



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 6, 2015

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Present	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Absent	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Absent	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: Frank Wright - Law, Steve McEachern - DPW, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Brad Rawsen - OSPCD, Omar Boukili - Mayor's Office, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:50 PM by Alderman Ballantyne and adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Document List:

Community Choice Aggregation item 199625 - Legal Opinion CCA

Community Choice Aggregation item 199625 - ALM GL ch. 164 § 134

1. Approval of the September 16, 2015 Minutes

RESULT:

ACCEPTED

199625: Requesting authorization to develop a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) plan to aggregate the electricity load of residents and businesses, per MGL c164 s134.

Mr. Wright and Mr. Sellers-Garcia provided a recap of the request; which was sent to the Office of Sustainability and Environment Department by the Commission on Energy and Climate Change. Mr. Wright distributed 2 documents relative to this item and noted that participation in the plan is voluntary, adding that the Board of Aldermen is not mandated by MGL to vote on the

CCA, however, best practices in Massachusetts is to have the BOA vote on the CCA Plan. Mr. Sellers-Garcia also shared that the CCA process is as follows: develop a plan, work with the Department of Energy and then have a public hearing.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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199092: That the Tree Warden report to this Board over the last 3 years, how many public shade trees have been removed, and how many public hearings have been held.

Mr. MacEachern reported that trees were taken down due to disease or structural damage. He will provide the Chair with a list, (prior to the October 8th BOA meeting), of the number of trees removed.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199133: That the Director of SPCD determine if any of the city's trees have been infected by the Emerald Ash Borer, and report back to this Board with any strategy to save them, possibly by spraying Tree Azin.

Mr. MacEachern explained that prevention against Emerald Ash Borer is a ten year process. No trees in the city have been infected by the Emerald Ash Borer and trees that are in good to better shape will be treated to avoid it.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199951: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the three dead trees in Magoun Square at K-2 Wine and Liquors, the New England Science Fiction Association, and the former Modelo Bakery.

Mr. Rawson said that this section of Magoun Square may not be part of the CDBG area. Alderman Niedergang stated that he has been trying for over a year to have these trees replaced and Mr. Rawson believes that they are scheduled to be replaced.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199952: That the Commissioner of Public Works arrange with the developer of 235 Lowell Street to plant trees in the two vacant tree wells in front of the building.

Mr. MacEachern reported that he spoke with the contractor and the trees will be planted within the next 2 weeks.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199982: That the Director of SPCD advise this Board on the number of new trees over the past 3 years that have been replaced within the warranty offered by the vendor.

Warranty replacement is as follows:

2012 - 6 trees replaced under warranty

2013 - 6 trees replaced under warranty

2014 - 47 trees replaced, mostly due to drought

2015 - No trees replaced as of this date

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

199983: That the City Arborist inspect the health of the trees at the locations named within.

Mr. Rawson has the list and will report the findings at a future meeting. A question was asked about the prevention plan to save the trees. OSPCD has a contract with a company to water trees.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

199984: That the Director of SPCD meet with this Board's Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy to discuss the selection and maintenance of trees.

Mr. Rawson reported that an RFP is out for bid for nurseries and planters. The city has \$65,000 in CDBG funds for the fall 2015 program that will be used for plantings. The areas of East Somerville, Winter Hill, Gilman Square and Union Square are targeted for planting.

Mr. MacEachern explained that the warranty on trees is 2-3 years and that the city does not plant certain types of trees due to their characteristic of dropping pods or causing sidewalk damage with their roots. The city makes an effort to select trees that do not grow very tall so that they won't interfere with utility wires. Mr. MacEachern said that ADA compliance requires 3 feet of clearance for sidewalks.

Alderman White would like a breakdown of the types of trees planted throughout the city. Alderman Niedergang suggested mobilizing the city's residents to report a dead tree that may be under warranty and Alderman Lafuente suggested the city be proactive and review trees that may be coming to an end of life condition so that the city does not lose its canopy look. Alderman McWatters suggested forming a committee or commission for trees.

Mr. MacEachern stated that there must be a hearing before any tree may be removed. A question was asked about the city's interaction with Eversource and Mr. MacEachern said that they have their own standards and that the city will not issue parking permits unless they agree with the city's terms.

There are 2 contracted arborist that work with the city. Alderman McWatters suggested that the city employ a full time arborist. Alderman Lafuente asked for the average salary of an arborist.

Chairman Ballantyne invited those present in the audience to ask any questions that they might have regarding trees. One resident asked why the contractor was not watering the trees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200021: That the Administration report to this Board on the hiring of the new contract arborist and how tree work will be coordinated between the DPW and SPCD.

Mr. Rawson spoke about the need for additional capacity as well as training for DPW tree personnel. Alderman McWatters suggested that the Administration present specifics about the arborist position(s) to help the BOA to understand the issue. The DPW has three operators who also have other responsibilities in addition to tree climbing. The city's tree crew needs to know the proper way to trim trees; which is something that can be provided by the arborist.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199097: Submitted by Vertex Companies Inc to install 2 groundwater monitoring wells in the grassy area just north of the Community Bike Path, 180 feet and 250 feet west of Cedar St.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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199419: That the Director of Capital Projects and/or the Director of Sustainability and Environment update this Board and the Ward 5 Alderman regularly on the testing for contamination of groundwater from 154 Cedar Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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199420: That the Director of Capital Projects and/or the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board whether contaminated groundwater from underneath 154 Cedar Street may be getting into the pools of standing water beside the Community Path west of Cedar Street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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199712: That the Mayor's Aide and/or the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on progress in addressing the litter from Globe Direct circulars, and whether Cambridge's agreement with Globe Direct is being implemented here.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE