



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

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR**

*NANCY A. BUSNACH
CHAIR*

MINUTES

Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Thursday, July 19, 2018 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, Brad Rawson as Director of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mike Tremblay as Senior Transportation Planner and Sunayana Thomas as Senior Economic Development Planner.

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

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- i. Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda
- ii. Draft June 28, 2018 Minutes
- iii. Presentation by Transportation and Infrastructure

Discussion and Actions Taken

1. Approval of April Minutes:

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

2. Assembly Square Update

Sunayana Thomas and Tom Galligani provided the update for Assembly Square.

- Assembly Row Update
 - Block 11
 - Cycle Bar – opened on July 19, 2018
 - Block 6

- Montaje – 446 total units 80% leased and 72% occupied
 - Mr. Ercolini asked how many units were affordable.
 - Space 622 – Assembly Dental – will open in November
 - Block 5A
 - The Row Hotel – 158 rooms open August 8th
 - La Cucina opening in November
 - Top Shelf – convenience store will open in November
 - Assembly Line Park
 - Smokeshop BBQ is now open
 - Assembly Marketplace
 - Space 5B will be occupied by Xfinity and will open in October
 - Assembly Phase 1 update
 - Former Kenneth Cole Space – True Religion will open in August
 - Former Pendleton Space – Setting the Space, home furnishing pop up is open
 - Former Luggage Factory space – Samsonite is now open and will be for one year.
- Ms. Thomas reported that the affordable housing requirement for Montaje is 12.5% or 56 units. 33 units are occupied and 23 available for a 446 unit building.

3. Union Square Update:

Sunayana Thomas, Brad Rawson and Mike Tremblay gave updates on Union Square.

- Ms. Thomas provided an update on 30 Prospect St. The owner, Mr. Francis Fahey, has vacated and been relocated. The house has been boarded and the demolition process has begun. The demolition permit requires abutters to be notified for a 10 – day period and remove building materials with asbestos. Anticipated demo is end of August.
- Ms. McGettigan reported that at a recent status conference on the currently pending eminent domain cases, the judge was very pleased to hear that Mr. Fahey had been successfully relocated.
- Transportation Improvement Plan and Presentation
 - OSPCD staff Brad Rawson and Mike Tremblay provided background data on transportation conditions in Union Square, discussed transportation analysis requirements in the City’s local permitting process, and the planning framework for future transportation improvements in Union Square.
 - Historical trend data collected by the City from mid-1990’s to present day indicate a substantial mobility shift away from automobile traffic and toward walking and bicycling
 - The City’s 2017 conversion of Prospect Street and Webster Avenue has created more efficient vehicular routes through the square and reduced through traffic on Somerville Avenue by approximately 30%.
 - New traffic signal equipment installed by the City in 2017 is state-of-the-art, and will allow for greater flexibility for future changes to signal phasing and timing.

- New priority bus lanes and bike lanes installed by the City in 2017 reflect best practices around the region and the country to incentivize non-automobile travel.
- Monitoring efforts continue, with regular traffic counts, travel time analysis, bicycle and pedestrian counts, crash analysis and traffic citation analysis performed regularly by the City.
- Board members raised questions about City maintenance activities for the new infrastructure; staff indicated that City DPW has invested in specialized equipment and staffing assignments to manage snow removal in protected bike lanes; and, that City OSPCD is building internal capacity to better manage new traffic signal equipment and timing in an iterative, adaptive fashion.
- The US2 development team was required to prepare exhaustive transportation analysis as part of its local zoning review during the Coordinated Development Special Permit Process.
- The developer's CDSP conditional approval includes robust and enforceable requirements for transportation demand management programs that reduce automobile usage by new employees and residents as well as ongoing reporting of mobility data and traffic counts. If the data indicate the developer has failed to meet the required 60% non-automobile mode share for new trips associated with the development project, adjustments and enhancements to the transportation demand management program are required.
- The US2 development team is required to provide additional site-specific mobility data for individual zoning processes at the Design and Site Plan Review stage of local permitting.

- Ms. Busnach noted that it was fascinating to see the traffic counts decrease and improvements made in the square allowing more cars to go through the city than before. Mr. Rawson added that the conversion has relieved artificial congestion in the heart of Union Square.
- Mr. Rawson noted that McGrath Highway carries 50,000 cars a day. The next monitoring task is to budget for 24-hour counts on interior streets.
- Mr. Ercolini raised the issue of the traffic on East Broadway being corralled by the traffic from the bridge, Assembly Row development, and the work being done in Sullivan.
- Mr. Gage thanked Brad and his team for their work and raised concerns around un-signalized intersections as well as US2's MEPA Phase 1 waiver; stressing that they should be focusing on mitigation and not providing enough information in their application like technical perspective. Mr. Gage questioned if there is anything US2 can do to improve the level of service for signalization.
- Ms. McGettigan confirmed that one of the covenant requirements is off site infrastructure funds, which would be available for various infrastructure related needs.

- US2 will need to receive approvals for individual sites and if there are unresolved conditions once the first building is completed, there will be a checks and balance process to ensure they are completed.
- Mr. Gage inquired about the parameters being discussed from the neighborhood council negotiations in regards to benefits.
- Ms. McGettigan mentioned that it was brought up during the BOA Finance Committee and decided that the Neighborhood Council is limited to negotiations only to topics that are not covered by zoning. They are recognized as the negotiating entity by the Board of Aldermen and have begun meeting with US2 on a weekly basis.
- Presentation to be presented to the Board will be made public.
- Finance Meeting Update
 - Ms. McGettigan informed the board that the City asked the BOA to transfer one remaining City-owned D2 parcel to SRA to transfer to US2. The BOA wants to wait to see what happens with the Neighborhood Council and begin discussions in September.
 - Ms. Busnach expressed concerns of the development process because the City has a lot of debt and if US2 leaves, we won't see developments for 10 years, leaving a bad taste in the industry and court settlements to pay without revenue from developer.

4. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

- 5th SRA Member Update
 - Ms. McGettigan provided an update regarding the member selection process. The Appointments Advisory Committee recommended one person to the Mayor but was tasked to provide two, so they are re-advertising.

5. Selection of Date for Next Meeting:

- Next regular meeting will be September 27, 2018.

6. Adjournment

- Motion by Phil Ercolini and seconded by Iwona Bonney at 6:38.