



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Land Use Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 1, 2026

6:30 PM

Joint Meeting with Planning Board

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Ewen-Campen at 6:31 pm and adjourned at 8:39 pm on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Clingan, Sait, McLaughlin, Ewen-Campen), and 1 absent (Councilor Davis).

Others Present: Dan Bartman – Director of Planning and Zoning, Kortney Cena – Senior Planner, Justin Schreiber – Senior Transportation Planner, Jahan Habib – Planning Board Member, Amelia Aboff – Vice Chair of the Planning Board, Lynn Richards - Planning Board Member, Luc Shuster - Planning Board Member, Michael McNeley - Planning Board Member, Coralie Cooper - Planning Board Member. Madalyn Letellier – Assistant City Clerk Legislative Services.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan, Ward Five City Councilor Naima Sait, Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin and Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen

1. Public Hearings

- 1.1. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1258](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 3.2.17, 4.1.15, 4.2.15, 4.3.15, 4.4.15, 5.1.16, 6.1.13, 6.2.14, 6.3.13, 6.4.16, 6.5.13 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to correct parking maximums.

Senior Transportation Planner Justin Schreiber shared edits to a previous proposal submitted in 2024 in, *Land Use - 2026-10-01 Parking Corrections Presentation (with 26-1258)*. Edits include various scrivener edits and simplify the parking tables. Vice Chair of the Planning Board Aboff read a comment from Planning Board Member Capuano regarding the loss of street spots and the request to restrict street stickers.

Councilor Ewen-Campen opened the public hearing at 8:01 PM.

One resident spoke to an increase in Urban Residential areas and expressed a desire to change it back to no parking as the district is already dense.

Councilor Ewen-Campen closed the public hearing at 8:03 PM. Public comments will be accepted until Friday October 30th, 2026, at 12:00 PM and can be submitted to publiccomments@somervillema.gov.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 1.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1259](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.4.4, 3.1.7, 3.1.8, 3.1.9, 3.1.10, 3.1.11, 3.2.7, 3.2.8, 3.2.9, 3.2.10, 3.2.11, 4.1.7, 4.2.7, 4.3.7, 4.4.7 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinances to remove ground story elevation requirements.

Senior Planner Kortney Cena presented on the proposed amendments to remove ground story elevation requirements for all building types and in all districts, *Land Use - 2026-10-01 Ground Story Elevation Presentation (with 26-1259)*.

Councilor Ewen-Campen opened the public hearing at 8:11 PM.

Two residents spoke in favor of this change and encouraged the committee to also consider items from a proposal previously submitted by Councilor Link.

Councilor Ewen-Campen closed the public hearing at 8:14 PM. Public comments will be accepted until Friday October 30th, 2026, at 12:00 PM and can be submitted to publiccomments@somervillema.gov.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

- 1.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-1336](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 3.1.3, 3.1.6, 3.1.8, 3.1.9, 3.1.11, 3.1.12, 3.1.13, 3.1.16, 3.2.6 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to align with State Law regarding protected accessory dwelling units.

Senior Planner Kortney Cena presented on the proposed amendments regarding protected accessory dwelling units in presentation, *Land Use - 2026-10-01 PU ADU Compliance Presentation (with 26-1336)*. Chair Ewen-Campen clarified that State law requires the accessory dwelling units (ADU) to be the same height as the principle building on the lot, Senior Planner clarified under state law that the city cannot have a more restrictive height limit, but the square footage is malleable.

Councilor Ewen-Campen opened the public hearing at 7:17 PM.

16 individuals spoke during the public hearing. Residents provided comments about state regulations and the square footage of ADU's becoming excessive and concern over the ability to adjust the state set statues. Concerns were expressed about these amendments aiding developers, removing affordable units, and further displacement as well as losing green space in the city. Many residents spoke to the desire of hiring the green score. Two residents suggested workshops for members of the public to understand what this means for neighbors and how to

operate within the new guidelines. One resident asked that a requirement be added that an owner be required to show proof of proper permit processes followed and tenants notified appropriately.

Councilor Ewen-Campen closed the public hearing at 7:55 PM. Public comments will be accepted until Friday October 30th, 2026, at 12:00 PM and can be submitted to publiccomments@somervillema.gov.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

1.5. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-1337](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.4.5, 3.1.17, 3.2.16, 4.1.8, 4.1.9, 4.1.14, 4.2.8, 4.2.9, 4.2.14, 4.3.8, 4.3.9, 4.3.14, 4.4.8, 4.4.9, 4.4.15, 5.1.7, 5.1.8, 5.1.9, 5.1.16, 6.1.12, 6.2.7, 6.2.8, 6.2.14, 6.3.12, 6.4.9, 6.4.15, 6.5.7, 7.2.8 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to clarify requirements for principal entrances.

Senior Planner Kortney Cena presented on the amendments to clarify requirements for principal entrances, *Land Use - 2026-10-01 Principal Entrances Presentation (with 26-1337)*.

Councilor Ewen-Campen opened the public hearing at 8:24 PM.

Three residents spoke during the public hearing. One resident spoke to concerns within the proposed amendments, and the back door entrance could create problems for neighbors. Another resident shared concern raised amongst neighbors that new construction does not comply with accessibility standards and variances have been applied to skirt those responsibilities.

Councilor Ewen-Campen closed the public hearing at 8:29 PM. Public comments will be accepted until Friday October 30th, 2026, at 12:00 PM and can be submitted to publiccomments@somervillema.gov.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

1.6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-1338](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Sections 2.1.1, 2.4.5, 3.1.16, 3.2.8, 3.2.9, 3.2.10, 3.2.11, 3.2.15, 4.1.3, 4.1.7, 4.1.8, 4.1.9, 4.1.10, 4.1.13, 4.2.3, 4.2.7, 4.2.8, 4.2.9, 4.2.10, 4.2.13, 4.3.3, 4.3.7, 4.3.8, 4.3.9, 4.3.10, 4.3.13, 4.4.3, 4.4.7, 4.4.8, 4.4.9, 4.4.13, 5.1.3, 5.1.7, 5.1.8, 5.1.9, 5.1.10, 5.1.11, 5.1.14, 6.1.3, 6.1.7, 6.1.8, 6.1.11, 6.2.3, 6.2.7, 6.2.8, 6.2.9, 6.2.12, 6.3.3, 6.3.8, 6.4.3, 6.4.9, 6.4.11, 6.5.3, 6.5.7, 6.5.8, 6.5.11, 7.2.7, 7.2.10, 7.4.3, 7.4.6, 7.4.7, 7.4.8, 7.4.11, 8.1.1, 8.1.2, 8.1.4, 8.1.5, 8.1.6, 8.2.2, 8.2.4, 8.2.5, 8.4.16, 8.4.17, 8.4.19, 9.1.7, 12.1.1, 12.1.2, 12.1.4, 12.1.5, 12.1.6, 12.1.7, 12.3.5, 12.3.6, 12.3.7 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance to update terminology for affordable dwelling units and commercial spaces.

Senior Planner Kortney Cena presented on the proposed amendments to update terminology for affordable dwelling units and commercial spaces,

Land Use - 2026-10-01 Terminology Updates Presentation (with 26-1338).

Councilor Ewen-Campen opened the public hearing at 8:37 PM.

With no speakers Councilor Ewen-Campen closed the public hearing at 8:37 PM. Public comments will be accepted until Friday October 30th, 2026, at 12:00 PM and can be submitted to publiccomments@somervillema.gov.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Ground Story Elevation Fact Sheet (with 26-1259)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Ground Story Elevation Presentation (with 26-1259)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Principal Entrances Fact Sheet (with 26-1337)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Principal Entrances Presentation (with 26-1337)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Terminology Updates Fact Sheet (with 26-1338)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Terminology Updates Presentation (with 26-1338)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Parking Corrections Presentation (with 26-1258)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 PU ADU Compliance Amendment Fact Sheet (with 26-1336)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 PU ADU Compliance Presentation (with 26-1336)
- Land Use - 2026-10-01 Joint Hearing Zoning Amendment Introduction Slides (with 26-1258, 26-1259, 26-1336, 26-1337, 26-1338)