



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 28, 2018

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Wilfred N. Mbah	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Stephanie Hirsch, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Hannah Payne, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairman Mbah and adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Approval of the October 3, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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204966: That the Administration consider including an anaerobic digester at the new High School.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204381: That the City arborist report to the Ward 5 Alderman on the status of the tree at 48 Holyoke Road.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204889: That the City Arborist trim the tree at 26 Mead Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204389: That the Director of SPCD consider planting trees on Somerville Avenue from Lowell Street to Central Street.

RESULT:**APPROVED**

204887: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board by end of February with the tree planting schedule, by Ward, for Spring 2018.

Mr. Rawson provided the committee with a map of 2018 potential planting sites. Several hundred sites are viable planting locations. Constituent requests and internal requests were discussed. Final recommendations for planting sites will be provided to the BOA in March. The planting budget is \$300,000 which comes from various sources including grants. The committee discussed how the city developed their urban forestry plan. The health and lifespan of the city's current tree inventory was discussed.

Ald. Scott asked if the city has data on constituent tree requests that are not able to be fulfilled. The committee discussed how the city has determined where trees can be planted.

The committee discussed the need for transparency with respect to the tree planting plan.

The committee discussed the best way to continue the conversation on native species plants and trees.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

202973: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with the tree planting plan for the city, by Ward.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

204353: That the Director of SPCD advise the Ward 6 and 7 Aldermen when the tree that was requested 6 years ago will be planted at 80 Bay State Avenue.

The committee discussed the history of this item. The previous location of the tree was patched with concrete and it is a conclusion that the root system could not be removed. There will be an investigation to see if a tree can be planted.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

204726: That the Administration continue to increase the tree canopy by adding 1,000 trees in the next 5 years.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

201432: That the Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment and the Commissioner of Public Works explore alternatives, such as a "pay as you throw" program, to limit the amount of curbside trash, and integrate curbside composting.

The committee discussed the goals of reducing waste at an effective cost. Composting and recycling costs the city more than trash removal. Ways in which to have businesses use less of the items that are non-compostable are a possible ways to achieve the goals of the city. The committee discussed ways to create price signals to eliminate waste. The committee discussed

the ways in which the plastic bag ban has helped achieve the city's goals. The city's trash is currently incinerated and does not go to a landfill.

Ald. Mbah expressed interest in creating ways to fund environmental initiatives in the city. Ald. Niedergang is willing to explore ways to achieve the goals, and he would not want a "pay as you go" program if it is going to be a burden on residents.

The committee discussed the city's current trash removal program and contract and ways in which it can be improved.

The committee discussed the importance of recycling and education in the schools and in the city as a whole. The committee discussed the burden that recycling causes due to costs and ways to reduce the consumption of materials that should be recycled. Various environmental clubs in the Somerville schools were discussed.

Ald. Hirsch spoke as a member of the public and discussed the way the city controls the materials in the schools. She wants the schools to have the same standards as the city has with respect to recycling. She is going to protest, sue the city and pull out her hair if the problem doesn't get fixed.

Members of the public suggested working with retailers to help with the initiative.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201695: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on reducing food waste and expanding composting at city schools.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202993: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment update this Board on the planned curbside composting pilot program, and on other possible programs to promote composting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204436: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment arrange a meeting with this Board's Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy, members of the School Committee, the Superintendent of Schools, the Administration, and the Commissioner of Public Works, to plan recycling efforts in the Public Schools.

The committee discussed inviting a representative from each department to attend a meeting in the future.

Ald. Niedergang said that the administration should do the work to put a meeting together because it is a time consuming task.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204869: That Director of Sustainability and Environment include the School Department's Finance Director in discussions of #204436, to examine procurement criteria for cafeteria

food and drink vendors given the amount of waste created by food packaging.

The committee discussed ways in which the city can eliminate waste in the schools.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202992: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment and the City Solicitor advise this Board on the feasibility requiring certain commercial and multi-family buildings to require composting as a part of regular waste disposal.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia would like some guidance from the legal department.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202019: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board, and to the School Committee, on the type, brand, cost, and use of all cleaning agents used in city and school buildings, and report on how "green," non-toxic cleaning products would compare with current practices.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia explained the role of Buildings and Grounds Dept and how they have decided to start buying cleaning products off of a pre-vetted cleaning products from the state.

The procurement process of cleaning products was discussed amongst the committee.

Motion by Ald. Ballantyne to complete this item - Approved

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204435: That Director of Sustainability and Environment provide this Board with periodic updates on the Somerville Forward initiatives.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia updated the committee of the progress thus far. There have been two rounds of meetings with the working groups involved in this project. Actions related to energy and greenhouse gas reduction are being looked at as increased heat and flooding will need to be dealt with in the future. Technical consultants are putting together a plan to implement some of these solutions. The committee discussed community involvement and participation at the state and federal level. Measurable goals and strategies to meet those goals were discussed. The committee would like to see a list of the subjects being explored by the initiative.

The committee discussed the amount of meeting schedule for the future and when those meetings will be held.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- Tree Data (with 204887)