



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 3, 2020

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

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

Others present: Lt. Tim Mitsakis - SPD, Sarah Lewis - OSPCD, Nancy Salamoun - DEI, Rose Durham - Clerk of Committees, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Rossetti and adjourned at 8:00 PM on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Clingan).

Councilor Clingan was absent due to his attendance at the Legislative Matters Committee meeting which was being held at the same time.

Approval of the November 2, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were accepted on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Mbah, Strezo, Scott and Rossetti), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Clingan).

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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209706: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Katherine Garavaglia as an Alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Garavaglia, a Title Attorney, was introduced by Ms. Lewis. There are presently 2 vacant alternate positions and their terms expire in January 2021. Ms. Lewis believes that the City Council could make the 2-year alternate terms effective as of the date of the appointments since the positions have been vacant. Ms. Garavaglia addressed the committee and said that it would be a privilege to serve the city.

Councilor Mbah thanked Ms. Garavaglia and said that she sounded like a stellar addition, a very unique candidate to the Zoning Board. He went on to say that even from her brief introduction, he had some keen interest when she mentioned bus lanes and he asked Ms. Garavaglia to speak a little to her

experience balancing different transportation modalities, including automobile, bicycle and pedestrian, with the design of the city's streets and public spaces.

Ms. Garavaglia replied that a lot of the bus lanes and bike lanes really do relate a lot to the Planning Board and for zoning, adding that she would be looking at the new zoning use manual guidelines about trying to maintain greenspace in Somerville and promoting an environmentally friendly aspect to the town, so you see that continued through planning and with the bus lane as you're trying to balance those out. She said that her role would be to follow the zoning code and implement decisions as reasonably as possible.

Councilor Scott asked about past appearances before other zoning boards and Ms. Garavaglia gave a brief summary. She said that she has reviewed the city newest zoning codes and is familiar with them. Councilor Scott posed various scenarios and asked the candidate to explain how she would deal with them. On the issue of special permits and modifications of conditions the candidate said she would want to have specific facts for each case and seek the advice for more experienced board members, all while adhering to the zoning code. Asked about the importance of community input, the candidate stated that in the absence of a permissible code, e.g., by right, the concerns of the community should be considered thoroughly. Councilor Strezo asked the candidate about displacement in Somerville and Ms. Garavaglia said that its important to pick projects that won't have overpriced units, so as to make them more affordable. Chair Rossetti said that she's looking for individuals to serve who will listen to the people, not just someone who will push development for the sake of increasing the city's revenue stream. Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment with a term expiration of January 21, 2023.

Ms. Lewis pointed out that many of the questions asked of the candidate this evening have more to do with the Planning Board rather than the Zoning Board of Appeals.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED. [2 TO 2]
AYES:	Rossetti, Mbah
NAYS:	Scott, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

209772: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Katharine Milton to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Ms. Salamoun presented Ms. Milton to the committee and noted that she has been a volunteer with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CPD). During questioning Attorney Milton stated her passion for civil rights. The candidate is also fluent in Spanish. Of the nine positions for this commission, there are 2 vacant positions on tonight's agenda and 3 currently filled positions at the present time. All councilors stated their support for the candidate.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

210753: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Christine Stone to the Somerville

Redevelopment Authority.

Chair Rossetti reported that the candidate's resume, along with some backup information, have not yet been received, therefore, this item will remain in committee.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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210869: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Lian Guertin to the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Ms. Salamoun presented Lian Guertin to the committee. Councilor Scott commented that he is familiar with the candidate and some of the work he has done in the city and is enthusiastic about his appointment.

Following further questioning by the committee, Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

210947: Requesting the re-appointment of Alan Bishop as Constable.

Lt. Mitsakis was present for the discussion of this item and reported that all paperwork is in order. Chair Rossetti referenced the attached letter from the City Solicitor regarding Somerville's ongoing eviction moratorium and Mr. Bishop acknowledged receipt of same. Mr. Bishop is supplying information from the Office of Housing Stability along with the eviction notices. He is still being asked to serve notices by landlords.

Following further questioning by the committee, Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

210948: Requesting the re-appointment of Catello Battinelli II as Constable.

This item was discussed with item 210949.

Lt. Mitsakis was present for the discussion of this item and stated that the SPD portion of the process, i.e., a background criminal check, has been performed with no problems found. He said that the process is fairly simple and he has been working to make the process more thorough. Mr. Battinelli stated that both he and Mary Battinelli supplied their own CORI check information along with their applications. Both candidates acknowledged receiving the information from the City Clerk regarding the city's eviction moratorium. Serving as a constable for 12 years, Mr. Battinelli stated that he has been providing housing stability information to those facing eviction in an effort to help them through the process. Mrs. Battinelli, now serving in her 4th year, admits to same. Both stated their passion for assuring our residents understand Somerville's moratorium. Mr. Battinelli stated that he is still receiving requests to serve eviction notices, and although he understands that evictions are not presently allowed or enforceable in Somerville, he will serve the papers after informing landlords about the city's policy.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

210949: Requesting the re-appointment of Mary Battinelli as Constable.

This item was discussed with item 210948.

Chair Rossetti moved for approval of the appointment.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Strezo
ABSENT:	Clingan

Handouts:

- Ltr-constable association-eviction moratorium 11-10-2020 (with 210947, 210948, 210949)