



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 16, 2017

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Michael Glavin - OSPCD, George Proakis - OSPCD, Michael Feloney - OSPCD, Jason Grossfield - Law, Goran Smiljic - ISD, Dennis Fischman - Fair Housing Commission, Rona Fischman - Fair Housing Commission, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:31 PM by Chairman Connolly and adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Approval of the September 25, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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204174: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services, the Director of SPCD, and the City Solicitor meet with a committee of this Board to discuss how to prevent developers from repeatedly violating city ordinances and regulations.

Mr. Smiljic said that violations are handled on a project by project basis according to the code and that the city is aggressive with violators. The Inspectional Services Department also tries to educate people about the proper procedures to follow. Chairman Niedergang said over 400 stop work orders were issued over 2 ¾ years, with tickets only being issued for 14 of those. He feels more tickets should be issued. Mr. Smiljic explained that voluntary compliance is the goal. He also said that triple fees are charged in lieu of tickets and that the triple permit fee sends a better message because a ticket may only be \$100. He discussed the complaint process of ISD. Chairman Niedergang asked about ISD's treatment of homeowners vs. developers and Mr. Smiljic replied that he follows the code and does not treat people differently, whether they are developers or homeowners.

Chairman Niedergang asked residents of Cherry Street to speak about a project that they consider a problem in their neighborhood. Mr. Smiljic explained why problems happened on this project and said he had numerous meetings regarding the project and that the issues dealt with should

not happen again. Allan Moore of 22 Cherry Street spoke about the issues at the Cherry Street project. He asked about the process of checking to make sure conditions on a permit are enforced. He said he is very concerned about neighbors being notified, dust mitigation and demolition without a permit. Garret Laws of 22 Cherry Street said ISD should have looked at the plans more closely. He wants a written response for a request to repeal the building permit. He said the project's design is poor and he is concerned with the entry way and landscaping.

Mr. Proakis said he will try to address this, but he said it is ultimately up to the Zoning Board, as the project is on hold. He will take a look at the concerns.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204168: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services report to this Board by September 28, 2017, the owners and addresses of all properties where Stop Work Orders were issued over the past two years, along with the names of the permit applicants and a list of any fines issued.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203980: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board why even the top priority recommendations of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group have not yet been implemented after almost two years, and consider hiring additional staff to effectively address the affordable housing emergency.

Chairman Niedergang said Somerville will soon be a place where only rich people can live. He said the affordable housing situation is an emergency and he wants more staff working on the issue, adding that he wants to do bold things. Mr. Feloney reviewed staff work from 2015 and 2016 and said that the city has hit many of the goals outlined in the various reports and recommendations. Alderman Ballantyne inquired about the next steps and requested information on a transfer tax. Mr. Snyder explained the process of passing bills at the state house and told the committee that the city should have an answer on the fate of the bill by February. Chairman Niedergang said he thought the city could do things that didn't require legislation and would like to work on things while waiting for the home rule petition. Mr. Feloney discussed doing something of a scaled back nature that could be done on the local level.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200700: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations in the recent report of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group.

See discussion of 203980.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204187: Community Preservation Committee responding to #203735 re: prioritizing affordable housing funds for municipal workforce housing.

See discussion of 203980.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

203593: That the Director of SPCD provide a bi-annual progress report on the 100 Homes Initiative, specifically relating to the new affordable off-site housing units granted by the Planning Board to FRIT on May 18, 2017.

Alderman Ballantyne would like a progress report on the 100 Homes Initiative. Mr. Glavin said SCC is watching the market and is trying to catch properties that would work for the program. A report will be submitted.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204301: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the city's Assessment of Fair Housing recently completed for HUD, and explain what the city is doing to advance fair housing and combat housing discrimination.

Chairman Niedergang said 30 years ago he was a tester in the rental market to find discrimination. Today he feels there is discrimination against families and children and he asked what the city is doing to combat discrimination. Mr. Feloney said that guidelines were enacted and a working committee was set up to assess fair housing. He went over issues that will be dealt with to provide equal access throughout the city.

Mr. Fishman said the Housing Department deserves a lot of credit. He said the results should be taken and turned it into something usable by the community. The city's tenant handbook is out of date and must be updated, translated and distributed. He wants to work with people in public housing because they don't know their rights and he wants to loosen up the requirements of those able to serve on the Fair Housing Commission. Ms. Fishman told the committee that the high priced zones are in white neighborhoods and that it is almost redlining. She is concerned about having white neighborhoods and about moderate income elders being pushed out by real estate taxes. She would like to see a way to help elders with this issue.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204299: That the Director of SPCD appear before this Board's Committee on Housing and Community Development to discuss plans to connect the Inner Belt with North Point and the substance of any discussions with the City of Cambridge.

Mr. Glavin discussed the idea of improving transportation and access and said that concept is alive and well. The city will continue to advocate for a connection. The matter is before the Secretary of Transportation and is within the impact area of the Everett casino.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

196221: That the Director of SPCD provide SomerVision updates twice a year, broken down by ward, showing progress made in residential, affordable units, jobs, public space, trips via transit, bike and walking, and development in transformative areas.

Mr. Proakis discussed the number of certificates of occupancy being issued by the city.

Alderman Ballantyne discussed the density of neighborhoods and concerns of constituents and said that she wants to move the dialogue about density forward. Mr. Proakis explained that hitting the housing goals does impact density in neighborhoods and that the zoning overhaul is designed to address these concerns and push growth into transformative districts. Mr. Glavin said that • of the goal has been met in non-transformative neighborhoods and he spoke about diversity and its challenges. Alderman Ballantyne wants to make sure that the goals are being measured.

Mr. Proakis said the zoning overhaul will be done soon. Accessory units are being left out of the proposed zoning overhaul. He also said having 4 unrelated people (living together) per unit is another issue that will not be changed at this time. Ald. Niedergang said if the new zoning doesn't pass this year, people will be pushing for a development moratorium.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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196368: That the Director of SPCD submit a plan on the use of city owned properties as it relates to projected growth identified in the SomerVision Plan.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202148: That the Director of SPCD and the Administration discuss pre-planning and planning processes and requirements for private developers and city infrastructure projects, identifying differences and similarities.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202149: That the Administration discuss requiring adding the word "Somerville" to buildings in the Assembly Square area, to enhance office and commercial marketing efforts.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203698: That the Director of SPCD discuss options property owners have to split lots in residential neighborhoods.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203564: That the Director of SPCD incorporate into the initial notice to abutters of development projects, that they may submit their e-mail address to the Planning Department for updates as the designs or plan change.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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