

APPROVED 1/3/2022

**Union Square Neighborhood Council
Public Meeting
Dec 20
On Zoom**

Present: Cosmo

Andy Greenspon
Ann Camara
Michele Hansen
Isabelle Drago
Bill Shelton
Bill Cavellini
Tori Antonino
Mary Napolitano
Matthias P. Rudolf

The secretary is not present. MPR is taking minutes.

MINUTES

1. Introductions and reading of mission statement

There is no reading of the mission statement.

2. Public Comment

Cosmo: A house on Linden St was sold for 1.5 mill. He'd like to commend the people who are investing in Somerville; unfortunately, they're buying the people out. It's a small two family; he's refitting it, not knocking it down and building a new building.

3. Review of meeting minutes from Dec 6

Bill C: moves to accept the minutes. Ann C seconds. Unanimous acceptance.

4. Developer Updates/CBA updates

DLJ.

Andy G: We are working on an amended proposal to DLJ this week. Building #1 has tenants now. Building #2 construction has begun.

US2

Bill C: Next meeting with US2 will be in February. The city council unanimously passed the funding for the second year of First Source and Union Square Main Streets.

Ann: Ben Ewen-Campen made that happen.

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CV:

Andy: We expect to have a final CBA with CV very shortly. We have hashed out all the big details.

5. Discuss draft Urban Design Framework for Milk Square (Union Square East)

Andy: should we discuss the Urban Framework next year? I haven't heard anything from optical hall.

No further comments.

6. Recap of visioning meeting for new Public Safety Building/Fire Station at 90 Washington St

Andy: do we have a summary of this issue?

Tori: Was at the meeting. There's a lot to talk about.

The city is now not calling it the public safety building but the 90 Washington St project. The city has been working on this for a year, and members of Cobble Hill and others were blindsided that this was happening. This is another example of the city plowing ahead with the project and not seeking out as much input ahead of time and not bringing the community in. There has been a public safety building committee that has been meeting since Jan 21, but the community has been pushing back. The city claims this was always the plan. Melissa Woods mentioned that she spoke to the members who would work in the space.

There was a break out session, the meeting was fine.

Two buildings — the public safety building plus another, and people are imagining all kinds of uses: CC, affordable housing, etc.

People are giving ideas, but it is disappointing that Woods has spoken to the "relevant parties" about their needs without consulting the community — this evades the issue of what a public safety building should look like.

Without Cobble Hill residents pushing back, the city would have gotten away with getting ahead of themselves.

Over 100 attendees at the meeting.

Michele: What is the building "across the street" of a 90 New Washington st? Olivera's? Are they still planning the fire station there?

Tori: doesn't know about the first question.

Bill S: Yes to the second part.

Andy: It's the spot behind Olivera's and the parking lot. The city likely took it via eminent domain.

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Bill C. The Cobble Hill developers had a development plan, the city got tired of them dragging their feet. The proposed development would have taken away the parking lot, which concerns the citizens. It would have blocked the pick-up to the trash and recycling. The Crawford Jefferson developers have mobilized the residents to oppose the city. Matt McLaughlin has been involved. There have been some connections back and forth between the parties.

The residents don't want anything that will mitigate their situation. No police, no fire station.

We should pay attention, but it's outside our boundaries.

Ann C: There's an above ground parking lot that is very disturbing to the residents.

Michele. the city does not intend to take Olivera's.

I feel that it is our business when the prospect of not having a fire station in Union Square. That is definitely our business. Trying to get here from across the street is too difficult. Some more thought needs to go into where the fire station goes. I am not worried about the noise.

Matthias: seconds Michele's comments.

Andy: Agrees with Michele and Matthias - it's relevant because the current public safety building is in the US2 development area, the buildings are falling apart, and they've been given up and it's not clear where else they can go.

There was talk of moving public safety building to 515 Somerville Ave.

We should be really focused on safety, given the wind situation and how quickly everything here could burn.

Bill S: the two important facts are what Andy said. Somerville has very little developed land left, and I challenge you all to think about a great location for this. There isn't one. I wrote a column saying that the current building is a sick building, it still is. The second fact is that if it were to be handled well, it would be with a public process, asking where to put it, they might have found a better location. But because they're so indifferent to the impact it has on the people, they're encountering resistance.

Michele: The second station on Lowell St. and Somerville Ave is too far away. Where to put it is the rub. I am not sympathetic about the noise, but I wonder if they've done any planning and timing how long it would take to get to Union Square.

Ann C: Nobody has listened to the people who have been making these points. The city is wasting our time.

Michele: One could leave the fire station where it is and move the police station.

Tori: Links the six places that were suggested in the chat

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<https://voice.somervillema.gov/90washington_redevelopment>

<https://voice.somervillema.gov/90washington_redevelopment#folder-42537-9491>

<Site 6 (90 Washington Street) 74% (63 out of 85)

2 Site 2 (17 McGrath Highway) 69% (58 out of 85)

3 Site 3 (185 Somerville Ave) 67% (57 out of 85)

4 Site 4 (501 Mystic Valley Parkway) 66% (56 out of 85)

5 Site 5 (526 Somerville Ave) 61% (52 out of 85)

6 Site 1 (17 Inner Belt Road) 59% (50 out of 85)>

Bill S: Michele's idea is worth pursuing.

Bill C: The muffler and gulf stations could be spots, too.

Bill S: the land prices are prohibitive. But they could do a land swap.

Bill C: the city has not sold the current public safety building block to US2. They want to wait until they're ready to build.

Bill C: if the city asks what the USNC thinks, we should insist that the city put a fire station on this side of the Washington St Railroad bridge.

Matthias motions to make Bill C's position official

Michele seconds.

Motion passes. Tori does not agree.

Bill S: Let's ask the city to explore a public private development. The public part would be the fire station.

Bill C: Bill S is referring to two round towers designed by "I am Very Well Paid" were made.

<https://www.google.com/maps/uv?pb=!1s0x89e37080e03e43cd%3A0xb8dadf5076ace0e5!3m1!7e115!4shhttps%3A%2F%2Fih5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipMdcnNzDaXHKgLr1UxVhUY43JtyMgtGExRHNYo%3Dw284-h160-k-no!5sBoston%20Fire%20Department%20Purchase%20Street%20-%20Google%20Search!15sCglgAQ&imagekey=!1e10!2sAF1QipMdcnNzDaXHKgLr1UxVhUY43JtyMgtGExRHNYo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZ_qba1PP0AhXNjYkEHUqsB9MQoip6BAgxEAM>

Ann C: Should we invite people.

Bill S: Asks to postpone and table discussion.

Matthias: Second.

7. Public Comment

Cosmo: "I Agree with you"

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Tori: Jan 5th is the next public safety building meeting. Link is here:
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSUWDRctxTA>>

8. Scheduling next USNC meeting

Jan 3, 2022. 7pm. Zoom.

Matthias: wants to make meetings in person.

Ann: where?

Michele: The city will change Public Safety rules because of Omicron.

Ann: Maybe we can do 1/2.

Bill C: move to go to Executive session.

Ann: seconds

Unanimous.

USNC loves Cosmo.