



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

PLANNING DIVISION

STAFF

GEORGE PROAKIS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*

LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*

VACANT, *PLANNER*

DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

FREDERICK J. LUND, *SENIOR DRAFTSMAN*

Case #: PB 2010-19

Date: November 4, 2010

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 34 Sturtevant Street (a/k/a 16 Sturtevant Street)

Applicant Name: Street Retail Inc.

Applicant Address: 1626 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852

Property Owner Name: same

Agent Name: Berkley Building Company, Haverhill, MA

Alderman: William Roche

Legal Notice: Applicant and Owner Street Retail Inc seek a special permit to exceed signage requirements in the Assembly Square Mixed Use District per Section 6.4.14.C and of the SZO to exceed size requirements of SZO Article 12 for a 36 foot freestanding three-face sign and 455 square feet of signage on the Assembly Square Marketing Building.

Zoning District/Ward: ASMD / Ward 1

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit §6.4.14.C

Date of Application: October 14, 2010

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board 11/4/10

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The property is vacant lot within the Assembly Square Mixed-Use District. The triangle-shaped parcel is 33,188 square feet in size and is bound by Assembly Square Drive and Foley Street. The parcel is identified as Parcel #9 on the proposed Assembly Square PUD that was approved by the Planning Board in June of 2010, but this application is not subject to or included within the provisions of the PUD.



CITY HALL • 93 HIGHLAND AVENUE • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02143
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 2500 • TTY: (617) 666-0001 • FAX: (617) 625-0722

www.somervillema.gov



The parcel is a portion of the property generally known as 34 Sturtevant Street, and has been advertised with that address. It should be noted that upon applying for building permits for the marketing center, on October 27, 2010 the City of Somerville assigned the new address of 16 Sturtevant Street to the site. Nonetheless, the original address of 34 Sturtevant Street clearly identifies this location to abutters that may receive notice.

2. Proposal: The primary work on this site proposed by the applicant is the construction of a 2100 square foot modular building. Because this is a single building for an allowed use under 5,000 square feet, that building does not require a special permit, and the applicant expects to secure building permits to install this structure during the week of November 1, 2010. The applicant is seeking to place a freestanding sign on the site and a sign on the building. These signs require a Special Permit from the Planning Board.

The applicant is proposing to use this building as a marketing center for the Assembly Row development that received preliminary PUD approval in June. The Applicant has indicated that the center will be used to bring potential commercial clients into the development site for an introduction to the development and a review of the project.

In order to adequately label the center and establish an on-site temporary gateway for the project during the marketing phase, the applicant is requesting signage that will allow this small building to stand out within the larger construction site. Therefore, the applicant is requesting to install a 3-face freestanding sign of 297 square feet in total area and 33 feet in total height, and signage on three sides of the building that totals 455 square feet in area.

3. Nature of Application: The sign regulations of the SZO in Section 12.4 allow a maximum of one freestanding sign with two faces and a total of 65 square feet per face. This section also allows on-building signs limited to a total square footage of 2 times the sign frontage. The sign frontage is approximately 120 square feet in this case. Therefore, the proposal violates both Sections 12.4.4d and 12.4.1e of the SZO. Per Section 6.4.14.C of the SZO, signage in the ASMD shall not exceed the requirements in Section 12.4, except that "approval for freestanding, directional and/or wall signage . . . that does not comply with the applicable provisions of the Ordinance may be granted solely through a special permit from the Planning Board."

Therefore, the applicant is seeking a Special Permit under 6.4.14.C to exceed the requirements of Section 12.4.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The area is surrounded by the commercial building at 5 Middlesex Avenue, the Assembly Square Marketplace, and the remaining lots that are to become the future IKEA site and Assembly Row development. Most of this area is vacant or under construction in preparation for future development in the area.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The signage will be an improvement to the site, highlighting the forthcoming Assembly Row development and helping the applicant market the larger development to potential future owners and tenants. The signage is bright and colorful, to catch attention, but this colorful signage is necessary when surrounded by the existing construction site. The building and signage are both temporary, with the intention of being replaced by the building proposed in the PUD for Parcel 9 when that site is ready to be developed, and other buildings within the PUD have been occupied.

6. Green Building Practices: None have been identified by the applicant.

7. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not provided comments.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."

The sign design complies with the regulations for signs within the ASMD, and is in compliance with all relevant zoning except for the sign size regulations of Section 12. Until the construction progresses on the site, the sign is required to mark the marketing center. The center is temporary and will be removed when the development reaches this parcel.

3. Consistency with Purposes: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to providing for and maintaining the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City and the purpose of the ASMD by allowing the Applicant to market the mixed use PUD that has received preliminary approval on the site.

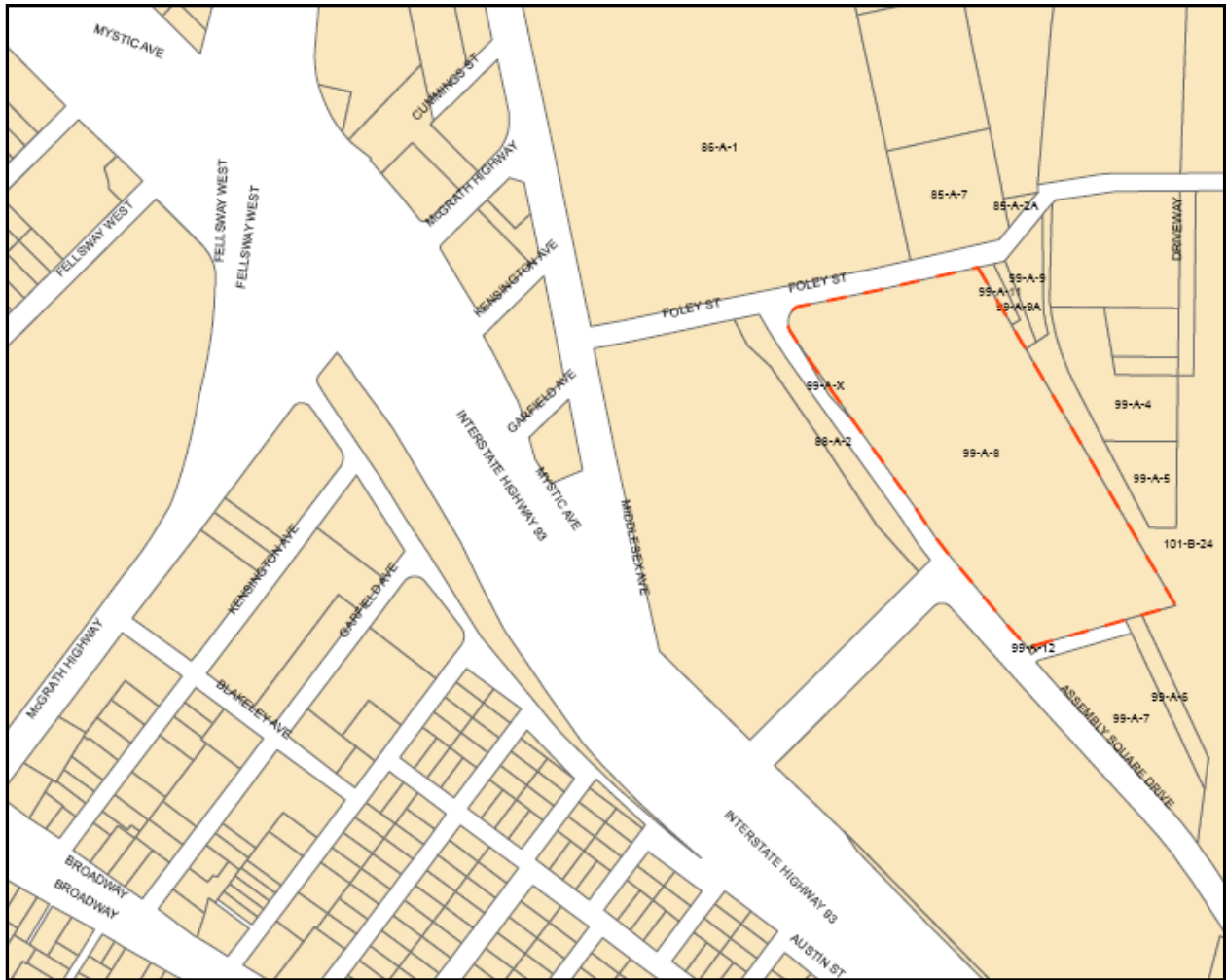
4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."

The signs will be compatible with the site as it is designed to be placed in proximity to the Assembly Square construction site where it must stand out as an attractive wayfinding structure.

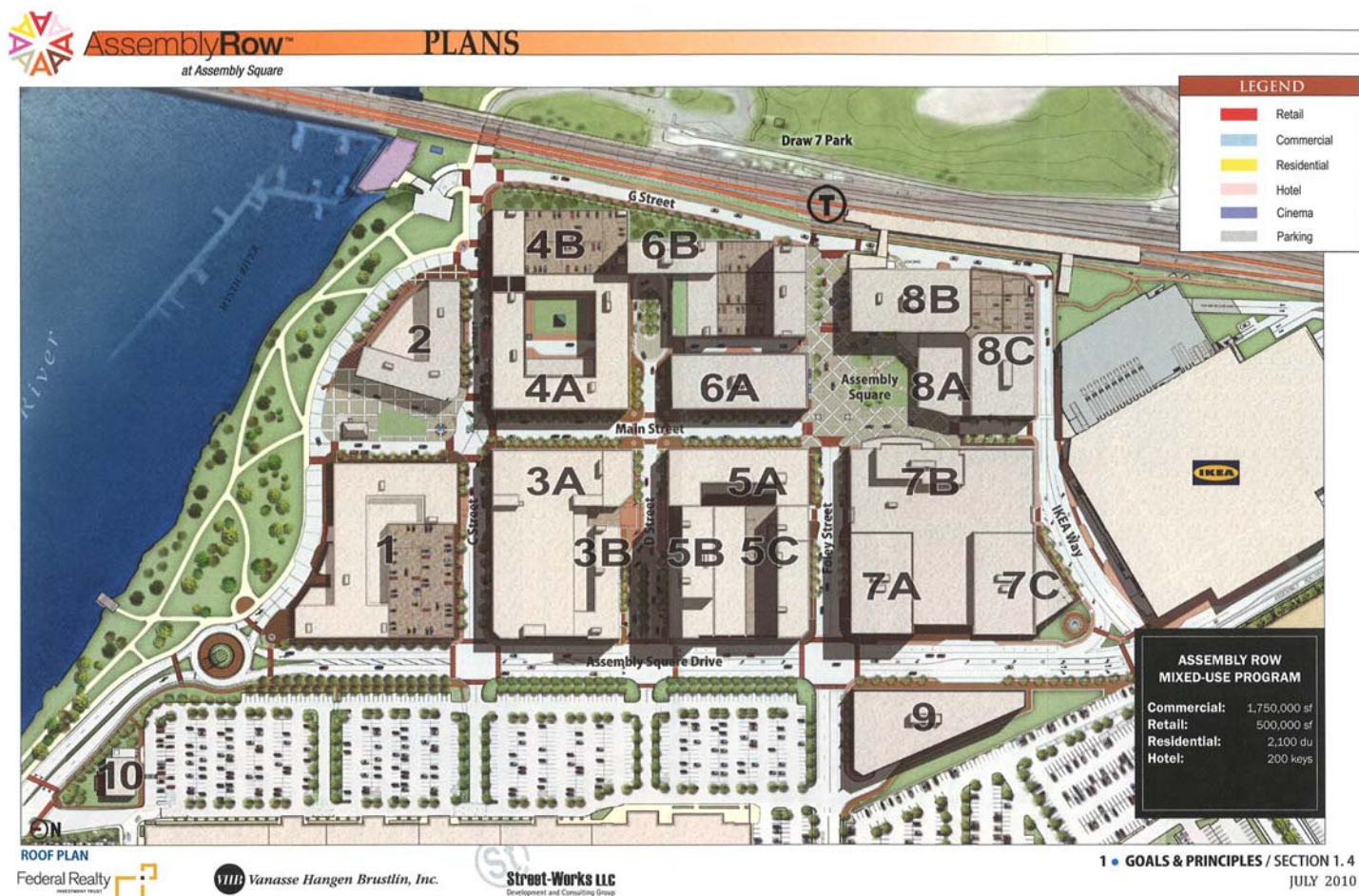
III. RECOMMENDATION**Special Permit under §5.1 & §6.4.14.C**

Based on the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	Approval is for a freestanding sign of a 33 foot high and 297 square foot freestanding sign and a series of signs attached to a building with a total of 455 square feet, as follows:	BP/CO	Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>10/19/10</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>10/14/10</td><td>Attachments to applicant numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, with 2-4 dated 10/14/10 showing freestanding sign and marketing center signage.</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	10/19/10	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	10/14/10	Attachments to applicant numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, with 2-4 dated 10/14/10 showing freestanding sign and marketing center signage.
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission					
	10/19/10				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office					
10/14/10	Attachments to applicant numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, with 2-4 dated 10/14/10 showing freestanding sign and marketing center signage.									
Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. Sign replacement of the same size within the same sign footprint and using the same sign technology shall be permitted by right.										
2	The sign shall be removed within 30 days from when the marketing center is removed from the site.	Cont.	Plng.							
3	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.							



34 Sturtevant Street



Assembly Square Parcel Plan: Subject Parcel is #9 on this plan