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May 17, 2007

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LAND USE
MEETING IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE PLANNING BOARD

The Committee on Land Use held a meeting on May 17, 2007, in Joint Session with the Planning Board, with Chairman Sean O'Donovan presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Maryann Heuston and Thomas Taylor also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Walter Pero, William White, Dennis Sullivan and Rebekah Gewirtz as well as members of the Planning Board, Housing Director Phil Ercolini, SPCD Director Monica Lamboy, Alice Martin and Martha Tai from SPCD and interested members of the public.

Ms. Martin and Ms. Tai gave an overview of the process to date for the revitalization of Union Square, and highlighted some of the areas of the project, including:

- Prior studies undertaken
- Community meetings, public hearings, committee and board meetings and zoning revisions
- The strategy for change
- Current density and diversity of Union Square's business, residential and artist communities
- Current assets and liabilities of the square
- The vision for tomorrow
- Goal #1 – citywide, provide clearer definitions of art-related uses
- Goal #2 – create incentives for higher density retail, commercial and residential uses through PUD-C Overlay District
- Goal #3 – support arts-related uses in Union Square through creation of Arts Overlay and PUD-C Overlay Districts
- Points of Change for building heights, density, district boundaries, usable open space and inclusionary housing
- Zoning process

Residents spoke in favor of the zoning amendments and against the development without 15% affordable housing.

Alderman Taylor requested that the Administration provide figures on the percentage of affordable housing in Union Square and to comment on the particulars of the zoning amendment as they relate to the preservation of the historic district.

The Land Use Committee will hold the record open until the close of business on June 25, 2007. The Planning Board will hold the record open until the close of business on June 15, 2007

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following item:

183168: Communication from Mayor - Requesting authorization to complete the acquisition of land owned by Somerville Hospital at 112 Central St., dedicate a portion as Article 97 Open Space, and accept \$8,000 from Ground Works Somerville for the project.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file

VOTE: Unanimous, 2 - 0 in favor (Alderman Heuston recused herself)

Alderman Sean T. O'Donovan, Chairman
Committee on Land Use

