



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

**MICHAEL F. GLAVIN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**PLANNING DIVISION STAFF**

GEORGE PROAKIS, *DIRECTOR OF PLANNING*  
LORI MASSA, *SENIOR PLANNER*  
DAN BARTMAN, *SENIOR PLANNER*  
AMIE HAYES, *PLANNER*  
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

**Case #:** ZBA 2013-16

**Date:** April 11, 2013

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

---

**PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

---

**Site:** 160 Washington St.

**Applicant Name:** AutoZone Inc.

**Applicant Address:** 123 South Front St., Memphis, TN 38103

**Property Owner Name:** Romanow Real Estate Trust, c/o Gabriela Romanow

**Property Owner Address:** 1010 Memorial Dr., Cambridge, MA 02138

**Agent Name:** Carolyn Thaemert

**Agent Address:** 123 South Front St., Memphis, TN 38103

**Alderman:** Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: Applicant, AutoZone Inc., and Owner, Romanow Real Estate Trust, seek a Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1 to modify the existing commercial storefront, which includes the rearrangement and removal of windows. IA zone. Ward 2.

Zoning District/Ward: IA Zone / Ward 2

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §4.4.1

Date of Application: March 19, 2013

Dates of Public Hearing: Zoning Board of Appeals – **Wednesday, April 17, 2013**

---

**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. Subject Property: The subject property is a 38,208 square foot parcel at the corner of McGrath Highway, Washington Street, and Joy Street. The parcel is comprised of a one story masonry structure that is 18,020 square feet and houses AutoZone. The lot has 38 parking stalls and one loading area. The structure is located in an Industrial District (IA) near Union Square.

There has been no prior zoning relief.



2. Proposal: The Applicant, AutoZone, proposes to modify the existing storefront, which includes rearranging and removing windows in an effort to update the front entrance. The existing center door will remain on the front façade, but the windows will be modified so four windows would be located to the left of the door and five located to the right. The windows would be approximately five feet in width by seven feet in height. The existing storefront window framing will be replaced with red Kynar (a thermo plastic) framing.

The left side elevation currently has six clear aluminum storefront windows grouped into two groups of three. These windows would be removed and infilled with a masonry material consistent with the existing. The wall will be painted to match the existing façade.

Signage is not proposed to change as a result of this application.



*160 Washington Street*

3. Nature of Application: The structure is currently nonconforming with regard to parking and landscape. In accordance with the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO) §4.4.1, a nonconforming commercial structure may be modified through Special Permit approval.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: The structure is located in an industrial (IA) district. The surrounding neighborhood includes single, two- and three-family residential dwellings, located predominantly to the north and west of the subject parcel. These neighborhoods also have other uses, such as retail and office, interspersed within the area. The areas east and south of the subject parcel are predominantly industrial uses associated with automobile use and repair.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The proposal to modify the existing commercial storefront to update the front entrance will not be detrimental to the structure. The Applicant proposes to rearrange and remove windows on the front and left side elevations to create a unified front façade.

6. Green Building Practices: The Applicant hopes to use a vendor within 500 miles of the store to complete the work proposed.

7. Comments:

*Fire Prevention:* Has been contacted but has not yet provided comments.

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

## II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §4.4.1):

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."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 of the SZO, Staff find that the alterations proposed would not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing structure. The proposal to modify and update the existing structure will create a unified front façade.

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 promoting "the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to provide for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City; to protect health; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to conserve the value of land and buildings; and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City."

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the IA Industrial District, §6.1.8, which is, "To establish and preserve areas for industrial and related uses which are not incompatible with commercial uses; uses which are most appropriately located as neighbors of industrial uses including living and studio space for artists; and uses which are necessary to service the immediate needs of industrial establishments in those areas, and accessory uses to industrial uses such as day care centers, cafeterias, health facilities, and the like."

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 proposal, to modify the front and left sides façades by rearranging and removing windows, will update the existing structure and create a unified front façade.

## III. RECOMMENDATION

### Special Permit under §4.4.1

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

The recommendation is based upon a technical analysis by Planning Staff of the application material based upon the required findings of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance, and is based only upon information submitted prior to the public hearing. This report may be revised or updated with new recommendations, findings and/or conditions based upon additional information provided to the Planning Staff during the public hearing process.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes								
1	Approval is for a Special Permit to modify the existing commercial storefront, which includes the rearrangement and removal of windows. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	ISD/Plng.									
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>(March 19, 2013)</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office</td></tr><tr><td>March 18, 2013 (April 10, 2013)</td><td>Land survey plan submitted to OSPCD</td></tr><tr><td>April 4, 2013 (April 10, 2013)</td><td>Elevations submitted to OSPCD (A-2 &amp; CE-1)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	(March 19, 2013)	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office	March 18, 2013 (April 10, 2013)	Land survey plan submitted to OSPCD	April 4, 2013 (April 10, 2013)	Elevations submitted to OSPCD (A-2 & CE-1)
	Date (Stamp Date)				Submission							
	(March 19, 2013)				Initial application submitted to the City Clerk’s Office							
	March 18, 2013 (April 10, 2013)				Land survey plan submitted to OSPCD							
April 4, 2013 (April 10, 2013)	Elevations submitted to OSPCD (A-2 & CE-1)											
Any changes to the approved (site plan or elevations) that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.												
2	The Applicant or Owner shall meet the Fire Prevention Bureau’s requirements.	CO	FP									
3	New siding infill, both type and color, as well as trim or other detail materials shall match or be complimentary to the rest of the existing structure.	CO	Plng.									
4	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.									

160 Washington Street

