



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 21, 2006

MAYOR CONVENES LIFE SCIENCES COLLABORATIVE

City to Encourage Local Life Science Investment and Facilities

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone announced that the city has convened a working group charged with encouraging investment in Somerville-based life sciences research, including biomedical and stem cell research initiatives. Comprised of representatives of the public, private and academic sectors, the Somerville Life Sciences Collaborative held its first organizational meeting on July 12, 2006. Its purpose is to develop strategies to support life-science ventures already based in Somerville as well as attracting new research and business activity in the life science field.

“Somerville offers an ideal location for the facilities needed to support cutting-edge research and economic development in the life sciences,” said Curtatone. “We’re centrally positioned in the Tufts-Harvard-MIT triangle, and we have the right types of office and light-industrial development districts to host these activities. Somerville is already on the map in life science research, and we’re determined to expand our city’s role in a field that is going to be crucial to the future health of our residents and our regional economy.”

The Collaborative includes members from Tufts University, the Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, members of the city’s legislative delegation and local research institutes and foundations, with the guidance of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative.

One of the local research centers looking for help in expanding its funding base and facilities is the Bedford Stem Cell Research Foundation, a Davis Square institute that conducts research with unfertilized human eggs to generate the stem cells that hold the promise of treatment and cures for a wide range of diseases, including heart failure, diabetes, spinal cord injury, AIDS, Alzheimer’s & Parkinson’s.

“Our research is both extremely promising and far less controversial than stem cell research that requires the use of embryonic, or fertilized, eggs,” said Bedford’s director, Dr. Ann A. Kiessling, PhD. “We pioneered this area of research and with increased resources and research space, we could now move the field forward rapidly. We’re delighted that the City of Somerville is working with other local institutions to help us with our accelerated research plans.”

Kiessling’s research center is only one example of the type of research and business venture that the Somerville Life Sciences Collaborative wants to support. “With Biogen opening up a facility in Somerville soon, we are poised to become a destination city for life science research,” said Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Community Development James Kostaras, “We’ve got affordable commercial real estate & proximity to premier hospitals and universities. By pooling resources on finding funds, facilities and other resources for life science ventures, we believe that the Collaborative can make a real difference in spurring long-term economic activity for the city.”

For more information about the Life Sciences Collaborative, please contact Maria Ortiz Perez, Business Development Specialist, at 617-625-6600, ext. 2500. For more information on the Bedford Stem Cell Research Foundation, please visit their website at www.bedfordresearch.org.

-END-

Contact:

Tom Champion 617-625-6600, ext. 2620

Maeghan Silverberg 617-625-6600, ext. 2614