



Somerville Redevelopment Authority

Philip Ercolini, Chair
Iwona Bonney, Secretary
Ben Ewen-Campen
William Gage
Patrick McCormick
Christine Stone

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting via GoToWebinar

Date: November 17, 2021

Time: The meeting started at 5:31 pm

Attendance

SRA Members Present: Iwona Bonney, Ben Ewen-Campen, William Gage, Patrick McCormick, Phil Ercolini (Chair)

SRA Members Absent: Christine Stone

Staff Present: Eileen McGettigan (Special Counsel), Rachel Nadkarni (Urban Revitalization Specialist)

Agenda Items

1. Approval of the October 20, 2021 meeting minutes

- Mr. Ercolini suggested that on Agenda Item number 1, second sentence which says "Motion to approve the minutes of ..." to include the word "as amended".
- Mr. Ercolini also suggested that on page two, of the second bullet to change the word "activation" for the word "activities".
- Mr. Ercolini mentioned that on page six, fourth bullet, last sentence "in all of the sudden" it should read "all of a sudden this incentivized development".
- Mr. Ercolini mentioned that on page seven, the second bullet after the word "meeting" the word "is" should be deleted.
- Mr. Ercolini additionally mentioned that on page seven, fifth bullet after ground floor, the word "the" should be removed.
- Mr. McCormick mentioned that on page five, regarding the green roofs, his comment was that it would be beneficial but also that the solar and green roofs are not mutually exclusive as it sometimes is assumed.

Motion to approve the minutes, as amended, of the October 20, 2021 meeting by Ms. Bonney.

Seconded by Mr. McCormick. The motion was approved by a roll call vote, unanimously, by all present

members.

2. Public Comments

- None

3. Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan Update

- Ms. Nadkarni mentioned that the application from the developers that was presented at the last meeting has moved forward. She mentioned that there was a public hearing held jointly between the Planning Board and the City Council Land Use Committee on November 8th on the project.
- Ms. Nadkarni explained that public comments that are submitted in writing are still being accepted by the City Council until November 26. She mentioned that there was a fair amount of public commentary, and she would be happy to direct to the SRA to this commentary if there is interest.
- Mr. Ercolini mentioned that he would like to present an email from Christine Stone for the record. He explained that she continues to be concerned about the Winter Hill site and would like to understand how the City plans to ensure the goals of the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan (WHURP) are met with the Mark Development project, and how not having the corner lots as part of the overall project will negatively impact those goals.
- Mr. Ercolini also mentioned that Ms. Stone would like to understand what powers the SRA has to help ensure the WHURP goals are met. Ms. Stone would also like to understand if there is a forum to raise her points to the other board members outside of the monthly board meetings.
- Mr. Ercolini additionally mentioned that Ms. Stone has always thought that suggested massing of the proposed development is flawed given the proposed residential building height exceeds any of the homes on Sewall Street. Mr. Ewen-Campen explained his perspective having been on the City Council side of that public hearing. He stated that the overwhelming public feedback was positive. He mentioned that the public was encouraging the City Council to pass a zoning change that would allow the proposal to move forward and go through the site plan approval process. He stated that it would be very important to emphasize that the reason there are so many members of the public in favor of the project is because the SRA maintains the ability to implement the WHURP if things get off the rails.
- Ms. McGettigan added that the Open Meeting Law prevents board members from having conversations about matters that are before the SRA outside of a public meeting. She mentioned that there is no way board members can communicate with each other to discuss SRA matters outside of these meetings. She mentioned that it is important to continue the

discussion and so hopefully in future months Ms. Stone will be able to attend the SRA meetings, and the SRA will be able to have a full discussion on the matter.

4. 90 Washington Street Demonstration Project Plan Update

- Ms. Nadkarni explained that the project right now has one upcoming meeting on December 13. There will be a joint meeting to talk about the front parcels at 90 Washington Street that are going to be redeveloped. There will also be an update about the public safety building. They are bringing these two conversations to the community.
- Ms. Nadkarni mentioned that so far there is a good attendance anticipated, about 50 people have RSVP'd to attend the public meeting.

5. Other Business

- One member of the public asked the SRA when the minutes would be published.
- Ms. McGettigan responded that her practice has been to ask the webmaster to post the corrected minutes from the prior month's meeting the day after the SRA approves them. She added that last meeting there were a couple of presentations and those presentations were posted the day after the meeting on the City website and they are available as "Meeting Materials".
- Ms. Erika Tarlin from Bradford Ave would like to know if there is an update about the meeting with the Winter Hill developers and where things stand. She would also like to see the comments on the website since it appears that they are not there.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen explained the process is in the City Council, and that this is understandably a very confusing process. He mentioned that there is a two track process, there is the SRA's process, which could lead to a possible eminent domain taking in order to implement the WHURP. And then in parallel to that process, there is the normal development process which right now requires the City Council to decide whether they will grant the zoning change. This is a process that does not involve the SRA.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen additionally mentioned that the City Council process is happening in the Public Land Use Committee. He is the chair of that Committee. He mentioned that they have meetings scheduled on November 22, November 30, and December 6.
- Mr. Ewen-Campen mentioned that they will not be voting on this until the public comment period is closed but they are discussing it. The Committee will come to a decision, one way or the other, on whether they want to approve the zoning change and allow the private developer

strategy to move forward. Mr. Ewen-Campen told Ms. Tarlin to feel free to reach out to him or her ward councilor for any questions.

- Mr. McCormick confirmed that the minutes and all materials are posted on the website. He mentioned that the website may be confusing to navigate but that all of the information is there.
- Ms. Nadkarni mentioned that there was an agreement between the SRA and the City Council to form a Civic Advisory Committee to specifically gather information around this project. She mentioned that they have extended the application window to serve on the Civic Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Nadkarni expressed that they have received a lot of interest but that they are still missing a couple of key constituencies. The committee's role is going to be to provide advice to the SRA, to the City Council and boards and commissions about what they are hearing around the neighborhood.

6. Next Meeting: December 15, 2021 at 5:30 pm. Location: Virtual Meeting- Software GotoWebinar

7. Meeting Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 5:55 pm by Mr. Gage. Seconded by Mr. Ewen-Campen. The motion was approved by a roll call vote, unanimously, by all present members

Meeting Documents

- None