 2.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	3/7, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on June 6, 2019 to continue the application to June 20, 2019.
Current Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

300 Somerville Avenue (PB 2018-21):	
Applicant:	Elan Sassoon
Property Owner:	300 Somerville Avenue, LLC
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo
Legal Notice:	Applicant, Elan Sassoon, and Owner, 300 Somerville Avenue, LLC, seek Special Permits, Special Permit with Design Review and Special Permit with Site Plan Review to convert an existing church structure to 10 residential units with first floor commercial through the internal re-configuration of existing space and construction of additions/Gross Floor Area. Relief under SZO §4.4.1, 7.11, Article 9 and Article 13. CCD-55 zone. Ward 2.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	3/21, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	No recommendation at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on June 6, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Current Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

57 Broadway: (PB 2018-08):	
Applicant:	Centrie Realty, LLC
Property Owner:	Centrie Realty, LLC
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo
Legal Notice:	Applicant and Owner, Centrie Realty, LLC, seek Special Permits to alter a non-conforming property. The existing structure will be demolished and a new building with three residential units and ground floor retail will be constructed. Parking relief. Articles 4, 5, 7, 8, & 9 of the SZO. CCD45. Ward 1.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional approval
PB Action:	Voted on June 6, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Case Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

114-120 Broadway: (PB 2019-13):	
Applicant:	Goodfood Restaurant Group, LLC
Property Owner:	Goodfood Restaurant Group, LLC
Agent:	Sean O'Donovan
Legal Notice:	Applicant and Owner, Goodfood Restaurant Group, LLC, seek a Special Permit with Site Plan Review (SPSR) under §5.2 of the SZO to replace a one-story building with a 5-story mixed-use building (+/- 4,000square feet ground floor retail and 39 residential units on floors 2-5). Inclusionary units provided under Article 13of the SZO and parking relief under article 9 of the SZO. CCD45. Ward 1.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional approval
PB Action:	Voted on June 6, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Case Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

434 McGrath Hwy (PB 2014-23-R1-4/19):	
Applicant:	Somerville Comedy Group, LLC
Property Owner:	Prospect Commons, LLC
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo
Legal Notice:	Applicant, Somerville Comedy Group, LLC, and Owner, Prospect Commons, LLC, seek a revision to a previously approved special permit (PB 2014-23) under SZO §5.3.8 to change a previously approved ground floor retail use into a comedy club and for parking relief under SZO §9.13. CCD-45 Zone. Ward 3.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional Approval
PB Action:	Voted on June 6, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Case Status:	Continued to June 20, 2019.

Previously Opened Cases That Will Be Heard:

10-50 Prospect Street (PB 2019-03)	
Applicant:	Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC
Property Owner:	The City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Agent:	N/A
Legal Notice:	Applicant, Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC and Owners, the City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, seek Design & Site Plan Review under SZO §5.4 and SZO §6.8 to create an alley on Block D2 (as identified in the Union Square Revitalization Plan and the Union Square Neighborhood Plan) as proposed in the previously approved Coordinated Development Special Permit. TOD 100 and CCD 55-C underlying zoning district. Union Square Overlay District and CC7, HR, and MR4 sub districts. Ward 2.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on June 13, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Minutes:	Greg Karczewski, US2, 31 Union Square, provided a Union Square Revitalization presentation to the Planning Board.

10 Prospect Street (PB 2019-04)	
Applicant:	Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC
Property Owner:	The City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Agent:	N/A
Legal Notice:	Applicant, Union Square RELP Master Developer LLC and Owners, the City of Somerville and the Somerville Redevelopment Authority, seek Design & Site Plan Review under SZO §5.4 and SZO §6.8 to construct a commercial building on Block D2 (as identified in the Union Square Revitalization Plan and the Union Square Neighborhood Plan) as proposed in the previously approved Coordinated Development Special Permit. TOD 100 underlying zoning district. Union Square Overlay District and CC7 sub district. Ward 2.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/13
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on June 13, 2019 to continue to June 20, 2019.
Minutes:	Greg Karczewski, US2, 31 Union Square, provided a Union Square Revitalization presentation to the Planning Board.

The following discussion occurred after Mr. Karczewski’s presentation.

Michael Capuano: practical use on 33k sf of proposed open space? Does 33k sf include potential open space of city fields or no? The area described as urban plaza, were you likening that to Harvard Square, the Green Way, etc. As I think of those spaces, those are substantially larger and further away from street use than it looks like where the civic space would be. When I think of how I use Davis or Harvard sq., seems like from the renderings, I’ll be sitting next to cars. What kind of barriers between the spaces. How do you envision it being used. How big does it sit? The greenway. Nobody is using the perimeter, it’s deep and it seems to be much bigger in scope.

GK: No it does not include that. –as we look at those they’re unique. Part of what we’re intending to create is sizable separate (vertical, horizontal) separated. The northern third of that is narrower, but it’s still gracious in size. There are many examples of outdoor seating against roadways. A lot of those don’t have the benefits of the open space. 2/3 of the space benefits from the other considerations as it gets broader. It becomes more of a path of travel than it does to congregate.

MC: This Board—outdoor open space air quality, etc. issues from previous projects. They did not have substantial amount of space. It is something on his mind. Also, is in written testimony they’ve received. Concerned about the Bennett street project. Are you considering that part of open space?

GK: It is part but it’s not part of civic space totals.

MC: when saw renderings, great. Small streets used as closed off and pedestrian use only. But then, curb cut and it’s going to be the access to where the garage will be. How do those two uses go together? He would love to see that not be used for vehicular traffic at all. If the intent is to go, why Bennet Street needs to be used as a thoroughfare at all with exception of emergency vehicles.

GK: Parking garage will enter from the rear. The rear would serve east but also for development. The main point of entry from garage. North have a variety of access points. Having optionality was viewed as being important.

MC: the last major point- open space along the tracks. Don’t hang out next to the tracks. Do people really want to congregate next to the train might come by. Commuter rail and not just the light rail. How far back will people be from trains going by? Usable open space next to a train track that people enjoy.



GK: The open space would be near a stop. Then noise, then as goes by. There's a potential to put a building against the tracks then green space further in, etc. We're trying to meet a number of objectives.

MC: how the City of Somerville moved Harris Park off of Mystic Avenue. It's something that's in my mind, if you can get it away from vehicles people will use it more and be healthy. Actual usability and safety concerns.

Dorothy Kelly Gay: Very pleased with presentation. It puts the whole thing into perspective. To see the placement of buildings. She is really excited about increase in open space. Concerned about civic space up against Prospect Street. When they were built nobody thought about pollution. I remember 30 years ago. That wasn't a consideration then. However it's a consideration now. Even now, with climate change. I would encourage people not to do that. It's good to put it out there. Encourage it to be more of a moving space. But not sure how to build a buffer. Encourage extra open space. The train reminds her about 30 years ago and the orange line coming through every few minutes. The noise pollution is going to be tough. How much enjoyment are you going to get? Overall, I'm really impressed. More consideration to civic space on Prospect Street. She is a health professional. That is her number one concern.

Joseph Favaloro: thanks for walking us through the vision. It's great that there's more open space, and green space but if it's not functional. It's a loss. With that, Page 4 in masterplan with 60 commercial 40 residential. How many of 1,500 parking spaces are underground?

DK: For all reasons, not any of them underground. What we've done is reduced the number of spaces. They've lined the garage. The investment is making great places with pedestrian streetscapes. That's the approach,

Amelia Aboff: Thank you for your presentation. The improvements show a response to the community reasons. Where are the lights going from north or south? They have a lighting program that's compliant with. After the retail was closed was a concern. Bike lane along the north south corridor and then turns into a bus lane. Circulation with the drop-off area adjacent to the civic and green space. Are you thinking about what the parking spaces will be in the future? Can they be converted into something else if there is no longer a need for them.

DKG: Getting back to question –clarify underground parking. Underground parking is not going to be a consideration?

GK: That is correct. We tested feasibility and given all other considerations all of those things weigh on the project. Especially with contamination and water.

MC: Making Bennett Court a pedestrian way. We don't think anyone is going to use the urban space on Prospect Street. Nobody is going to want to sit next to a line of cars and busses. The usable space is going to be along the tracks and amphitheater area. Have you considered taking d2 and d2 and twisting? Widen Bennet Court and make open space. It already looks like pedestrian way. That's where people want to use open space. Logically, our concerns is that's where people are going to want to be.

GK: Appreciate the thought. Spent a lot of time studying the site. A couple of things that come to mind. The entrance to the station. The idea that we can provide something at grade, and ADA access, that would become difficult to accomplish. The bridge. The solar orientation would make it difficult. With buffer we provide, alfresco dining all over. There has to be some balance.

DKG – I agree with you. My image of Prospect Street is cars and busses stopped ad traffic not moving that quickly. I don't want to inhale that. We know the damage. Is there anyway the Bennet Place is inviting. If that could be just pedestrian? That would be an oasis. You wouldn't have to move anything.

GK: We can look at that.

MC: where is the proposed entrance to the garage?

GK: It's on Milk Alley. You do not have to. Its only for optionality.

AA: if he came back from solution, not accessible during certain times of the day. Would that be a compromise?

MC: Want to hear from everyone that's there next week.

Jacob Kramer, Board Member of the Union Square Neighborhood Council: Housing labor permanent jobs, arts and creative space. We are awaiting their response. Among terms, we are not negotiating with overall health and safety around civic design and human health. Those are issues too big for a neighborhood council. We have asked multiple times the way design of spaces affect human health esp. with increasing. We are negotiating what you see here is not on our table.

Other Business

- Meeting Minute Approval
 - May 02, 2019 - Approved
 - May 15, 2019 - Approved
 - June 06, 2019 - Approved

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.