



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

6:00 PM

The meeting took place remotely via Zoom and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Clingan and adjourned at 6:30 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors McLaughlin, Scott and Clingan), none against and none absent.

Others present:

Neha Singh – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, DPW Commissioner Jill Lathan, Peter Forcellese – Legislative Clerk.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [25-1047](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Public Utilities and Public Works Committee Meeting of June 2, 2025.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Order
(ID # [25-1456](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council the recent snagging of overhead wires by a semi-truck, that took out the electricity in Ward Seven, and what plans have been put in place to prevent a similar occurrence.

Parking Director Suzanne Rinfrett submitted a memo addressing this item prior to the meeting.

Chair Clingan cited a recent incident where a garbage truck snagged overhead utility wires on a street where it regularly operates and asked if winds could alter the height of those wires. He inquired if the city has a minimum height for hanging wires and if there's a way for the city to preempt these occurrences. Commissioner Lathan commented that the DPW has regular contact with Eversource and that she will discuss this matter with the DPW's Lights and Lines staff to see what may be done.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Resolution
(ID # [25-1425](#)) By Councilor Scott
- That the Administration, including the Director of Mobility, discuss with this Council a process for establishing municipal standards for furnishings at bus stops and shelters.

Director Singh told the committee that the administration has begun having internal conversations about developing city-wide standards. The plan, so far, is for the Mobility Department to review existing city standards and MBTA standards for bus stop furnishings, perform an inventory of MBTA equipment in the city, and obtain input from relevant groups, e.g., the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD). From there, a set of standards will be developed. Chair Clingan noted that furnishings might encompass covered shelters, benches, lighting, etc., and he asked who decides what furnishings would go where. Director Singh will take the question to the Mobility team. Councilor Scott commented that the furnishings in question were purchased using city funds and included a hostile design. He also said that this is about more than architecture at any particular site, but all sites and that this is an opportunity for departments to come together to make uniform standards that meet the city's policy goals.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Resolution
(ID # [25-1177](#)) By Councilor Sait, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Burnley Jr.
- That Eversource explain the reasons behind repeated power outages in Magoun Square, and share what they have done to address them in the near term and what is being done to prevent long term recurrence.

Director of Emergency Management William Fisher submitted a memo addressing this item prior to the meeting.

The memo, containing information provided by Eversource, noted that outage data affecting Magoun Square over the last two years identified 26 unplanned outages as well as some circuits that had equipment failures. Eversource plans to convert some circuits and replace cables, switches and other equipment in the next ten years. Councilor Scott commented that he appreciated the explanation but noted that a date for the work to be done is missing, saying that ten years is a broad window. He suggested following up with Eversource's Community Relations Representative Jason Wright for more details. In the meantime, Councilor Scott will follow up with Councilor Sait. Chair Clingan commented that it might be a good idea to submit another item via the City Council asking for work dates.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order
(ID # [25-1133](#))

By Councilor Sait

That the Commissioner of Public Works increase sanitary maintenance of the streets and sidewalks in Magoun Square.

Commissioner Lathan spoke about “big belly” trash receptacles used by the city and said that during a walk through of the area, staff did not see evidence of overflowing barrels, however, a number of discarded cigarette butts were seen. She told the committee that the trash receptacles are emptied daily and that the area is cleaned weekly. The Commissioner spoke about the city having a maintenance contract for the “big belly” cans and said that local businesses should be cleaning in front of their businesses. Chair Clingan commented that people are focused on the cleanliness of the city’s various squares.

Councilor Scott said that this is a question of capacity and he agrees that businesses should be cleaning up their areas. He noted the increasing numbers of expanded tree wells and asked if the city is paying attention to them on some sort of rotating basis. Commissioner Lathan explained that, as improvements are made around the city, additional resources become necessary. She and her staff will continue looking at how to meet those capacity needs.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- T&P 2025-10-15 Memo (with 25-1456).pdf
- T&P 2025-10-15 Magoun Power Outages (with 25-1177).pdf