



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

**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR**

*PHIL ERCOLINI  
CHAIR*

**MINUTES**

Somerville Redevelopment Authority  
Thursday, November 14, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.  
Somerville High School Cafeteria  
81 Highland Ave, Somerville

Present from the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA): Phil Ercolini (Chair), William Gage, Iwona Bonney, Patrick McCormick, and Ben Ewen-Campen. 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 5:30PM. Open session commenced. A quorum was present. This meeting was audio recorded.

**Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting**

- i. Draft October 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes
- ii. Photo of temporary Fire Truck tent and trailer on 90 Washington

**Discussion and Actions Taken**

**1. Approval of October Minutes:**

- Mr. Ewen-Campen requested the documents and exhibits from the October meeting be accessible online.
- Mr. Gage noted a change on page 4
- Ms. Bonney noted on page 4 under 90 Washington section's third bullet to change sight to sites.
- Mr. McCormick corrected on page 3, second to last item under Assembly Update, that the question regarding voting and Somerville residents was from Mr. Gage not Mr. McCormick.
- Motion to approve with requested corrections by Iwona Bonney, seconded by William Gage.
- Unanimously approved

## **2. Assembly Square Update**

Ms. Thomas & Mr. Galligani provided the update for Assembly Square.

- Kmart liquidation ends November 18th
- Mr. Ewen-Campen requested an update on the Assembly Job Fair. Mr. Galligani reported that Federal Realty held a Job Fair on Saturday November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11am-1pm with 15 merchants and between 30-50 attendees. Kmart tried to accommodate any employees that were willing to relocate.
- Ruth's Chris grand opening is on November 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Solar powered flowers have been installed, one at the corner of Foley and Assembly, the other at the corner of Revolution and Assembly. Federal Realty is waiting on meters and a fence to make them operational.

## **3. Union Square Update:**

Mr. Karczewski was present to provide the update for Union Square as requested by Mr. Gage at the SRA's October meeting.

- Once the permits have been received, US2 will acquire the land and conduct site remediation to develop the projects for lab and residential. They are finalizing the construction documents and financing now.
- The land acquisition process is underway and they are working with the City's legal department to outline the process to complete the D2 closing. The confirmatory taking of the D2 Block is a piece of that process.
- US2 has begun to market the project to commercial tenants and workers. The website is being updated, direct mail campaigns to brokers and participation in panels related to life science in the Greater Boston area have been great opportunities to spread the word. Signs on the property will be up as well to market the site and show the progress of the project.
- Coordination with GLX is ongoing. US2 is currently working on easement agreements to coordinate US2's construction on D2 with GLX's construction of the station.
- Mr. McCormick questioned if US2 had any concerns regarding the GLX timeline and the project. US2's initial concern was that the Green Line station would be delivered after the first phase of the D2 project but that's now reversed with US2 trying to ensure that the first phase of the project is delivered at the end of 2021. They are working with the MBTA for streamlined access to the site.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen inquired whether US2 has begun to make plans to market the retail spaces. Mr. Karczewski replied that they haven't advanced that because it's important to understand what services are helpful to the community. Once construction begins, they will have discussions with Union Square Main Streets and discuss merchandising and marketing plans.

**Vote:** Adopt D2 Block Confirmatory Order of Taking

- **Discussion:** Ms. McGettigan provided copies of the Order of Taking and explained the process. Mr. Ewen-Campen clarified that the this vote would clear the title and erase internal property lines.
- **Motion** to vote by William Gage and seconded by Iwona Bonney. Unanimously approved.

**4. 90 Washington**

Ms. Thomas provided the 90 Washington Street update.

- A request was made by the City Fire Department to host a temporary fire truck tent and trailer on 90 Washington due to the delay in reopening the Washington Street bridge. The MBTA, Fire Department and OSPCD have been coordinating to understand where on the site it would be the most appropriate. MBTA is financing this effort.
- Two locations were reviewed: one of which was on the back side of the property through New Washington Street. However, it required grading work, trenching and tree removal which would all delay the intended timeline of December 1<sup>st</sup>. The temporary infrastructure is anticipated to be on site until April 2020.
- Mr. Ercolini asked what type of truck will be on site--rescue or ladder truck?
- Ms. Thomas clarified that it will be a ladder truck. Proposed is an 8' x 32' office trailer unit and 22' x 40' fire truck shelter unit.
- Ms. McGettigan asked whether it affects our ability to demolish the existing building.
- Ms. Thomas explained that it will not delay or affect the demolition process. A demolition RFP was released and submissions are due by the end of November. There are two access points to the site so demolition should not be a problem.
- Public Activation – OSPCD has engaged place activation organizations to program the site, as requested by Ward Councilor McLaughlin. Activation of the site is anticipated to begin in Spring 2020.
- An RFP for a project manager for the public safety building construction was released and the Q&A session was conducted last week. Capital Projects is anticipating making a selection in the next two months. Selecting an OPM will be the first step in the building process. A building committee will then be assembled.
- The draft sketches that were provided by Mr. Galligani at the previous meeting were an initial subdivision plan based on the requirements of the public safety

building as set forth in the Weston and Sampson report, as well as discussions with the police and fire departments. The delineation of the private project portion of the site was based on highest and best location for a future development site.

- Mr. Gage inquired about the timeline of creating the building committee.
- Ms. Thomas stated that the City is waiting to bring an OPM on board to decide a path forward. The makeup of the committee is determined by the Mayor's Office, Capital Projects and other related departments.
- Mr. Gage's understanding was that the SRA would participate on the Building Committee.
- Ms. Thomas clarified that the building committee for the public safety building is separate from the private project.
- Mr. Gage felt strongly that the SRA should have a representative on the public safety building committee as well as for the private building process.
- Ms. McGettigan explained that the SRA is going to convey the parcel on which the public safety is going to be built to the City, and it wouldn't be in the SRA's jurisdiction. The remainder of the parcel which is the public private partnership and the planning process for that portion will be governed by the City/SRA MOA.
- Mr. Gage expressed that both projects on the site should be coordinated and that is why an SRA member should be on both committees related to the project.
- Mr. Galligani confirmed that OSPCD will have a presence on the building committee to make sure that the goals of the private project is maximized.
- Mr. Ercolini advised that no decision is necessary on this matter tonight. The board needs more information regarding the process and the role of the Council representative on the SRA now to make sure we're on the same page.
- Mr. Gage is reluctant to leave it in the hands of OSPCD when SRA members should be participating in it.
- Mr. Ercolini reminded the board that this project is different than anything the SRA has done in the past. The board needs more information about the building committee and its role before making decisions on how the process is formalized.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen was confused about how the lot was divided since the OPM has not been selected. He was unclear about how the subdivision process will unfold and wanted to know who makes those decisions. He stated that the process should be open and clear to the SRA.
- Ms. Thomas explained that the draft subdivision was a version created by OSPCD, Planning as a starting point based on the needs outlined in the Weston & Sampson report and continuing conversations with police and fire. That

could certainly change but this allows us to set some parameters to move forward.

- Mr. Ewen-Campen is uncertain about the SRA's roles in each step of the process. He would prefer that when consequential decisions are being made, they are brought to the SRA and that the Council be notified of public meetings so they can attend if a member wishes to. It would be helpful to actively receive updates on where the process stands.
- Mr. Galligani stated that it is our intention to provide updates every month as needed. The building committee is a typical process that municipalities set up for a large capital project. OSPCD will provide more information from the Capital Projects office to have a better understanding on how the committee functions and its role. The working subdivision plan is based on the location to the MBTA station, public safety needs, street access, areas for highest visibility on Washington, etc.
- Mr. McCormick would like to know if there are high level timelines with milestones in place to be sent to the SRA to understand where the decision points are at the moment. Also, a point to consider is to maximize the height of the public safety building to free the lot for private development or open space. Those are examples of discussions that he would like to be informed about to ensure success of the project.

## **5. Winter Hill Update**

Ms. Lauren Drago from OSPCD Economic Development provided an update on Winter Hill.

- OSPCD and Councilor Clingan conducted a community meeting in June 2019 regarding 299 Broadway, Star Market site. Over 90 people attended.
- The City provided the community with the option of leaving it as is for private market action, for the SRA to undertake a demonstration project plan, or an urban renewal plan.
- 95% of the attendees wanted to do something on the site and not wait for a private developer. The votes came in highest for demonstration project plan with the intention of using the tool to move faster. Second highest votes were for urban renewal.
- Since the last meeting, OSPCD has been meeting with legal to review the path of demonstration plans and urban renewal plans. Legal has recommended that it is preferable to pursue an urban renewal plan in case there are other parcels to include to implement the Neighborhood Plan. It's certainly possible to do 299 Broadway only but there are other opportunity sites outlined in the Neighborhood Plan. It's still early in the process and staff is doing research and plan to meet with the community to decide how to move forward.

- Mr. Ercolini asked what the pros and cons are of urban renewal vs. demonstration plan.
- Ms. McGettigan informed the board that the demonstration plan process is a new tool that is outside of DHCD review and that you want to be conservative in deciding when to use it because those demonstration project plans that courts have reviewed only focus on one parcel. It is better to do an urban renewal plan when multiple parcels are targeted.
- No further discussion.

**6. Public Comment Period**

- None

**7. Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair**

- None

**8. Selection of Date for Next Meeting:**

- Meeting dates through January had been previously selected. Next regular meeting(s) are scheduled for the following dates:
  - December 12, 2019 at 5:30pm, location Somerville High School Cafeteria.
  - January 16, 2019 at 5:30pm, location Somerville Library Auditorium.

**9. Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn made by Iwona Bonney and seconded by Patrick McCormick at 6:14pm.
- Unanimously Approved.