

**Union Square Neighborhood Council Meeting**  
**August 20, 2019**  
**7 pm – 9 pm**  
**Public Safety Building**  
**220 Washington St.**

**Attendees:**

**Board Members:**

Michèle Hansen  
Andy Greenspon  
Pennie Taylor  
Jacob Kramer  
Bill Shelton  
Afruza Akhar  
Ann Camara  
Paola Massoli  
Ellie Tiglao  
Ben Bradlow  
Tori Antonino

**Members of the Negotiating Committee:**

Michèle Hansen  
Ben Bradlow  
Jacob Kramer  
Mike Firestone  
Van Hardy

**Community members.**

Rachel Weil  
Ted Poppitz  
Vickie Choitz  
Jenna and Ron  
Isabella Drago  
Angela Kevit  
Renee Mardones  
Marie-Elle Merchant  
Benjamin Weber  
Sonna Sheik  
Laurie Goldman  
Mary Jo Connolly  
Shawna B  
Joe Beckmann  
David Dinklage  
Wig Zamore

Jessica Eshelman

**Elected officials:**

Bill White

Ben Ewen-Campen

Will Mbah

Mary Jo Rossetti

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**2. Public Comment**

**Ron:** Once affordable housing units are allocated, how are they maintained as being affordable in the future, if they are given to a new resident?

**Answer Given:** *The units are inclusionary and have a deed restriction and are overseen by the City in terms of the rental cost in perpetuity.*

**Renee Mardones:** I want to thank the negotiating team for going through this long process. Question about Concord Community Garden not included in Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) has a proposal for affordable units and a health center on D2.4 that also not was discussed in the CBA.

**Answer Given:** *Green and Open Space Section 1c of the CBA to add open space of 10,000 sq ft to D2.4.*

**Renee:** It could be mentioned in the CBA that the Concord Community Garden space stays the way it is in order to ensure it is not changed during development.

**3. Approval of Minutes of July 9, 2019 and July 30, 2019 Meetings**

*Voted on after Community Benefits Agreement Document discussion.*

**4. Discussion of Community Benefits Agreement Document by the Board**

**Ben Bradlow:** Our purpose today is to bring this Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) to the Board in a public meeting in order to ask the Board to vote to refer the agreement to the membership for ratification. The bylaws require a ratification by 2/3 of the membership that vote. We will provide a summary of many of the points that will be by no means complete and extensive, but everyone has the written document to refer to.

**Mike Firestone:** We spent a year and a half going back and forth with US2 in almost weekly meetings with terms sheets going back and forth. If we could have started this development from scratch, I know many people would have done things differently. But we feel confident in this process and the document we have finished to represent the interests of the various constituencies of the community.

**Discussion of term sheets with Ben Bradlow and Mike Firestone taking turns explaining each section of the document:**

**Housing:**

20% inclusionary required by City zoning. To mitigate displacement, we wanted more of the inclusionary zoning to be built ahead of time. US2 will acquire the D4.3 site and work with an affordable housing developer to build 75% affordable units (39 of the 51 units). US2 will provide necessary bridge financing to make the project happen in a timely fashion.

Eight additional workforce housing units will eventually be built beyond the 20% inclusionary requirement.

28.6% inclusionary housing in the first phase of the development

1,000 total housing units across all D blocks.

202 affordable with 8 work-force housing total across all the D blocks.

No building will have less than 10% affordable units.

65% of the inclusionary units on D4.3 will be two bedroom.

Discussion of ensuring the D4.3 building does not cut into the current Concord Community Garden green space.

Question about whether units can be preferenced to Somerville residents.

Inclusionary units are dictated by lottery system in state law.

Discussion about strength of language ensuring actions are enforceable.

Question about possible segregation by putting 75% of affordable units in one property. But without this, there would not be as much affordable built fast enough. All affordable units are built the same as market rate units.

Discussion of Community Garden being a more public space and not by individual lot ownership. Could be advocated later on beyond a CBA.

**Labor:**

Construction: US2 has agreed that for every bidding process in the project, they will solicit at least one bid from a company that uses union labor. Laid out a range of minimum standards for contractors to meet in their hiring and management practices. Hiring goals: 20% Somerville residents, 20% minorities, 8% women. US2 will submit quarterly reports to the USNC about meeting those goals.

Second phase of project has a planned hotel on D2.1. US2 has signed memorandum of understanding with Unit Here 26 that the management of that hotel will take a neutral position towards a union card check campaign.

All hourly workers will make \$2.25/hour above the state minimum wage.

US2 is committing \$2 million towards workforce training initiatives in the development.

\$500,000 towards funding a position in Somerville Community Corporation's first source jobs program.

\$1.5 million will go into Somerville Jobs Creation and Retention Trust.

**Small & Sustainable Business:**

Generous subsidies for model employers with good practices such as living wage, sustainability, etc.

Subsidy for Union Square Main Streets (USMS) to hire a staffer for 5 years to help existing Union Square businesses.

US2 will negotiate in good faith for re-location of 6 existing businesses in Union Square to the redeveloped D blocks.

Question about how such subsidies would operate with future owners of the parcels in.

Answer: This will exist as long as the subsidy funds exist.

Goals listed in Labor and Small & Sustainable Businesses include creating a workforce training and hiring ecosystem for more local people.

US2 is also hiring a staff person to interface with businesses and help hire local workers.

### **Sustainability:**

D4.3 will be developed to the PassivHaus standard. A demonstration project to give local publicity for this standard to be used elsewhere.

Buildings >50,000 sq ft LEED Gold, <50,000 sq ft meet LEED Silver at minimum.

D2 buildings will have sections of green roofs.

Electric Vehicle ready parking and infrastructure.

US2 Power purchasing agreement for 10 years for D2.1, D2.2, D2.3 green power, carbon offsets, or renewable energy certificates.

All project areas will be solar ready.

Discussion of issue that certain environmental standards that should already be set by the City are being pushed by the USNC in the CBA. As a result of other governing bodies not setting these standards, then it limits the ability of the USNC to negotiate further.

Discussion about weaker CBA term language such as “where feasible and practicable”.

Answer: Certain terms started at “where feasible and practicable” such as PassivHaus, but then became more defined terms and requirements. As the project is developed in the future, technology and knowledge will change in terms of what is feasible and easier to build. This language at the very least requires referencing the CBA when design plans are presented to more powerful boards who have authority.

### **Green and Open Space:**

If City agrees to amend zoning to allow 5 stories on D7.1, then US2 will redesign D7.2 to add a second neighborhood park of 10,000 sq ft.

### **Civic Space:**

A temporary civic space in the short term until a permanent civic space is established as envisioned in the Coordinated Development Special Permit.

Terms of use for the space can be worked out between USNC monitoring group and US2.

Question of whether YMCA would want to get a lease on land in D1.2 since the YMCA wants to actually buy their own building.

**Exhibit A:**

Shows distribution of Community Benefits Linkage Funds from US2 and what US2 is paying out of their own cost.

**Monitoring and Compliance Terms:**

USNC will designate 7 members to form the “CBA Implementation Committee”, which will meet with US2 quarterly during construction and twice a year thereafter, and US2 must provide an update report each time.

*Motion to vote to refer this document to the council membership for a ratification vote.*

*Unanimous 11-0.*

Discussion of when to hold public meeting to explain CBA and answer questions.  
Publicize details to The Somerville Times, the Patch, Somerville Journal, etc.

Allow people to vote any time at the informational meeting (they don't have to sit through the meeting), and then can also vote on a ballot one other day in the future.

Hold two meetings, one on weekend morning, one on weekday night.

**3. Approval of Minutes of July 9, 2019 and July 30, 2019 Meetings**

*Unanimous approval 11-0 of meeting minutes from July 9 and July 30.*

**5. Public Comment**

**Vickie Choitz:** I'm a managing trustee of the Somerville Jobs Creation and Retention Trust. I fully support all the provisions for workforce development and high-road employers. Question – remind us how USNC membership piece works.

**Answer Given:** A USNC Member is anyone who lives, works, owns property, or volunteers regularly for an organization in Union Square boundaries, boundaries as shown in bylaws and based off the Union Square Neighborhood Plan from the City.

**Ben E-C:** There will be a public hearing on the transfer of land parcel on D2 on September 10.

**Renee:** CBA document has money for hiring staff for First Source Program from SCC. I would recommend some agreement with SCC and USNC that they are committed to reporting goals and achieving CBA goals.

**Ben Bradlow:** I think SCC needs to enter into an agreement with US2, and USNC should not act as an intermediary in that process.

**Jessica:** 1) Who could I speak with for specifics on the CBA term for supporting a hired position with Union Square Main Streets (USMS)?

**Answer Given:** Let USNC know your questions and concerns.

**Jessica:** 2) USMS will help get word out on about CBA in our newsletter and social media. Who should I talk to on USNC to coordinate?

**Answer Given:** USNS Secretary Andy Greenspon

**Jessica:** 3) Can the public offer substantive feedback to change parts of the CBA?

**Answer Given:** We can be receptive to feedback, and if feedback could be incorporated, then some modest adjustments **may** be possible, but the deal won't be re-negotiated. But we do need to receive a 2/3 majority vote to execute the agreement.

There was a big public outreach at the beginning of this process and community benefits summits to determine the priorities from the community. Then a negotiating team was chosen to negotiate for those benefits. And that is what this document represents.

**Jessica:** 4) Congratulations on the momentum from this process. Lots of affordable housing coming online earlier and help for local businesses as the development proceeds.

**Wig:** Regular USNC meetings have been fairly participatory. However, the organization overall is fairly flat and not incredibly participatory. There should be a more informal meeting with Negotiating Team or Board members to discuss issues with the CBA. It would be nice to have an opportunity for those interested in the details to have a more informal give and take.

**Joe:** You could table at the Union Square Farmers Market to advertise the meetings and interface with people to ask questions.

**Public Presentation and Information Sessions about Community Benefits Agreement**

**Sunday Sep 22 10 am**

**Monday Sep 23, 7 pm**

**Location: Likely at Argenziano**

**Can vote at any of those meetings or at one other voting day after that.**