



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

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR**

*PHIL ERCOLINI
CHAIR*

MINUTES

Somerville Redevelopment Authority
Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
(Virtual Meeting)
Software: GotoWebinar

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. C. 30A, s. 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, as well as Mayor Curtatone's Declaration of Emergency, dated March 15, 2020, this meeting of the Somerville Redevelopment Authority was conducted via remote participation.

Present from the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA): Phil Ercolini (Chair), William Gage, Iwona Bonney, Patrick McCormick, Ben Ewen-Campen and Emily Hedeman. Also present were Eileen McGettigan as Special Counsel, Tom Galligani as Director of Economic Development, and Sunayana Thomas, Senior Economic Development Planner.

Phil Ercolini, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Open session commenced. A quorum was present. This meeting was audio recorded.

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting

- i. Draft April 22, 2020, June 10, 2020 and June 24, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes
- ii. Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan Implementation Presentation

Discussion and Actions Taken

1. Approval of Minutes:

- April 22, 2020 Minutes
 - Page 3 – add the word “Plan” after “Urban Renewal”
 - Middle of Page 4 – 3rd bullet – add Temple “Street”

Motion made by Ben Ewen-Campen to Approve the April 22, 2020 Minutes with amendments, seconded by Bill Gage.

Roll Call Vote:

Iwona Bonney, Yes
Ben Ewen- Campen, Yes
Bill Gage, Yes
Emily Hedeman, Yes
Patrick McCormick, Yes
Phil Ercolini, Yes

- June 10, 2020 Minutes - No comments

Motion to Approve the June 10, 2020 Minutes made by Iwona Bonney, seconded by Bill Gage.

Roll Call Vote:

Iwona Bonney, Yes
Ben Ewen- Campen, Yes
Bill Gage, Yes
Emily Hedeman, Yes
Patrick McCormick, Yes
Phil Ercolini, Yes

- June 24, 2020 Minutes – No comments

Motion to Approve by Iwona Bonney, seconded by Patrick McCormick

Roll Call Vote:

Iwona Bonney, Yes
Ben Ewen- Campen, Yes
Bill Gage, Yes
Emily Hedeman, Yes
Patrick McCormick, Yes
Phil Ercolini, Yes

2. Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan/Potential Urban Renewal Plan Implementation Update – Presentation by Lauren Drago, Urban Revitalization Specialist, OSPCD

Ms. Drago provided a presentation to update the Board on the Urban Renewal Plan process for Winter Hill. Presentation can be found here:

<https://somervice.somervillema.gov/winter-hill-plan-implementation>

Comments from the Board:

The board noted that an urban renewal plan is meant to solve the physical and social issues through the built environment in a community and that the proposed strategy was creative and highlights the community concerns. The plans proposed are in line with the neighborhood plan and the board members are pleased in the direction the strategy is taking in regards to physical scope and broader community goals.

Public Comments:

Resident of Winter Hill – Once the boundary is identified, what are the next steps for the community after the urban renewal plan is drafted.

- City staff will update the community through the SomerVoice platform and provide additional opportunities to provide input into the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan. The next step is to build the Citizen Advisory Committee of key stakeholders within the community.

3. Union Square Update

Mr. Karczewski was present to provide a project update.

Mr. Karczewski assured the board that the GLX project has continued through the COVID-19 disruption and the Union Square Green Line station still targeted to be opened next year. US2 continues to coordinate logistics and design with the MBTA. The Somerville Ave Streetscape and Infrastructure project is underway again after a 45-day break. US2 is working with the City to coordinate infrastructure work on both projects. US2 partnered with Union Square Neighborhood Council (USNC), the Ward Councilors and the City to release approximately \$200,000 in community benefits so that grants can be issued for small business development and workforce development in Union Square. The City issued an RFP and awarded the grants to Union Square Main Streets and Somerville Community Corporation.

All facets of the D2 project are moving forward: permitting, financing, and land closing. Land closing and start of construction is anticipated for early Q4 of 2020. Vertical construction of the lab building on D2.1 and residential on D2.2 and D2.3 is anticipated to commence in the first quarter of 2021. The majority of the work to date has been around permitting, including an important approval milestone from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to begin site remediation. The U.S. EPA requires a signed acceptance by both the SRA and US2 as the property owner and developer, respectively. The EPA process took 8 months.

Comments from the Board:

Mr. Ewen-Campen was glad to hear progress on the project despite Covid-19 challenges. He inquired about the elevator construction and affordable housing status for D4.3.

- The elevator construction and other improvements for the MBTA station will happen as part of the residential project.
- As part of the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) between US2 and USNC, US2 and USNC have been meeting quarterly to discuss the necessary steps to expedite the affordable housing development on D4.3: acquiring land, appraisals, meeting with SCC and POAH to develop the building and term sheet, and working with the City to outline the procedural steps related to approvals for that project. Once the feedback from City staff is received around the process, they will have a better understanding on how to move forward.

Mr. Ercolini requested to know the amounts of the community benefits grants and who the City selected as awardees.

- Ms. Thomas explained that the two grant opportunities using the community benefits funds were \$70,000 for a Small Business Liaison and \$100,000 for Career Navigation and Placement. The City selected Union Square Main Streets and Somerville Community Corporation and submitted the selection to the Council to approve in August. In the meantime, staff is working with the awardees to submit the necessary documents for their grant agreements.

Vote and Ratification: D2 Parcel - Acknowledgement of Receipt of EPA Approvals
Motion to Approve by Iwona Bonney, seconded by Bill Gage.

Roll Call Vote:

Iwona Bonney, Yes
Ben Ewen-Campen, Yes
Bill Gage, Yes
Emily Hedeman, Yes
Patrick McCormick, Yes
Phil Ercolini, Yes

4. 90 Washington Project Plan Update

Ms. Thomas and Ms. McGettigan provided the update for 90 Washington.

Demolition process is ongoing and the contractor is obtaining the necessary documents and approvals for a demolition permit. The SRA received the appellate brief of the former property owner and have until the 2nd week of September to respond to the brief.

Comments from the Board:

Ms. Hedeman noted that the board and staff should keep in mind the ongoing dialogue of public safety and its role in the community especially considering this is a demonstration

project and that we collectively should reach out to residents in the community to better understand their vision for public safety.

5. Assembly Square Update

Ms. Thomas provided the update.

Out of 82 tenants, 68 tenants are re-opened. Construction was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions but has been resumed for the residential and office parcels and is on target for 2021 completion.

6. Public Comment Period

General Question – What is a demonstration plan?

Section 46(f) of Chapter 121B provides the SRA with special authority to adopt and develop “demonstration projects” outside of urban renewal areas to eliminate the blighted condition of a parcel. The 90 Washington project is one parcel with a derelict vacant strip mall that has been inactive for over 6 years.

7. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

8. Adjournment

Next Meeting Date – August 19, 2020 – 5:30pm - Virtual Meeting

Motion to Adjourn by Iwona Bonney, seconded by Patrick McCormick at 6:20pm.

Roll Call Vote:

Iwona Bonney, Yes

Ben Ewen-Campen, Yes

Bill Gage, Yes

Emily Hedeman, Yes

Patrick McCormick, Yes

Phil Ercolini, Yes