



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

Somerville High School Auditorium, 81 Highland Avenue
Thursday, September 26, 2019
6:00 P.M.

Other Business

Review and Adoption of the Davis Square Neighborhood Plan.

LDavis:

Happy that pages already in the new draft, draft has a heat map density, more sense than a zoning map

When zoning something like Davis, we uniformly hear we don't want to have giveaways to developers, need community benefits, if going to have more, have base and overlay

Need affordable housing, affordable commercial space, can use that in overlay rather than base, that is a tool we have

Need to zone for small businesses, suggested to DBartman that for places like this where what we love is small business zone to keep those, do away with formula

Conceptually want to see that in this document, 4 way intersection pictures out of there, was one idea, not intended to be plan, start with pedestrians and cyclists and work around that, if we design for the most vulnerable road users, then we can figure out traffic patterns

Dover Street shut down is the only way to make four way work, but that's not the way to stop, need to have a plan process

Stay plugged in, we will have our own process, are listening, tools that we can use to get satisfied that it will result in successful Davis Square



Hirsh agree with Davis

Niedergang: don't live and don't represent, read plan and see good things, heard from many about agree and object, in terms of zoning, one of the deciders on that, not prepared to support up-zoning square, should be some limited higher commercial, not sure where they are look forward to discussion, have to defer Davis in order to accept the zoning and have intense process next year,

Written comment will be open until noon on November 1st.

Jeff Burns – 294 Summer Street, in favor, speaks to life of square, like to enjoy the space, make more space for those things and expand out to get more, expand ability to do business there, make more opportunity to have more people in the square to support

Colleen Meckern, Elm Street, Davis Square: vehemently opposed to anything taller than what is already there, know that plan is different from zoning, but they are related, read from presentation, read from triple decker, priority on maintaining character of the street, not clear on how increase and maintain character, thanks for presentation, but doesn't include taller, tannery brook row, currently being built to 4 story, many that could be, not need to go to 5 6, or 8 discriminate on age, marital status

Jeff Keller, Meacham Road, neighbors upset about losing Johnny D's, upset about scape, about tall buildings in Davis, unhappy that was added late in process, like the things hearing tonight, believe the square can be improved even if I love it as it is, understand that people want more space in Davis, hope you don't change it, glad that horror scenario is Harvard, not Kendall, at least I can recognize what it was

A, strongly in favor of plan, at charrette, top things identified was afford housing and dealing with traffic, this does all, open to change, affordable housing crisis, with transit, this is responsible way to do that, maximize density in square, more work, more live, more jobs, only way to do is build more, plan is good on complete streets and vulnerable users, be more explicit about protected bike, don't wait on great ideas, do the loading and double parking now, if neighbors could see, would be more amenable

Lee, thank everyone three things I like – blind eye to the small businesses now open, serious about, second is Councilor Niedergang that support for freezing zoning at 4, move forward with overlay, three good things, remind that stakes are substantial, quarter of property within quarter mile of core, more than million sq feet to be developed, don't have to be hasty, don't have to be greedy, previous process justifies 5 and 6, current cap is 50 feet, 4 story mean 6 means 85 feet can stick with 30 right now and see what happens later

Nate Kauffman, 56 Gorham street, support for plan, city has tackled lot of important issues, regarding density, pro-density especially for affordable housing especially in Davis where unreasonable right now, complete streets plan does great to allocate to pedestrian, more parks, more cycling, priority bus lanes and signals, right now car oriented and dangerous, need to alleviate congestion, slow down, pedestrianize elm and dover, make enjoyable

Tom Lamont, chair of Somerville Bike, first aware in 2013, commute through every day, did not feel comfortable on street, most commute is lovely, but needs better through Davis, eventually heard about planning process happy to see connecting path through square plans, excited to see move forward, love to see advanced but more specific, more cycle parking, protected cycle lanes, need to extend along College Ave, mixing with traffic not safe, move strong support, move forward

Gregory Elly grew up here, very much in favor of up zoning, best to put in new housing without increasing traffic, glad to hear plans were not really plans, better connection for community path, like to see better bike infra on elm, highland, double parking makes dangerous and uncomfortable

Joe Devine working in Davis since 2001, live right in Davis, love it, amazing, lot of faces I know, lot of people I love, faces of Davis Square, people who make it what it is, want to thank all you all mean a lot to me, all of us here we made Davis a safe haven, 10 years ago that's how it was, 5 years ago how do you feel about being in the new



Brooklyn, that means a lot to me, just don't want to see Davis taken away, the heart, what it means to all of us here, let's not tear it down

Arial White 11 Hinkley, Davis Sq is a treasure, we love it, make sure people can enjoy it, make room on sidewalks for people to walk, priority for busses, choked with cars, difficult and scary to get around without a car, can't count how much time spend trying to get through, if serious about climate, have to make it more pleasant to get around without cars, let people live in Davis, know rents are rising, only going to get worse unless we fit in more housing somewhere, long term residents will be priced out will be bad for character more people on wider streets, like this plan, but whatever happens, will need a future square with less room for cars, more for people

Matthew Applegage 11 Hinkley St in favor of this plan, great vision, housing and transport, common tonight and always, bike to work every day from Magoun to Boston university, not afraid but one of the only places I don't like to bike is Davis, no infrastructure, rampant lawlessness, lots of entrances into intersection, can't track light cycles, do support vision of making places for everything but cars as it is now, in terms of people, something we all love, people need places to live, generally buildings, if you want more people, need more housing, increase density, shocked that this has been a 6 year process without much progress, time to get to work

Chris Iwerks, 8 Kingston Street new perspective not talked about yet, this process was biased from start in favor of taller buildings, center needs to grow up, but Davis square is tiny, all missed something, no analysis of three metrics, sq feet of commercial now, what is latent build out of potential if we keep now, what additional gain is available, existing plus latent is 2 million, 86 of possible is under 4 stories, have to go back and evaluate how to add without having street wall rise, preserve scale and character, follow example of Newburyport, not become Kendall 2.0

Alan Bingham 30 day street, know intimately, zoning can override this plan, zoning will have final say, have concerns about city property being used as incentive for commercial development, can't give away our property, square needs comprehensive maintenance, complete disrepair, needs to be addressed with detailed process documented in plan, Davis is on red line, naïve that makes this prime development, actually less commercial that what we have, reality check, we, Porter, Alewife are feeder for city, destination for local, no consideration for deliveries, blocking, if we go higher, more dense, will get clogged even worse, affordable business rentals, in order to keep small biz, need to make affordable rents to keep local, if we allow density will kill eclectic small biz, need to look at this and address, if we build out to 4 stories, when you look at it, have opportunity where it is, if we go to 6 stories, won't add more than 14%

Lived in Davis 40 years, tried to make Davis nice place it is today, request that change the plan immediately, get rid of 6th story, don't need it, who wants to live next to it? Only developer greed, have fought parking garages out, was changed, we will vote you out if you vote for this, totally eliminate from any plans, as far as the T goes, have problem with it as it is, has to get on the T and ride out to Alewife, too many people on the T already, do not need density, do not need crowding, had to stand on the T, we are at capacity, four stories is enough

Purchase Thorndike speaking for Harriet Ranvig, 5 Leister Terrace, 36 year resident, seen wide range of change in Davis, some has improved comfort and quality but not healthy proportional spread for all levels, development has and continues to drive out elder, and low income residents, M5 and M6 main gain and increase small business, which plan does, if any residential is built, not focus on student housing, proposed high rise ignores accessible and affordable housing for all levels of income, would like to offer that planning board is not elected body, doesn't have to take seriously our testimony, shown by FRIT vote

Dan Ehrlich: discussion of density, Somerville is already at 20k per sq mile, already most dense in state of Massachusetts, question our obligation to increase and destroy square in the process, in favor of cycle friendly and pedestrian friendly, but height is fundamentally important to character of square, been there 20 years, coming to Davis far more, such an unusual, rare place, character of small town in the city, can't find that other places in Boston, home grown businesses with real character, that's what we mean, authenticity, small town feel, makes us feel human, if we allow 6 story, big money will come in, and there's no need for it, population wants to preserve core, authenticity of small scale, units will do nothing to affordability but will destroy character of precious gem

Emily Warren, 77 Highland, 8 times a day through square, commend city staff for great plan, appreciate focus on identifying what is special ad build while making better for vitality of street space for pedestrians, cyclists, transit,



even if this plan locked in place Davis, we could not preserve it in amber, cities are living organisms, if we do nothing to add additional capacity, will just become more unaffordable and it will change anyway because people won't be able to afford, have to include responsible density, echo Tom Lamar, on protected cycle and connectivity for community path, difficult to get from one site of square to another, parking max not min

Alex Freeman: in favor of plan, simplifying intersection will mean not choosing between and get safer with higher throughput, no more road capacity, more people want to live here, jobs are not moving outward, coming inward, in favor of closing elm and dover, chance to build common green space for next century, be creative, 900k number was pretty scary, don't have that money and most people don't, need more affordable options

Jeffrey Race: family lived half a century, involved more than 50 years, was involved in this document, endorse this document, bikes, important to me, researched how to improve connectivity, submitted proposal, need to sit on it, if you decide to do it can be done on a weekend, increase in building height, procedural defect in process, have to document evidence, neighborhood is happy now, proposal for change has a burden of proof, absent right now, talk about consultant, those people benefit, will benefit strangers, not familiar, also process of devolution, Davis Sq degraded to support larger vision, other places this thing could be done proposal should be totally repudiated, some places have made decision about building height, no reason not to do in Davis

Susan Fendel 39 Simpson avenue, submitted written testimony on behalf of self and neighbors, may be nice things, vehemently opposed to increase in building heights, at city council meeting said that there was no 5 or 6 story height limit by right, has to go through planning board, but there is not a reason to put faith in that process, assembly square, ability to "slime out" of providing affordable housing dispute, can't rely on process, affordable housing in general, no reason to believe that big development will provide any meaningful development, will increase prices, local business can't survive the construction process, even if there is a hold in place, can't afford to move, have customers find them, and move back, unlikely that they will be able to afford to move back without rent control, nice to ban chain stores but new stores won't be able to afford

Rosemary Broom Bingham talk about traffic, images shown create wonderful vision but traffic crossing is heavy, show open plaza, but deceptive, if you superimpose trucks and cars, would be very different, if you raise building heights, trees will die in the canyon, more thought on traffic issue, plan doesn't specify where cut through traffic will be converted to, what is proposed solution? Would be wonderful to see Davis as pedestrian, join up the community path, limit trucks, that's the type of Davis square that would support thriving activity center, affordable business along with

Steven Mackey, Chamber of Commerce: born and raised in Somerville, familiar with Davis all my life, the inhabitants of the city of Somerville shall continue to be a municipal corporation under the name of the city of Somerville, don't need government to have a community, to remain civilized, work through apparatus of municipal charter, the chamber of commerce recognizes the power of the neighborhood, Urban Land Institute had conference in Boston, went on bus tours, first place to stop was Davis, Somerville Theater, established principles that we start with, bring transit, showed them a good time emporium, most densely populated in New England, we need urban quality of life to maintain that, support tax base, smaller than any other city, need to have the development and transit, people will come for dining and nightlife, urban resurgence brain power and transit, more of a tax base, city tax base as grown, done using principles used in Davis 20 years ago, business community believes, and appreciate commitment to small biz, like to look forward to working together to solve complex issue of being a municipal coordination with urban quality of life

Amy Rochelle, 11 College Ave, noise and pollution as it stands today, living here since 1996, with current building have to keep windows shut because of smell of auto body shop, and a night because of sweeping and dumpster emptying, have not done a good job having business be good neighbors have to consider how people living in square will

Larry Yew, appreciate difference between plan and zoning, can't help but point out connection, watched hearing last week, comments that Davis made, change in was made from process of community plan, intent wasn't for that comment to be made, I don't recall that emerging from any of the processes that I was involved in, how did that emerge? Appreciate the responsiveness in adding elements for small biz, have some professional experience in them



so fondness, looked at zoning, overlay includes small biz overlay, struck me that intent was to displace into corridors,

John Amaral between Davis and Powderhouse, watching foot traffic on college for 40 years, since 1980, what I have noticed is to go back and look at, implicit idea that there are people, I remember much denser on College Ave, more numbers than now, think there are less people than people believe, wish you had hard numbers, but seems like if you build it they will come, density and demand are less. Traffic in Davis, it's bad we know that, but traffic laws are not enforced, serves narrative that there is a problem, so do something about that, could be improved now. Thought about zoning, seems that the idea not part of the discussion, do away with RB is a mistake, driving pressure on Davis to do more development, depression of development in places where there could be, RB was instituted to take pressure off and have more even distribution bad idea to do away with,

Cypress Franken? Lived there for 5.5 years, commuted via red line, bus, bike, red line is best experience bike is worst, in favor of connecting community path and protected bike lanes, not mentioned specifically, would like to see more wording about specifics of separation, in favor of small businesses any change to protect would be good, have four roommates and three downstairs neighbors, only one has car, would benefit us a lot to encourage place for people on foot, people

George Oshay, freeze zoning as it is, want slightly more jobs than housing, need to have lots more, housing taxes won't pay for community benefits, need people to be there during the week and during the day, need places for people to work in Somerville, dormitory square for people to go to Boynton Yards, not be very lively

Meredith Porter, great to see turn out given lack of proper notice, first learned last week, only mentioned coincidentally, looked for notices online not in city calendar, only comply with 48 hour, newspapers didn't mention as event, don't know how everyone learned of it, past presentations were postponed at last minute, few concerns, haven't been involved looking at density in Davis is problem, 5 6 story in heart is problem ,better outside of square, special 'hipness' was talking with friend, buildings that tall would feel unsafe to her, that height in the square would change character, deeply concerned about affordable housing but dorm in Davis would be inappropriate needs more consideration, but appreciate hard wok, also when look at way sites are ranked, more development perspective with economic ranks not character, hard to put in numbers

Cases Previously Continued to a Future Date:

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, 6/20, 7/11 (re-advertised), 8/8, 8/22, 9/4, 9/19
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.
Case Status:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.



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):	2018: 6/21, 8/23, 10/4, 11/8, 11/29, 12/13 2019: 1/9, 1/24, 2/7, 2/21, 3/7, 3/21, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16, 6/6, 6/20, 7/11 (re-advertised), 8/8, 9/4, 9/19
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.
Current Status:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.

346 Somerville Avenue (PB 2019-08)	
Applicant:	346 Somerville Avenue, LLC
Property Owner:	Palmac Realty Corp
Agent:	Richard G. DiGirolamo, Esq.
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, 6/20, 7/11 (re-advertised), 8/8, 8/22, 9/4, 9/19
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional approval
PB Action:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.
Current Status:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.

1060 Broadway (PB 2016-79-R1-7/19)	
Applicant:	Powderhouse Living, LLC
Property Owner:	Powderhouse Living, LLC
Agent:	N/A
Legal Notice:	Applicant & Owner, Powderhouse Living, LLC, seek revisions to a previously-issued special permit by making changes to the building's facades. §6.7 and §5.3.8 of the SZO. PRD zone. Ward 7.
Date(s) of Hearing(s):	9/19
Staff Recommendation:	None at this time.
PB Action:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.
Case Status:	Voted on September 19, 2019 to continue to October 3, 2019.

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.

