



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

**STAFF**

MADELEINE MASTERS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*  
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*  
LORI MASSA, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*  
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*  
FREDERICK J. LUND, *SENIOR DRAFTSMAN*

**Case #:** 2007-03-R0409  
**Date:** May 20, 2009  
**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 16 Butler Drive / 100 Temple Street (St. Polycarp)

**Applicant Name:** Somerville Community Corporation

**Applicant Address:** 337 Somerville Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Somerville MA 02143

**Property Owner Name:** St. Polycarp Redevelopment, LLC

**Property Owner Address:** c/o Somerville Community Corp, 337 Somerville Ave, Somerville MA 02145

**Agent Name:** none

**Alderman:** Pero

Legal Notice: The Applicant Somerville Community Corporation & Owner St. Polycarp Redevelopment, LLC seek a revision to Special Permit ZBA 2007-03 and 2007-03-R0308 (SZO §5.3.8). The revision is to establish a phasing plan that would modify building dimensions, parking layout and landscaped areas.

Zoning District/Ward: NB / Ward 4

Zoning Approval Sought: Revision to Special Permit 2007-03 and 2007-03-R0308, SZO §5.3.8

Date of Application: April 28, 2009

Date(s) of Public Hearing: ZBA: May 20, 2009

Date of Decision: N/A

Vote: N/A

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: Located in the Winter Hill neighborhood and bordered by Mystic Avenue, Temple Street, Memorial Road, and the Mystic View Apartments (Somerville Housing Authority), the subject property is an approximately 3.5 acre lot. The proposed Saint Polycarp Village site was formerly occupied by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, and used by the St. Polycarp Parish until 1999.

There were six existing buildings on the property- a church, rectory, convent, school, library/storage building, and garage.

The library/hall building is occupied by Just A Start (JAS) as classroom space. The rectory building is owned by JAS and used as housing. The church building is owned by the Immigrant Church of the Haitian Community and is used as a church.

The Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) received Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval in March 2007 to demolish four of the six existing buildings and construct seven new buildings in two phases. Phase 1 is under construction which consists of the construction of one four-story building with approximately 4,000 s.f. of commercial space and 2,000s.f. of office space on the ground floor and 24 residential rental units above. The ZBA granted the SCC a revision in March 2003 (2007-03-R0308) to add 3 parking spaces to have the required amount of parking to satisfy condition four of the original special permit and gain approval for the parking for 100 Temple Street to be on the separate lot at 8 Butler Drive.

2. Proposal: The Applicants seek a revision to Special Permit ZBA 2007-03 for phase II – 60 units of housing, 20 of which will be affordable. The revision is to establish a phasing plan that would modify building dimensions, building elevations, parking layout and landscaped areas.

The present application seeks to:

1. Phase the remaining 60 units into two phases of 30-units each.
2. Modify the building dimensions (decreasing the total footprint) and parking layout (increasing the total area), which will affect landscaped areas (a small decrease in the courtyard green space around the three buildings with an increase in the playground area along the Phase II and II boundary).

The revisions are shown on the plans dated March 28, 2009 and May 6, 2009 with an OSPCD stamp date of May 15, 2009. The design changes are all contained within the Phase II boundary on the plans.

3. Nature of Application: The Applicant seeks a revision to the permit under SZO §5.3.8.

4. Green Building Practices: Both phases of the redevelopment will use green building practices. The applicant stated, “The mixed-use building is LEED registered and we are aiming for a Platinum rating under the new LEED for Homes program administered by the USGBC. The condominium phase has been awarded green building funding through the Enterprise Foundation’s Green Communities program and will be following the Green Communities standards for green building.”

## II. INITIAL STAFF COMMENTS

Planning Staff is not recommending a vote at present, but requests the Board to take public testimony at this hearing and consider the application, as well as staff comments below, in order to provide direction to the applicant for any subsequent revisions.

This project was initially permitted according to a site plan illustrating a “mixed-use village” organized around a central spine (formerly Butler Drive) and largely defined by a series of open spaces radiating outward. The original approval did not establish a phasing plan; therefore it has never been specified

when each of these amenities would have to be provided, or when changes to Butler Drive would have to be implemented.

In light of current financing constraints, Planning is supportive of the Applicant's efforts to establish clear phases of building so that the project can move forward and begin to generate revenues. At the same time, Staff would recommend specifying corresponding timelines and guarantees of infrastructure improvements and community amenities to go along with each construction phase. These timelines have not yet been defined. Staff are also working with the Applicant and with Traffic & Parking on a separate request for an interim traffic plan; Staff would like to see this request incorporated into the phasing plan presented to the Board.

In considering the applicant's request for a phasing plan, Staff are particularly interested in seeing the "village" aspect of the development come to fruition. The timing of the changes to Butler Drive and the installation of landscaping along that central spine is important to defining that character. Planning will be working with the Applicant to balance the need for certain amenities with the financial feasibility of their installation.

In considering the applicant's request for changes to the site plan and building elevations, Staff have some concerns about increased paved areas dedicated to parking and details on the submitted elevations. Staff are continuing to work with the Applicant and their architects on these aspects of the proposal and would additionally seek input from the Design Review Committee, the ZBA, and the public prior to requesting revisions.

### III. NEXT STEPS

As the project is rather large as well as time-sensitive, with the Applicant's funding deadline at the end of June, **Staff request the Board's and the public's comments on this proposal in advance of the staff recommendation**, in order to ensure that the Applicant can respond comprehensively and expeditiously to all concerns.

Finally, **Staff request that the proposed changes to the site plan and elevations be presented to the Citywide Design Review Committee** for their comments. Their next meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2009.

Following the initial public hearing and further review by City Staff, a supplementary report will be provided, which will include findings and a recommendation.