



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 16, 2014

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	

Also present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Michael Glavin, Goran Smiljic, Ed O'Donnell, Frank Wright, David Shapiro, Stephen Mackey (Chamber of Commerce), Omar Boukili

**Approval of the Minutes of May 13, 2014**

**RESULT:**

**APPROVED**

**193206 - That the City Solicitor review Boston's and other municipalities' ordinances to eliminate public nuisances caused by problem properties, and appear before the Committee on Legislative Matters to discuss adopting it here.:**

The committee discussed how Boston and Somerville handle this issue and whether there is a need for a new ordinance. The discussion touched on specific cases and overcrowding. Alderman White indicated his desire for the Police Department to discuss enforcement of the city's current ordinance.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**194062 - That the City Solicitor examine the proposed ordinances of Quincy, Boston and Woburn regarding absentee landlords and appear before this Board's Committee on Legislative Matters to discuss the implementation of a similar ordinance.:**

See 193206 (above).

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**195725 - That the City Solicitor provide this Board's Committee on Legislative Matters with input on restricting formula businesses in Somerville by requiring specific review and oversight before they may enter central business districts.:**

The Planning Department is working on this and information will be included in the new comprehensive zoning package, due to be submitted this fall.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**195825 - That the City Solicitor and the Director of SPCD (ISD) update this Board on measures requiring property owners to maintain their property so it doesn't negatively impact their neighbors.:**

See 193206 (above).

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**196362 - That the City Solicitor appear before this Board to describe the process for responding to requests for public records, including fees and redactions, and how this comports with the requirements of state law, the Secretary of State's Public Records Division, and the practices of other communities.:**

Mr. Wright reminded the members that this information was provided to the committee in May of this year. The city charges the amounts allowed by law for processing public information requests. Mr. Wright will provide an opinion on whether the Board of Alderman has the authority to set the processing fees.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**196385 - That the City Solicitor determine whether the U.S. Postal Service complied with federal law and applicable guidelines regarding the closing and selling of the Union Square Post Office facility.:**

Letters of concern were filed by the city and although the Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) agrees with the city's position, the USPS is not bound by the FAC's opinion. There was a discussion regarding a possible court challenge by the city. The Solicitor's Office was asked to report back regarding whether the USPS followed the law with respect to closing and moving the Union Square Post Office. The property is under agreement and the USPS feels justified in moving forward. Mr. Glavin express his desire that a potential buyer would be cognizant of the city's vision.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**196644 - That the City Solicitor provide the Committee on Legislative Matters with an analysis of the Law Department's support to charge for review and redaction of requested information.:**

See 196362 (above).

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**196645 - That the City Solicitor provide the Committee on Legislative Matters with the good faith estimate of number of hours and the hourly rates charged for every information request this year, to date.:**

See 196362 (above).

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**196646 - That the City Solicitor report to the Committee on Legislative Matters on the Board's ability to create guidelines for public information requests.:**

See 196362 (above).

**RESULT:****KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**196856 - Assistant City Solicitor responding to #195725 re: restricting formula businesses.:**

See 195725 (above).

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**197062 - City Solicitor responding to #196645 re: public records requests year to date.:**

See 196362 (above).

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**197330 - That the Director of SPCD and the City Solicitor apprise this Board of the latest developments with regard to the sale of the Post Office in Union Square and the ongoing dispute as to the mural.:**

See 196385 (above).

**RESULT:****KEPT IN COMMITTEE**