



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

*PLANNING DIVISION*

**STAFF PRESENT**

CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*  
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

KEVIN PRIOR, *CHAIRMAN*  
MICHAEL A. CAPUANO, ESQ  
JOSEPH FAVALORO  
JAMES KIRYLO  
ELIZABETH MORONEY  
DANA LEWINTER, ALT.

**PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

The Somerville Planning Board held a public meeting on **Thursday, December 17, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Aldermanic Chambers of Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

**Senior Housing Amendment (PB #2009-15)**

The amendment includes changes to Article 2 “Definitions” to add definitions for senior housing types, Article 5 “Special Permits and Special Permits with Site Plan Review” to add design guidelines, Article 7 “Permitted Uses” to allow the use, Article 6 “Establishment of Zoning Districts” and Article 8 “Dimensional Requirements” to alter in the RC, NB, CBD, BA, CCD, TOD-55 the minimum lot area per dwelling unit, number of stories, and landscape requirements, and Article 9 “Parking Requirements” to incorporate parking regulations.

*Joseph Favaloro asked in response to letter of neighbors of 44 Park Street, if there was a specific development scheduled for construction that was related to this project.*

*Philip Ercolini, Director of Housing, stated that we have not had a senior housing project proposed in a long time in the City. Most projects were built in the 50’s and 60’s when the Zoning Ordinance was different. Currently most of the properties in Somerville are nonconforming in terms of zoning regulations. There is a lack of clarity in the Ordinance related to multi-family developments, especially for senior housing. The 44 Park Street was the last senior housing project before the City and it highlighted the weaknesses in the Ordinance. The amendment tries to address the weaknesses and there are no projects that are being proposed. Data shows that the number of seniors in the City is growing everyday and the Somerville Housing Authority cannot provide housing for everyone that is currently on their waitlist. We studied zoning ordinances in other Cities to create an ordinance that makes sense for all developers.*



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*Kevin Prior explained that there have been a number of instances where clarifications and corrections to the Ordinance have been made in recent years to better state what the City desires out of a development. The report shows that meeting the letter of the Ordinance does not always create a project that is the most desirable. Sizes of units and accessibility of units and kitchens are important changes that have to be made regardless of if there is a development in front of the Board or not.*

*Elizabeth Moroney found that the concerns addressed at the public hearing have been addressed with the proposed changes to the amendment. She understands why the RA and RB districts were not initially included; however, she supports keeping an open mind about incorporating the use in these districts.*

*Dana LeWinter stated that many of the comments from the public hearing were about aging in place and the amendment would not preclude people from doing that. When people are not able to age in place, she appreciates the changes to the ordinance that would make moving to a new building feel more like home. She is interested in keeping the dialog open about incorporating the use into the RA and RB districts.*

*Following discussion, the Dana LeWinter made a motion to approve the proposed amendments, as amended by the Staff report of December 17, 2009. James Kirylo seconded the motion, which carried 4-0. Michael Capuano and Joseph Favaloro abstained because they were not present at the December 3 hearing.*

*The Planning Board recommends APPROVAL of the zoning amendment.*

#### **Review of Continued Cases for the Zoning Board of Appeals:**

**369-371 Beacon St (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.

*Attorney Richard G. DiGirolamo appeared and explained the project. Rob May, OSPCD staff, worked with Alderman Maryann Heuston to hold 4 public visioning sessions for Porter Square and came up with vision for area. Based on the vision they felt that the hotel meets the desires of the neighborhood. It would be a gateway, pedestrian oriented, etc. The Board discussed issues regarding the underground drop off, delivery times and the impact on traffic. Richard DiGirolamo stated that most people were in favor of the proposal at the neighborhood meetings. Chris DiIorio relayed that Traffic & Parking staff member Terry Smith reviewed the parking and traffic report and finds that it was a good plan. Abutter Seth Goodman appeared and stated his concerns with the drop off plan at peak time of traffic. Claudia Murrow stated her concerns regarding environmental issues, in and out traffic vehicles entering/exiting garage and drop off area. Staff recommended the Board add a condition regarding parking mitigation, which the Board accepted. Kevin Prior made a motion to recommend conditional approval. Elizabeth Moroney seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously 5-0.*

**9-11 Harvard Pl (ZBA #2009-04)** Applicant & Owner Elaine Thibault seeks a Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval under SZO §7.2 to construct two principal structures on the same lot and under §7.3 to develop four (4) residential units, where 12.5% are affordable housing. RA zone. Ward 3.

*Attorney Richard G. DiGirolamo appeared and explained his proposal. Comments from abutters included issues concerning damage to surrounding foundations, transformer location, tree removal,*



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*snow removal, drainage and construction hours. The conditions addressed the neighbors concerns. Michael Capuano made a motion to recommend conditional approval. James Kirlyo seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously 5-0.*

**Review of New Cases for the Zoning Board of Appeals:**

**255 Elm St (ZBA #2009-57)** Applicant Rockwell Restaurant Group, LLC & Owner Gorin Realty Trust seeks a Special Permit with Design Review to establish a 4,900± s.f. lounge (SZO §7.11.10.6.B), a Special Permit to alter the façade of the nonconforming structure under §4.4.1, and a Variance in order to not provide thirty-one (31) required parking spaces (§9.5) for the lounge and by-right 4,400± s.f. restaurant. CBD zone. Ward 6.

*Attorney Richard G. DiGirolamo appeared and stated the proposed plans. The Board discussed issues concerning window style and separate entry being key component of proposal. The conditions address the changes to the façade and allowed for a separate entrance to be added. Elizabeth Moroney made a motion to recommend conditional approval. James Kirlyo seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously 5-0.*

**62B Summer St (ZBA #2009-58)** Applicant, Paul Denis, & Owner, Gurmail Banwait seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.5.1 to change the use from a 390± s.f. real estate office to an Artist Studio Space §7.11.6.8 (audio/video editing and recording service). RB zone. Ward 2

*The Applicant appeared and stated his proposal. Michael Capuano made a motion to recommend conditional approval. Joseph Favaloro seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously 5-0.*

**Other Business:** None

The meeting adjourned at 8pm.

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

Plans and reports are available at the City of Somerville website at the following link:  
[www.somervillema.gov/planningandzoning/reports](http://www.somervillema.gov/planningandzoning/reports)



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