



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 14, 2019

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Vice Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	City Councilor at Large	Present	

Others present: Vanessa Boukili - OSPCD; Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison; Kimberly Wells - Assistant Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairman Scott and adjourned at 6:52 PM.

204908: Requesting the re-appointment of Michael Lapiana as Animal Control Officer.

See 207406

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED
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207406: Requesting confirmation of the re-appointment of Michael Lapiana as Animal Control Officer.

Chair Scott noted that the candidate has previously received and been granted a postponement for this discussion. The candidate has been informed of his right to appear before the Committee and to bring an attorney if he chooses.

Ms. Connor confirmed that her understanding from the Solicitor's office is that this item can be withdrawn through a request to the Clerk, which was made on Tuesday.

Councilor Rossetti asked how this would impact the policy that this comes before the Committee every year. Councilor Ewen-Campen expressed his concern about the number of complaints about this employee and is unclear why the administration is not comfortable withdrawing this request and replacing the employee with someone who is qualified. Ms. Connor stated that she cannot comment on private personnel matters. Councilor Rossetti expressed frustration that the relevant individuals from the administration are not present to have this discussion, as it must be solved quickly. Ms.

Connor shared that it is the official position of the administration that the request was withdrawn, which is why nobody was present to speak on the issue.

Councilor Rossetti moved to deny the re-appointment.

Councilor Rossetti withdrew her motion and Chair Scott called for a roll call vote for the item. There were no Councilors voting in favor, five Councilors voted against (Scott, Ewen-Campen, Clingan, Rossetti, and Mbah), and no Councilors were absent.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED
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207424: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Chris Dwan to the Urban Forestry Committee.

Dr. Boukili introduced Chris Dwan, who has been very involved with forestry issues for the City. He is the founder of Friends of the Urban Forest and a strong advocate for trees in our community. Chair Scott asked if Mr. Dwan would have any concern about conflicts of interest between members of the committee and individuals who do business with the city. Mr. Dwan responded that it is a conflict of interest when the same person is paid to do an assessment of a tree that would be paid to do the work. He would be cautious about who we bring in to do tree care and removal work. Councilor Ewen-Campen requested a statement from Mr. Dwan on his thoughts on what he would like to do on this commission. Mr. Dwan is new to civic activism and is approaching this with a spirit of curiosity. He is focused on transparency and accountability. He hopes to be able to bring a clear voice in support of doing the will, whatever that is, of the people of the city. Councilor Mbah has worked with Mr. Dwan in the past and is confident he will excel in this position. Councilor Rossetti noted Mr. Dwan's relentless passion for the topic and ability to deliver information in a calm fashion. She also noted his ability to create a website and thanked the candidate for volunteering for the role. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked how Mr. Dwan would strike a balance between trees and other important issues, such as the bicycle lanes in Inman Square, which are a current topic. Mr. Dwan responded that there are a variety of ways to address concerns such as traffic, and finding the balance is important. He will always err on the side of safety.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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207036: Requesting that the members of the Somerville Women's Commission be designated as Special Municipal Employees.

Ms. Connor spoke on behalf of the Mayor's office and cited an email from City Solicitor Wright, sent to Chair Scott, about which she is inclined to follow Mr. Wright's request.

In this particular case, an individual would like to take a paid position with an organization called STEP that does business with the city, and remain in her position on the Commission. This action would allow any other members of the Commission to do the same in the future.

Councilor Rossetti asked for information about what other instances this has been put in effect and questioned whether it would impact every Commission. Councilor Clingan noted his inclination to not support this, and that any Commissioner with a potential conflict of interest should resign the Commission position. Councilor Mbah echoed Councilor Clingan's sentiment. This also would allow opportunities for new people to serve on Commissions. Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that there could be extreme cases either way, but he would like to have a more informed discussion around the policy before taking a position, and that the decision should be applied to all Commissions or none. Councilor Rossetti agreed that addressing on a case-by-case basis does not seem ideal and she would

also like to continue the conversation with more information. Chair Scott added that some Commissions and Boards must be prepared to confront the administration, and having this overlap could be a concern.

Councilor Rossetti moved *that the Administration meet with the Committee to discuss the implications of designating every Commission's members Special Municipal Employees.*

The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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