



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board
From: Central Square Advisory Committee
Date: March 2, 2022
Re: **Planet Fitness, 625 Massachusetts Avenue**

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

SANDRA CLARKE
Deputy Director
Chief of Administration

KHALIL MOGASSABI
Deputy Director
Chief of Planning

Overview

The Central Square Advisory Committee (the "Committee") met on Wednesday, February 2, 2022 to discuss the special permit application by Planet Fitness for 625 Massachusetts Avenue. The meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of Section 20.300 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in advance of the applicant's request for a Formula Business special permit from the Planning Board. Committee members present were Joel Altstein, Saffana Anwar, Chris Fort, Melissa Greene, Esther Hanig, Tahir Kapoor, Michael Monestime, and Robert Winters. After discussion, the Committee decided to forward a report to the Planning Board with a positive recommendation.

Proposal Description

The applicant, Planet Fitness, proposes to use an existing retail space at 625 Massachusetts Avenue as a Fitness Center. While this use is allowed as-of-right by the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant is a Formula Business and therefore needs a special permit from the Planning Board. The applicant does not propose any changes to the building exterior, besides signage.

Committee Comments

Members of the Committee were supportive of the applicant's proposal and noted that it would be a continuation of the current use as a Fitness Center by Boston Sports Club. They appreciated that there would be an entrance off Essex Street and suggested coordinating with the Cambridge Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TP+T) Department on locating a loading zone there. Members noted that the proposal shows a reduction in the number of signs for the business, which they saw as an improvement. They also supported the use of illumination for the signage since the block is poorly lit.

Committee members expressed support for the 24-hour operation of the Fitness Center, though a couple encouraged the applicant to be cognizant of any safety concerns that staff and members may have.

After discussion, all eight present members of the Committee voted in favor of recommending that the Planning Board grant the requested special permit.

Respectfully submitted for the Committee,

Sarah Scott

Sarah Scott

Associate Zoning Planner

Community Development Department