



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 27, 2016

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	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Absent	

Others present: Michael Glavin - OSPCD, Oliver Sellare-Garcia - OSE, Emily Monea - OSPCD, Shannon Phillips - Law, Jill Latham - Recreation, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:30 PM by Alderman Ballantyne and adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Approval of the June 27, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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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.

Mr. Snyder reported that the Director of Capital Projects is working on the matter and it is believed that there is no contamination on the community path. Alderman Niedergang asked about the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

See discussion of item 199419

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

199513: That the Commissioner of Public Works develop a maintenance plan for all grass athletic fields and submit a request for funding to this Board.

The Administration gave an update to its Athletic Fields Master Plan, dated September 2016. Ms. Monea spoke about the city's fields and discussed the renovations at Lincoln Park and Anunziato Field, limited rectangle use at Trum Field, a small turf field at the Winter Hill School, Healey School fields, the renovation to the Dilboy auxillary, Foss Park and Drawer 7, the field maintenance budget and the search for a Director of Park and Recreation Operations. Ms. Monea explained the prioritizing of the parks/fields, noting that medium and large spaces are in demand. She also pointed out that artificial turf allows for more hours of use on a field. Chairman Ballantyne mentioned that this plan was not a completed master plan but rather a fields usage plan, because it is missing financial analysis for both natural grass and artificial turf materials and does not address the environmental impact; pros and cons of natural vs. artificial turf. Alderman McWatters inquired about negotiations with DCR of Foss Park and Dilboy Field and Mr. Snyder stated that an agreement with DCR is up for renewal. Mr. Snyder also spoke about certain capital investments that are needed. Ms. Latham said that the plan for Conway Park is to have all turf fields and she discussed the needs of the city's other fields. Conway Park is also a potential site for storm water storage. Members of the public made comments on the subject and expressed concern for the hours of field use and organic vs. chemical maintenance of the fields.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

199864: That the Administration develop a city-wide Open Space Integrated Plan for the protection, development, maintenance and programming of both private and public open spaces.

See discussion of item 199513

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

199992: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide the Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy with a list of fields that would benefit from the field maintenance plan this fall and those that would not.

See discussion of item 199513

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

200638: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with the 2016 tree

planting/replacement plan for all Wards.

Mr. Snyder spoke about the tree planting schedule and he will email the report to the members of the committee.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201689: That the City Solicitor report to this Board on avenues to recover losses due to leaks in the natural gas infrastructure.

According to Ms. Phillips, the Solicitor's Office is waiting to see the trial outcome from the City of Brookline which is looking to recover money from trees killed from natural gas leaks. According to the pre-trial update, a municipality would need to 1) issue a demand letter and 2) have expert testimony to what causes the trees demise. Then, Chairman Ballantyne and Alderman McWatters stressed the importance of having a full time arborist to determine if gas leaks are killing trees. Mr. Snyder reported that the city is close to hiring an arborist, who will be able to help the City of Somerville determine the health of its trees.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201752: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on the increase in wild rabbits this year, and on any environmental concerns about the shifting composition of wildlife over the past decade.

Mr. Sellars-Garcia reported that he doesn't have an answer to the increase in the city's rabbit population, adding that he hasn't received any complaints about it, it isn't a public nuisance and it isn't specific to Somerville. Alderman Niedergang said that he has heard talk that it might be due to the city's rodent control measures. Chairman Ballantyne spoke about the rodent problems in Ward 7.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202073: That the Director of Environment and Sustainability update this Board's Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy regarding the Community Choice Aggregation draft plan's approval by DOER, and the RFP's key requirements, prior to its release.

Mr. Sellars-Garcia updated the committee that; a competitive procurement would be started around mid-November; potential vendors will be vetted and pre-qualified by Good Energy, and noted the City could reject bids; the process of choosing a utility supplier, the delivery of power and potential changes. He would like to pursue a "green" option to explore its benefits for the city; a public awareness campaign will be developed to inform residents.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202009: Conveying the Department of Public Works' response to questions about landscaping at the Healey School.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202003: Assistant City Solicitor responding to #201689 re: legal avenues available to recover losses due to leaks in the natural gas infrastructure.

See discussion of item 201689

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

201750: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 6/9/16.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

Handouts:

- Athletic Fields Master Planning Staff Report update (with 199513)
- DPU hearing notes (with 202073)