



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 25, 2012

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE Meeting as a COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Tony Lafuente	Chair	Present	
Rebekah Gewirtz	Vice Chair	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Absent	
William M. Roche	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Thomas F. Taylor	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Sean T. O'Donovan	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Robert C. Trane	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Bruce M. Desmond	Alderman At Large	Present	
John M Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Joseph Curtatone	Mayor	Present	
Omar Boukili	Administrative Assistant	Present	
Michael Glavin	Exec. Director, OSPCD	Present	
Frank Wright	City Solicitor	Present	
Steve Azar	OSPCD	Present	
Peter Forcellese, Jr.	City Treasurer	Present	

193585 - Requesting approval of the Union Square Revitalization Plan, per MGL c121B s48 and 760 CMR 12.00 et seq.:

Mr. Glavin informed the members that the plan has been amended by deleting the Asian Market from the list of properties to be taken. Mayor Curtatone stated that the plan is necessary to attract developers and that the properties in question are currently being under utilized. He told the members that if the city does not move forward on this proposal, the redevelopment of Union Square will not happen. The Mayor added that even if the MBTA stop does not come to fruition, the taking of the subject properties by eminent domain would still be good for the city, since higher and better used of the properties would create a better quality of life.

Alderman White expressed concern over the plan being contingent upon approval by the MBTA Board of Directors and he spoke about redevelopment plans that have failed in the past. Alderman White stated that he is not confident that the city would be able to sell the land if the

MBTA stop isn't built, adding that he doesn't feel comfortable about the guarantees for the Green Line extension, and he asked for some statements from the Governor to support the state's dedication to extending the Green Line. Alderman White also spoke about how this plan could hurt current businesses from obtaining financing and he believes that the plan could be carried out in a manner that would not harm those businesses.

Alderman Gewirtz stressed that state financing is not in place for the Green Line extension and she asked why the city needs to take these properties if the MBTA can do it themselves. Alderman Gewirtz also asked what would happen if a developer didn't come forward. Alderman Heuston spoke about the lack of a time frame to carry out the plan and feels that demolishing properties in the D-2 block prevents owners of those properties from developing the properties on their own. Alderman Desmond pointed out that there are no guarantees from the state.

Alderman Connolly stated that the city should move forward cautiously and maintain control of the sites and he expressed concern about remediation and exposure to the city, to which Mr. Glavin replied that the remediation of private property can be negotiated with private developers, so as to avoid using public funds. Mr. Azar noted a statute limiting liability with respect to environmental issues and redevelopment authorities.

Alderman Taylor stated that he would like to deal with the portion of the plan dealing with block D-2 only, this evening, to allow for further discussion of the full plan. The committee discussed severing the D-2 section of the plan, however Mayor Curtatone stated that the Administration doesn't plan to do so because time is of the essence.

Alderman O'Donovan made a motion to move the question. Alderman Gewirtz stated that deliberation is important, therefore, she was not ready to vote on the matter. Alderman Heuston stated that she had concerns, as did some property owners, but she was ready to move forward, adding the Board of Aldermen would still have control of the finances even if a redevelopment authority is involved. Alderman White disagreed with that statement since a developer with its own funds would not need Board of Aldermen approval. Alderman O'Donovan's motion to move the question was approved on a roll call vote of 6 in favor, 3 against and 2 absent.

A roll call vote was taken at the committee meeting to approve the item (193585), as follows: 6 in favor (Ald. Lafuente, Heuston, O'Donovan, Trane, Desmond and Connolly), 3 against (Ald. Gewirtz, Taylor and White), and 2 absent (Ald. Sullivan and Roche), and the item was reported out of committee as such.

Note: At the October 2, 2012 Board of Aldermen meeting, this Committee Report was amended by placing item 193585 on file, since a revised plan was being submitted at the BOA meeting.