

YSAG: Young Somerville Advisory Group

A group of 21-35 year old Somerville residents working to increase the number of young residents engaged in our civic community, improve the quality of City services offered and increase communication between City government and the young adults that live here. Our goal is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City staff, initiate and organize activities targeted to our age demographic, and advocate on behalf of fellow Young Somerville residents. These newsletters are intended to inform you about local resources, City goings-on, and YSAG activities.

--- July Happenings ---

Shape Up Somerville >>

During our July meeting Jaime Corliss, Director of Shape Up Somerville, was able to give us more insight into the many initiatives that the program is involved in.

Shape Up Somerville began as a collaboration between Tufts University and the City of Somerville to study ways to fight childhood obesity and encourage physical activity in the home, school and throughout the community. Their goal is to influence City policies (such as increasing access to community supported agriculture, which now has a new East Somerville drop off), advocate for physical infrastructure improvements (such as walking audits of City walkways) and initiate city-wide programs (like the Healthy Corner Stores Campaign).

Somerville faces many challenges that work together to hinder options for healthy eating and physical activity. To address some of these challenges SuS has promoted a number of initiatives, including designing a Somerville parks map to make it easier to locate the parks nearest the neighborhood where you live. SuS also created the Shape Up Approved Restaurant program which promotes restaurants that offer healthy fruits and vegetables as side dishes, low-fat dairy options and 'doggie-bags' for leftovers.

SuS works with many other local groups to ensure that public health is taken into account with all City programs and City government decisions. In addition to partnering with WalkBoston, Green Streets Initiative and the Federation of MA Farmers Markets, SuS is looking to partner with people throughout the community to help promote healthy lifestyles (see *For More Information* to look for ways you can help).

website: www.somervillema.gov/Division.cfm?orgunit=SUS

Get involved with Shape Up Somerville's fight to prevent obesity:

- Go to your local park
- Tell your friends about Shape Up Somerville
- Ask your elected official to support healthy eating and active living
- Write letters to the editor in support of healthy eating and active living
- Ask Somerville restaurants to buy local, and become Shape Up Approved
- Dine at Shape Up Approved restaurants, or attend SuS events

YSAG Feedback >>

YSAG members had a number of questions regarding the topics covered by SuS's Director. Some people suggested increasing the basic requirements for Shape Up Approved Restaurants, others asked for more information about Somerville's farmers' markets and the recent tree audit (see *For More Information* below for details).

Another resident asked why a number of sidewalks throughout the city are being ripped up and replaced to include new red mats on the ramps. Jackie Rossetti explained that one reason for this construction is to make the city ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Others wanted to know if it was possible to nominate open/vacant lots for use as green space. While there is no mechanism for that type of suggestion in place, the group was told it wouldn't hurt to approach a City government official with ideas like this.

Recommendations >>

We as a group would like to see the city work on:

- Adding more bike lanes and racks throughout the city
- Making quicker progress with the Community path extension
- Helping the Davis Square farmers market find affordable accommodation to ensure its survival, thereby ensuring residents' access to fresh produce.

--- YSAG Membership Drive ---

Young Somerville Advisory Group has several openings for new members to get involved with the group. Membership vacancies will be filled on a rolling, first come-first served basis, so visit www.somervillema.gov/youngsomerville and get your application in today!

--- For More Information ---

- To find out more information about *Shape up Somerville*, please visit them on the web at <http://www.somervillema.gov/Division.cfm?orgunit=SUS>
- To learn more about local farmers' markets, check out www.massfarmersmarkets.org for information about dates, times and products available
- To learn more about the effort to increase City parks and green spaces, visit <http://www.somervillema.gov/Division.cfm?orgunit=PARKS>, or to locate the park closest to you, visit <http://www.somervillema.gov/Maps.cfm?page=24>

--- New Website!! ---

For more information on Young Somerville Advisory Group, or to make suggestions and give input about future topics go to www.somervillema.gov/youngsomerville or contact Jackie Rosetti at Jrossetti@somervillema.gov.