

16 May 2018, 7pm,

Present: Rachel W., Bill C., Michele H., Erik N., Tori A., Father Richard C., Pennie T. (taking minutes), Ann C., Simon H., Jacob K., Wig Z., Joe B., Gary T., Afruza A.

YMCA Director meeting:

One possible location: Park area leading to train tracks at Charlestown and Linden. Second building of residential with higher proportion affordable, and park area. In conceptual beginning stages- Simon. Not on US2 spot but adjacent, private property. Per Ann, Stephanie is in prelim talks and is preparing something to share for us. They have financing for whole lot and maintenance. Some interest in keeping community center in D1, especially since the timeline for D2 is fairly stringent - Gary. There is no urgency for Y to move from Highland (speculated to have face value of ~3.5 million). Tori & Erik remind: still need to hold US2 accountable for public/open space- CDSP/requirement. Rachel raises issue of where SROs (single room occupancy), that are used widely, are needed and unlikely on D2. Joe: with loss of Ruby Rogers there is need for these services...will Y fill that need? Can US2 fill gaps? Jacob summarizes: people liked the conversation, Y might be doing own thing, we won't come to any plan now at this stage, we await updated information and continuing conversation.

D2 block: Tori

Going to design review on 5/24. Permit could be issued in next month. Tori's main concern: private recreational space on parking garage luxury space overlooking Allen St. Thoughts to share feedback with US2, mayor? Jacob proposes honing our position on specific space, bring to design review board. BoA has opinion that rooftop should be open space, programming developed in collaboration with USNC, other neighborhood groups. Jacob motions to make a clear position that we can similarly submit; seconded. Residents adjacent on Allen St. need to be engaged, given alternative, or need process to prioritize Somerville residents. How do to so? Simple property swap (Wig), we'll canvass them via BEC (meeting this Sat/canvass this Sun); Bill connected with Allen St. residents and thinks many will be open to connecting with us. Forms they're suggesting are not adequate and do not meet needs of neighborhood. What is our counterproposal? Positions: 1. Public space. 2. Critique of proposal in broad strokes. 14400 people on affordable housing wait list- it's closed. Bill has seen examples in 3 cities to maximize residents getting affordable housing; no evidence in Somerville. Bill: This should not be interpreted as an endorsement for overall plan, which we find falls abysmally short of creating vital urban space that people will remember they've been and want to return to, because of content and shape, beauty, way it's arranged. It's a shame if we can't do this here. Wig, Rob's proposals on visuals are all way better than what US2 proposes. If we make a statement on open space, we need to preface it. Erik: include language to hold design committee accountable!

JK: write a letter to design review that will serve as testimony to present: 1. Strenuously advocating for any open space to be fully public, with community process to program. 2. Bill's point. Pennie will bottom line drafting letter using these notes.

Wig: need to research affordable housing process- general knowledge - Joe B. volunteers, and informs about Council on Aging- deals with financing, restructuring, renovations, limited equity

ownership etc. Overlaps with discussions on transfer fee-- these are the other pieces folding into place here.

Re: meeting with mayor: Tori wants Joe C. on board; parking garage (D2) can't be the anchor for his Somervision. His buy-in could be worthwhile. Michele confirms that Design Review and Planning make decisions outside of BoA- so we have to get in front of them, and reaching BoA might not have impact..

Use letter as simultaneous request for

1. Inadequacy in general
2. Public space

Erik: ship sailed on BoA with Union Sq. zoning. Point raised that several planning board members have expired terms, one has been lame duck for years. Design Review committee doesn't usually take comments. 2012 SCC got grant and planning event that involved residents of Allen St.; a document emerged with neighbor's wishes; do those same ideas apply 6 years on, can we reach the same people ? Something to start from. Gary has contacts of people that did 2012 workshop (*Actually, the workshop I attended, where emails were collected was in May, 2015 - gst*) . 8-10 parcels impacted. We want to canvass residents to get them on board, inform them. Per Bill, ~3 households have Portuguese as first language, BEC will bottomline canvassing- Tori and Wig volunteer. We've never seen massing on whole façade- don't just want ivy up and pretend it's not there. Want to see image of massing on backside.

Meeting update: 65 Bow St. Erik- zoning is a bit slow, map last thing they'll work on. Erik sent out document with 5-6 specific questions. BoA not making much progress on zoning, budget season is upon us. Bill- very good to see abutters at meeting, main concern was that abutters should be contacted, and make sure developers had had contact. Developers are asking for changed zoning, pulling 5-story variance up a lot. An agreement to purchase with contingency that they get upzoning. First salvo- if you let us build more units, you automatically get more affordable housing. JT and Ben said they need to work it out with abutters and USNC, can't do spot zoning via petition, don't want special permit or variance- want to change zoning, not prove hardship, etc. Big issue = parking. Don't build too many, but address inadequate on-street parking. Force to build some ratio of spots to units. Any spots created are not tied to deeds. Residents wouldn't be allowed to pay for city parking permits? There's precedent in Cambridge. Erik made abutter map. Creative ideas for green space? 2 trees in plan, nothing else suggested, idea of rooftop garden not popular. Could they buy a nearby property to be a pocket park? Anything else missing? Documentation of automotive business history of Somerville... Jacob raises idea of adding another affordable unit over required. Concern raised about affordable housing taking precedence over green space. Eversource substation behind it, next to business stretch, may not be site for green space. Joe raises idea of building in preventing condo conversion. Calendar: Erik wants to have proposal written by end of May/early June, to not get lost in summer slow-down during July and Aug.

Gary asks for Outreach and Communication and CBA committee to send updated info for website. There are not presently descriptions on the web site for either the CBA or the O & C committees, so information is requested from the chairpersons of those committees to put onto the landing pages for each of those committees. Who are point people for those updates/uploads? - please step up.

DLJ looking to purchase Star Market – open space being discussed- luxury housing, with open space. Not configured to fit soccer field, which is what community needs...one community meeting happened, more to come.

Motion to move into executive session for personnel reasons approved.