



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Scott at 6:01 pm and adjourned at 8:25 pm on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Davis, Mbah, Ewen-Campen, Scott), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Strezo).

Others present: David Shapiro - Assistant City Attorney, Legislative and Policy Analyst - Brendan Salisbury, Luisa Oliveria - Director of Public Space and Urban Forestry, Matthew Zaino - Deputy Director of Inspectional Services, Michael Potere - Licensing Operations Manager, Sean Sheehan - Police Captain, Diego DeOliveria - Police Lieutenant, Neha Sing - Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Madalyn Letellier - Legislative Services Manager.

Roll Call

Present:	Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis
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1. Committee Minutes **(ID # [25-1611](#))** Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of October 20, 2025.

RESULT:	<u>ACCEPTED</u>
AYE:	Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Six City Councilor Davis
ABSENT:	City Councilor At Large Strezo

Ordinances

2. Order **(ID # [25-1439](#))** By Councilor Wilson, Councilor Mbah, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Scott

That the City Clerk work with this Council to amend the Code of Ordinances to better regulate the sale of second-hand goods.

This item was discussed with item #25-1686.

RESULT:	<u>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</u>
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3. Ordinance **(ID # [25-1686](#))** By Councilor Wilson
Amending Chapter 8, Article III of the Code of Ordinances pertaining to secondhand dealer licenses.

This item was discussed with item #25-1439.

Licensing Operations Manager Potere talked about the amendments to the language being proposed. Among the points is to clarify reselling of secondhand dealers and a change in language to expand the system of record keeping in the Police Department. He also stated the penalties remain the same within the submitted amendment. In response to a question from Chair Scott, Licensing Operations Manager Potere stated that identification documents would need to be presented as a manner of record keeping if a shop-owner goes to a yard sale to purchase items for their storefront. Councilor Scott asked if an acceptable edit would be to add a dollar amount to the requirement of identification for a purchase, specifically within Sec 8-61 (c). Chair Scott shared his desire to keep the item in committee and work with the Clerk's staff to find a dollar amount. In response to a question from Councilor Mbah, Licensing Operations Manager stated the enforcement comes in the renewal process, which goes to the police department which is reviewed by the liaison.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Ordinance
(ID # [25-0357](#))

By Councilor Clingan

Amending Section 12-8 (a) of the Code of Ordinances by inserting the words "including abutting curb cuts if applicable".

Deputy Director Zaino was present to confirm that the amendments were reviewed and agreed upon within the Inspectional Services Department. Councilor Davis expressed concerns about placing responsibility, and potential fines, on residents to remove snow piles and what could be done by city employees to remove large snow piles. Following concerns from Councilor Strezo, Councilor Davis inquired if this amendment could be targeted at specific buildings, mainly larger tenant sized buildings. Assistant City Attorney Shapiro clarified that the amendment can be implemented differently depending on the size of buildings. Councilor Mbah asked how implementation of this amendment will be monitored. Deputy Director Zaino stated the process remains the same as always, while inspectors are out, they may observe or if 311 tickets are put in directly the problem will be addressed. Discussions continued to apply the amendment to commercial properties only, with the acknowledgment that the language would need to be revised. Chair Scott requested that the Legislative and Policy Analyst draft language around creating an obligation on commercial properties to clear abutting curb ramps.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE DISCHARGED WITH NO RECOMMENDATION

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Strezo

5. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1652](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 2-309.9 and 2-309.10 of the Code of Ordinances to clarify term length and appointment process for the Community Preservation Committee.

Director Singh was present to review the submitted memo that reviewed the proposed changes, *Legislative Matters - 2025-12-02 CPC Term Structure Memo (with 25-1652)*. In response to a question from the Chair, Legislative and Policy Analyst Salisbury stated that until an administrative code is put in place that would capture the multi-member bodies the ordinance remains in effect.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

6. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1714](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 12-178 of the Code of Ordinances to remove the prohibition on sourcing neonicotinoid-treated plants.

Director Oliveira stated the amendment eliminates the sunset clause. In recognition that neonicotinoid-treated plants are dangerous, but they are prevalent throughout nurseries, it is very hard to buy the quantity of plants needed on city projects. If this clause continues with the project's completion would be in jeopardy, the contractors who would be required to complete the projects would face immense difficulties in fulfilling the plant needs. While smaller, local nurseries are utilized, renovations such as the Kennedy School, Mystic River separation project, Morrison Avenue, and the Blessing of the Bay Greenway are all projects that will be put out to bid in the new year, and prices will either be much higher or be unable to plant as many plants as possible. Director Oliveira reiterated the inability of smaller nurseries to fulfill the requirements needed for city projects, and with planting less the goal to create more habitat is undermined. She went on to share that research largely shares that neonicotinoids do not stay in plants forever, but there is ongoing research on that statement. Another avenue that has been explored is changing planting specifications and seeing how that changes the ability to use neonicotinoid free plants. Councilor Davis expressed apprehension to remove the sunset clause.

In response to the conversation Councilor Ewen-Campen shared his belief that while this should still be a priority that the January 1, 2026, date is not feasible to support. Director Oliveira, in response to Councilor Strezo, stated that the department does not purchase the plants directly. A request for proposal goes out, and the lowest bidder is accepted, due to procurement law they also cannot dictate where plants are purchased. When the department itself does smaller projects, it is when they have control over the nurseries and can select the plants. Director Oliveira stated throughout the

conversation that trees are the hardest to source, as there are no trees that are not neonicotinoid-treated, and would be unable to plan the over 300 trees that are to be planted this year.

Councilor Ewen-Campen moved to amend by replacing struck sentence with “provided, that as January 1, 2029, the city shall not source native plants that have been treated with neonicotinoids. “This motion was approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Davis, Mbah, Ewen-Campen, Scott), 1 opposed (Councilor Strezo), 0 absent.

Councilor Strezo moved to amend the amended version to replace the year 2029 with 2028. This motion was approved on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Davis, Strezo, Scott), 2 opposed (Councilors Mbah, Ewen-Campen), 0 absent).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

7. Officer's Communication (ID # [25-1676](#))

City Clerk submitting an amendment to the Rules of the City Council to align with the provisions of the City Charter.

Legislative and Policy Analyst Salisbury clarified the proposed amendments to bring the Rules in line with the newly adopted Charter. The document outlines all changes in red line including editing the document to reflect the new references for the Charter. Councilor Davis clarified Rule 55 that if one member objects the item can be taken up at a special meeting if two-member objects the item cannot be taken up until the next regularly scheduled meeting. He went on to state ambiguity in Rule 59 that all functions of the Clerk may be performed by their designee. Legislative and Policy Analyst Salisbury stated that continued language tweaks could be made and put before the Council.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

Surveillance Technology Impact Reports

8. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1605](#))

Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Ball Cameras.

This item was discussed with items #25-1604, 25-1603, 25-1579.

Chair Scott set the conversation that these reports are not modified by the Council but are submitted and approved by the Council. Councilor Ewen-Campen provided commentary on the technology reports that may impact civil liberties or privacy issues but stated the use of these submitted reports is well documents in the city. Councilor Davis inquired if the ability for the technology to capture video and audio, specifically for the Ball Cameras, about what a download scenario may be. Lieutenant DeOliveira, who wrote the report, shared the ability to download material would only be if necessary for an investigation and would be deleted within a timely manner once the use was no longer. Councilor Davis continued with his commentary that all responses are missing a legal standard justification and that it would then be consistent with other reports submitted. Captain Sheehan, in response, did state the language exists in other reports and would be amenable to edit the report to include.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

9. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1604](#)) Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Thermal Imaging Monoculars.

This item was discussed with items #25-1605, 25-1603, 25-1579.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

10. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1603](#)) Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for Under Door Cameras.

This item was discussed with items #25-1605, 25-1604, 25-1579.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

11. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1579](#)) Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for use of an Unmanned Aircraft System at the High School.

This item was discussed with items # 5-1605, 25-1604, 25-1603.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Strezo

Referenced Documents:

- Legislative Matters - 2025-12-02 Amendment (with 25-0357)
- Legislative Matters - 2025-12-02 CPC Term Structure Memo (with 25-1652)
- Legislative Matters - 2025-12-02 Amend Section 12-8_ Updated (with 25-0357)