



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

STAFF PRESENT

MADELEINE MASTERS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*

MEMBERS PRESENT

KEVIN PRIOR, *CHAIRMAN*
LINDA BOHAN
JOSEPH FAVALORO
JAMES KIRYLO
ELIZABETH MORONEY
MICHAEL A. CAPUANO, *ESQ. (ALT.)*

AGENDA

The Somerville Planning Board held a public hearing on **Thursday, January 15, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Aldermanic Chambers at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. Prior to the hearings, the Planning Board reviewed cases for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Review of Cases for the Zoning Board of Appeals:

163 Hudson St (Case #ZBA 2008-53): Applicant & Owner: Afarin Bellisario, seeks Special Permit approval under SZO §4.4.1 for the alteration of a non-conforming structure in order to enlarge the existing structure with an increase of the gross floor area by more than 25 percent. This proposal would create a new unit as-of-right. RB zone. Ward 5.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

42 Allen St: (Case #ZBA 2008-67) Applicant & Owner: Mark Resnick seeks a special permit under §4.4.1 in order to finish and legalize partially completed alterations to a non-conforming structure. RB zone. Ward 2.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

7-9 Bowers Ave: (Case #ZBA 2008-68) Applicant & Owner: Christina Yanhui Li seeks a Special Permit (SZO §7.11.4.a) to establish three rooms to rent without kitchen facilities, for a tourist home, in an owner occupied dwelling. RB zone. Ward 6.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

369-371 Beacon St: (Case #ZBA 2008-61) Applicant Beacon Street Hotel & Owner George Makrigiannis seek a special permit with Site Plan Review (SZO §7.11.10.5.b) in order to construct and establish a hotel of more than 10,000 gross sq.ft. BA zone. Ward 2.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

56 Webster Ave/520 Columbia St: (Case #ZBA 2008-65) Applicant Royal Hospitality Services, Inc. (Royal White) & Owner Columbia St. Realty, LLC seek a special permit (SZO §4.4.1) for alteration of a nonconforming structure and special permit with site plan review (§7.11.12.1.c) in order to expand the existing laundry processing use. IP zone. Ward 2.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.



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600 Windsor Pl: (Case #ZBA 2008-66) Applicant Green Cab, Inc. & Owner The Windsor Co., LLC, seek a special permit with site plan review (SZO §7.11.11.12.1.b) in order to establish a taxi storage and service use of more than 5,000 gross square feet. IP zone. Ward 2.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

68-70 Glenwood Rd: (Case #ZBA 2008-70) Applicant & Owner Don Schuerman seeks a special permit (SZO §4.4.1) to alter a nonconforming dwelling by adding a dormer to the right side. RB zone. Ward 5.

After discussion, Mr. Favaloro moved to accept the staff recommendation for conditional approval, deleting condition #2; Ms. Moroney seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

22 Benedict St: (Case #ZBA 2008-71) Applicant/Owner Oi Chao Ding seeks a special permit (SZO §4.4.1) to alter a nonconforming dwelling by adding 20' x 14' porch to the rear. RB zone. Ward 1.

Applicant's request to continue was granted.

29 Ames St: (Case #ZBA 2008-72) Applicant & Owner Nancy Roche seeks a special permit (SZO §4.4.1) to alter a nonconforming dwelling by adding a third story dormer. RA zone. Ward 5.

After discussion, Ms. Moroney moved to accept the staff recommendation for conditional approval; Mr. Favaloro seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

33 Springfield St: (Case #ZBA 2008-73) Applicant & Owner Scott Barrett seeks a special permit (SZO §4.4.1) to alter a nonconforming dwelling by extending a third floor above the existing second floor. RB zone. Ward 2.

After discussion, Mr. Favaloro moved to waive the reading of the recommended conditions, and to accept the staff recommendation for conditional approval; Ms. Moroney seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

Public Hearing:

UNION SQUARE ZONING AMENDMENTS:

An amendment establishing six new zoning districts: [Transit Oriented Districts 55 through 135 (TOD-55, TOD-70, TOD-100, TOD-135), Arts Overlay District (AOD), Corridor Commercial District (CCD)], mapping those districts in specified areas of the Union Square / Boynton Yards vicinity, and facilitating their creation through other Citywide amendments. The proposed amendment would incorporate changes to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Somerville with respect to the official zoning map and Articles 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Members of the Board raised several questions about the proposal, including: the requirement to place utilities underground (Mr. Kirylo), the height along Prospect Street (Mr. Kirylo, Ms. Bohan, Mr. Capuano), the provisions for artists (Mr. Kirylo), the financing of the affordable units (Mr. Kirylo), how interim zoning



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provisions would work (Ms. Bohan), the timing of the Green Line Extension (Ms. Bohan), the relative differences between the zoning in Ward 2 and Ward 3 and the implications for environmental justice (Mr. Capuano, Ms. Moroney), the treatment of parking (Ms. Bohan), the potential for a new library (Ms. Bohan), and treatment of usable open space.

Staff stated that underground utilities are a priority for Boynton Yards redevelopment and would be more cost effective there, where infrastructure improvements would accompany new development. Regarding artist provisions, staff explained that there had been a public misunderstanding about “artist housing” and that there would only be floor area bonuses for a variety of commercial and mixed-use arts uses as a result of the higher cost to develop space for those users, but that there would be no set-aside of either affordable or market-rate housing for artists. Regarding the financing of affordable units, Ms. Moroney opined that appropriate loans would still be available to homebuyers. Staff responded to inquiries about station timing and location, and described other municipal projects aimed at revitalizing Union Square and building new municipal buildings including a library. Regarding the environmental justice question, explained existing requirements for environmental remediation of sites, also noting that the majority of for-profit developments would be market-rate units, so that there would not be an isolated area of affordable housing. Regarding treatment of parking, staff explained design guidelines and pedestrian oriented use requirements that would conceal structured parking, even if constructed at ground level, also explaining payment-in-lieu of parking provisions in the proposed CCD. Regarding open space, staff explained that payment-in-lieu of open space would not go toward private open space, and that any open space located within or on top of a private building (e.g., a winter garden or roof garden) would be likely to be a great public amenity, but would be subject to Planning Board approval and have to be clearly marked and accessible to the public.

Regarding the proposed height, staff explained the process by which the heights, FAR limits, development standards and design guidelines had been developed, including that immediate abutters to the proposed TOD-100, residents of Allen Street, had been part of the Focus Group and had been supportive of the proposal. Staff explained how development standard would allow additional development where appropriate, while respecting transitions to residential districts. As a result of district mapping and development standards, upper stories would generally not be perceived from the street, and shadow studies illustrated most new shadow falling on the public right-of-way rather than residential abutters. Staff stated that additional height was needed along Prospect Street in order to frame significant vistas and draw people leaving the proposed Green Line Station into the heart of Union Square, as well as to provide incentive to existing inappropriate uses to relocate.

Mr. Favaloro opined that the proposal was part of an integrated plan and that the vision for the area must begin now, despite there being many moving parts of the redevelopment of the area. Ms. Moroney opined that there is a strong vision for the area. Mr. Prior described an inventory conducted of blight in Boynton Yards, stating that



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the staff had answered the Board's questions and that public concern about the proposal had been dramatically reduced as more information became available.

After this discussion, the Chairman made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed zoning amendments, as amended by the staff report dated January 9, 2009; Mr. Kirylo seconded the motion, which carried 5-0.

Other Business:

Board members signed Mylars of Approved Subdivision for Assembly Square Roadway.

The meeting was then adjourned.

A recording of this meeting may be obtained in the Planning Division.