



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*
SARAH LEWIS, *SENIOR PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*
DAWN PEREIRA, *ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT*

Case #: ZBA 2016-95
Date: September 29th, 2016
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 309 Washington Street

Applicant Name: Anthony Fava
Applicant Address: 11 Elkins Street, #250, Boston, MA 02127
Owner Name: Radha Nadasundaram
Owner Address: 309 Washington Street, Somerville, MA 02143
Agent Name: n/a
Agent Address: n/a
Alderman: Maryann Heuston

Legal Notice: (Case # **ZBA 2016-95**) Applicant, Anthony Fava, seeks a Special Permit under SZO §5.5 and §8.6.5.c to approve a complete renovation of a 2-1/2 story 2-unit residential building with rear decks. RB Zone. Ward 2.

Dates of Public Hearing: October 5th, 2016

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The property is a 2,200 square foot parcel on the northside of Washington Street, across from Parker Street, in an RB zoning district. The existing building is a 2-1/2 story wood framed paired house and the subject property is a stacked two-family dwelling with 2 bedrooms in each unit. The existing structure has a non-conforming F.A.R. of 1.077 and there is currently no parking on the property.



2. Proposal: The proposal is to renovate the entire building to increase the usable area of the building without expanding the existing building footprint. The basement will be finished, the attic reconfigured, and the two units will have separate entrances. The only perceptible change from the public street will be two doors at the existing stoop.
3. Green Building Practices: None.
4. Comments:

Fire Prevention: The building needs to be fully sprinklered.

Traffic & Parking: Has no comment at this time.

Wiring Inspection: Has no comment at this time.

Lights and Lines: Has no comment at this time.

Engineering: Has no comment at this time.

Historic Preservation: Not applicable

Ward Alderman: Has no comment at this time.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1.4):

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."*

Nature of Application: **6.1.2. RB – Residence District**

The structure is currently nonconforming with respect to the following use / dimensional requirements: Floor Area Ratio: the current dimension is 1.077, the proposal is 1.47, and the requirement in the district is 1.0. This alteration to a nonconforming structure requires the Applicant to obtain special permits under §4.4.1 of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance (SZO). There are also non-conformances of the Front Yard, Side Yard, and Street Frontage, however none of these dimensions are proposed to be altered.

Section 4.4.1 states that "[l]awfully existing one-and two-family dwellings which are only used as residences, which are nonconforming with respect to dimensional requirements, may be enlarged, extended, renovated or altered by special permit granted by the SPGA in accordance with the procedures of Article 5."

In considering a special permit under §4.4 or 4.5 of the SZO, Staff find the proposed renovation and alteration is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing nonconforming building. The building will not additionally impact traffic volumes or congestion, the adequacy of municipal water supply and sewer capacity, noise, odor, scale, on-street parking, shading, visual effects or neighborhood character.

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 promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Somerville; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to protect and promote a housing stock that can accommodate the diverse household sizes and life stages of Somerville residents at all income levels, paying particular attention to providing housing affordable to individuals and families with low and moderate incomes; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the municipality.

The proposal is consistent with the purpose of the district, which is, "To establish and preserve medium density neighborhoods of one-, two- and three-family homes, free from other uses except those which are both compatible with and convenient to the residents of such districts."

In considering a special permit under §9.13 of the SZO the SPGA may grant such a special permit only when consistent with the purposes set forth in Section 9.1.

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."*

Surrounding Neighborhood: The property is included in the Union Square Neighborhood Plan and sits at the edge of an RB residential district backing up to the railroad tracks. The surrounding properties are 1-

1/2 to 3-story residential structures, other than the Albert F. Argenziano School to the east where the character of the neighborhood changes to the mixed-use and fabrication uses of the neighborhood center.

Impacts of Proposal (Design and Compatibility): The project is very appropriate with the surrounding 1-1/2 to 3-story residential structures.

5. Adverse environmental impacts: *The proposed use, structure or activity will not constitute an adverse impact on the surrounding area resulting from: 1) excessive noise, level of illumination, glare, dust, smoke, or vibration which are higher than levels now experienced from uses permitted in the surrounding area; 2) emission of noxious or hazardous materials or substances; 3) pollution of water ways or ground water; or 4) transmission of signals that interfere with radio or television reception.*

Impacts of Proposal (Environmental): There are no adverse environmental impacts associated with this project.

6. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation: *The circulation patterns for motor vehicles and pedestrians which would result from the use or structure will not result in conditions that create traffic congestion or the potential for traffic accidents on the site or in the surrounding area.*

Impacts of Proposal (Circulation): There are no increases in pedestrian or vehicular circulation impacts associated with this project.

7. Housing Impact: *Will not create adverse impacts on the stock of existing affordable housing.*

Impacts of Proposal (Housing): There are no changes in the stock of existing affordable housing associated with this project.

8. SomerVision Plan: *Complies with the applicable goals, policies and actions of the SomerVision plan.*

Impacts of Proposal (SomerVision): There are no impacts to the goals, policies, or actions of the SomerVision plan associated with this project.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §5.1

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 the renovation of the entire building to increase the usable area of the building without expanding the existing building footprint. 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>August 8th, 2016</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>September 20th, 2016</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A100 & A200)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	August 8 th , 2016	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	September 20 th , 2016	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A100 & A200)
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Any changes to the approved plans or use that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval.										
Pre-Construction										
2	The Applicant shall complete the Site Plan Review Checklist and supply the information to the Engineering Office. The plans must comply with the City's Stormwater Management Policy.	BP	Eng.							
3	The Applicant shall develop a demolition plan in consultation with the City of Somerville Inspectional Services Division. Full compliance with proper demolition procedures shall be required, including timely advance notification to abutters of demolition date and timing, good rodent control measures (i.e. rodent baiting), minimization of dust, noise, odor, and debris outfall, and sensitivity to existing landscaping on adjacent sites.	Demolition Permitting	ISD							
Construction Impacts										
4	The applicant shall post the name and phone number of the general contractor at the site entrance where it is visible to people passing by.	During Construction	Plng.							
5	Approval is subject to the Applicant's and/or successor's right, title and interest in the property.	Cont.	Plng.	Deed submitted & application formed signed						
6	The Applicant shall at their expense replace any existing equipment (including, but not limited to street sign poles, signs, traffic signal poles, traffic signal equipment, wheel chair ramps, granite curbing, etc) and the entire sidewalk immediately abutting the subject property if damaged as a result of construction activity. All new sidewalks and driveways must be constructed to DPW standard.	CO	DPW							
7	All construction materials and equipment must be stored onsite. If occupancy of the street layout is required, such occupancy must be in conformance with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the prior approval of the Traffic and Parking Department must be obtained.	During Construction	T&P							
Site										

8	Landscaping should be installed and maintained in compliance with the American Nurserymen's Association Standards, and in accordance with SZO §10.2.2 and §10.6.2;	Perpetual	Plng. / ISD	
9	The electric, telephone, cable TV and other such lines and equipment shall be placed underground from the source or connection. The utilities plan shall be supplied to the Wiring Inspector before installation.	Installation of Utilities	Wiring Inspector	
Miscellaneous				
10	The Applicant, its successors and/or assigns, shall be responsible for maintenance of both the building and all on-site amenities, including landscaping, fencing, lighting, parking areas and storm water systems, ensuring they are clean, well kept and in good and safe working order.	Cont.	ISD	
11	Any antenna that is not operated continuously for a period of twelve (12) months shall be considered abandoned, and the owner of such antenna shall remove the same. Failure to remove may result in a fine or penalty.	CONT.	ISD	
Public Safety				
12	To the extent possible, all exterior lighting must be confined to the subject property, cast light downward and must not intrude, interfere or spill onto neighboring properties.	CO	Plng.	
13	The Applicant shall provide notice of intent to strictly comply with applicable State and Federal regulations regarding air quality including without limitation continuous dust control during demolition and construction.	CO	Plng/OS E	
Final Sign-Off				
14	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.	