



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SOMERVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR**

NANCY A. BUSNACH
CHAIR

MINUTES

Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
3rd Floor Conference Room, City Hall
93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA

Present from the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA): Nancy Busnach (Chair), Iwona Bonney (Secretary), William Gage, and Phil Ercolini. Also present were Eileen McGettigan as Special Counsel, Thomas Galligani as Director of Economic Development, George Proakis as Executive Director of OSPCD and Sunayana Thomas as Senior Economic Development Planner.

Nancy Busnach, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Open session commenced. A quorum was present.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- i. Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda
- ii. Draft December 13, 2018 Minutes
- iii. Chapter 364 of the Acts of 2018
- iv. Email requesting SRA representative for SomerVision 2040
- v. Draft Demonstration Project Plan
- vi. Draft Memorandum of Agreement

Discussion and Actions Taken

1. Approval of December Minutes:

- Motion by Iwona Bonney, seconded by William Gage
- No discussion
- Unanimously approved

2. Expansion of Board Membership – New legislation & Quorum Issues

Ms. McGettigan distributed and reviewed Chapter 367 of the Acts of 2018 to the board; signed by the governor in the last days of 2018.

- This special act expands SRA membership from five members to seven.
- Five members are appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the Board of Aldermen's Confirmation of Appointments Committee, one member appointed by the governor and one member appointed by the Board of Aldermen President. The Aldermanic representative serves only during the term of the President who appointed him/her.
- Ms. McGettigan stressed that because the expansion of the board to seven members became effective upon passage, a quorum is now four members. Therefore, attendance by all four existing members is required in order to have a meeting.

3. Assembly Square Update

Sunayana Thomas provided the update for Assembly Square

- Federal Realty has pulled building permits for both Block 8 & 5B. Construction has already commenced and pile driving begin on those blocks in the next couple of weeks.
 - Federal Realty has signed a lease to occupy 150,000 square feet of commercial space on Block 5B and we anticipate an announcement in the next few weeks.
- Retail/Restaurant openings:
 - Block 5A
 - Top Shelf – opened in December
 - La Cucina – opening by end of January
 - Block 6
 - Assembly Dental – opening January 12
 - Block 11
 - Parelli Optical – opening in May
 - AR Nail Bar – opening in March
- Montaje is 96% leased, 94% occupied with 10 affordable units still vacant.
 - Mr. Ercolini questioned why the affordable units have not been filled. Mr. Galligani mentioned that the certification process is very rigorous.
 - Mr. Ercolini requested the Director of Housing provide an update to the SRA at the next meeting regarding the breakdown of 1-3 bedroom affordable unit availability and the tenant selection process.
- Estimated total number of employees at Assembly including Partners is roughly 6,000.

4. Union Square Update

Mr. Galligani provided the update for Union Square.

- Mr. Galligani updated the board on the infrastructure project in Union Square; water main replacement work is being completed and utility relocation is almost complete through the project area. This phase of the project will be completed in the next few weeks. The next phase will be wastewater and storm water infrastructure. Detour and closure information is on the City website.
- Mr. Gage raised a concern and questioned if there are specific routes for trucks during the detour. He mentioned that trucks are going through Warren Avenue and Columbus Avenue. Mr. Gage requested Economic Development to make sure both streets are permitted for trucks to route through and if not request the construction team to put up restricted signs.

5. 90 Washington Street

Demonstration Project Plan

- Mr. Galligani reviewed the presentation originally given to the SRA during the previous meeting about 90 Washington. It is the second most blighted property in the city. The strip mall on the property has been vacant for nearly five years and presents the City with a confluence of opportunities that would help to eliminate blight and transform the Inner Belt district. The City has an imperative need to relocate the existing public safety building and its various departments, currently located in Union Square on disposition parcel D-1. Relocating the public safety building will help to achieve the goals of the Union Square redevelopment plan as well as present a rare opportunity to build a new state of the art combined facility. There is opportunity on this site, in addition to the land area required for the public safety building, for economic development at a transformative scale.
- Ms. Busnach also noted that the condition of the site is also important in terms of environmental cleanup.
- Mr. Galligani provided hard copies of the draft demonstration project plan as well and noted that a link to the plan's appendices had been emailed to the board prior to the meeting. The demonstration project plan provides details of the community process, BOA collaborations, public safety programming needs and space needs, and other development opportunities to generate revenue for the City. Mr. Galligani stated that this plan is innovative and unique because the SRA will be working collaboratively with the Board of Aldermen for the reuse of the site. The home rule petition to include a member of the Board of Aldermen on the SRA will also help to create a better synergy between the SRA's projects and the two boards.

Memorandum of Agreement with the Board of Aldermen

- Ms. McGettigan summarized the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which sets forth the rules of engagement with the Board of Aldermen to efficiently deliver the

project. The MOA outlines a community process managed by the City, BOA, SRA and OSPCD to meet with various stakeholders to clarify the development for the property. The draft plan and MOA was submitted to the Board of Aldermen and will be assigned to a committee for deliberation.

- Ms. McGettigan noted that customarily the board implements urban renewal projects under Chapter 121B. This is the first time this board will be executing a demonstration project plan using their power for this purpose in Somerville under Chapter 121B Section 46(f).
- Ms. McGettigan requested that the board review the MOA closely, as it includes additional meetings and joint hearings as well as specifics regarding rules of engagement with the Board of Aldermen.

6. SomerVision 2040 Representative

- Ms. McGettigan requested that the SRA select a board member to be on the SomerVision 2040 committee as SRA representative. A previously sent email described the members' role and responsibility for the process.
- Mr. Proakis explained that during the last SomerVision process, there was a member who attended and participated and the invitation is extended again for the update of the plan.
- Mr. Ercolini volunteered to attend the first two SomerVision meetings until new members of the board have been appointed who may wish to serve in this capacity. Ms. Busnach accepted his offer and none opposed.

7. Conflict of Interest Training Certification

- Ms. McGettigan reminded the board that every two years each member is to complete the conflict of interest training program. Ms. Thomas will send the board the requirements for the training program and next steps.

8. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

- None

9. Selection of Date for Next Meeting

- Next regular meeting will be on February 7, 2019 at 5:30.

10. Public Comments

- Attorney George McLaughlin representing Cobble Hill, LLC at 90 Washington requested to address the board. He noted that his clients understand that the City is very frustrated that the site is blighted. He explained that the owners will not be

able to develop the property themselves because of litigation but they would sell it and prefer that it not be taken by eminent domain. He informed the board that the judge presiding over the litigation between the owners of the property made a decision that the two of the existing three members of the ownership entity would be able to sell the property. They would like to hire a broker and sell the property promptly to a developer. If they are able to market the property now, a purchase and sale agreement could be completed in three months. Mr. McLaughlin acknowledged the frustration that the redevelopment authority and the Board of Aldermen share regarding the site being an eyesore for years while wonderful work is being done in other parts of the City.

- Mr. Ercolini requested Mr. McLaughlin to provide a formal written statement regarding his representation to the Board.

11. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Iwona Bonney; seconded by Phil Ercolini at 6:15pm.