



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 24, 2024

6:00 PM

The meeting took place virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:06 PM by Chair Davis and adjourned at 7:24 PM with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Burnley, Davis), none opposed, and one absent (Councilor Scott).

Others present:

Sean Sheehan - Lieutenant, Nicholas Antanvica - Director of Inspectional Services, Matt Sirigu - Labor Council, Brendan Salisbury - Legislative and Policy Analyst, Madalyn Letellier - Legislative Services Manager.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr., City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah and Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen

Absent: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

Committee Minutes
(ID # [24-0886](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of May 28, 2024.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0912](#))

Requesting approval of the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for use of an Unmanned Aerial System at the 2024 Somerville Police Department Junior Police Academy.

Chair Davis gave background to the item regarding the usage of the drone to be used as a demonstration for students in the cadet program and the reason for this discussion is technology usage is subject to review by the ordinance. Lieutenant Sheehan went on to provide further details about the usage of drones for the Junior Police Academy at the Kennedy School to give students an idea of how drones are used in policing. The drones will be coming from a collaboration with the Boston Police Department (PD) who are licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Chair Davis referenced the Surveillance Technology Impact Report and confirmed that the drone footage will not be recording or have remote access it will just be for review by the students and the instructor, Lieutenant Sheehan confirmed this is also for one day use.

Councilor Burnley assumed the Chair at 6:11, Chair Davis returned to Chair

at 6:15.

Councilor Burnley asked Lieutenant Sheehan about the training that is required to operate such technology as the drones and if there are any Somerville Police Officers with the correct training. Lieutenant Sheehan confirmed there are none and that is why the Boston PD, who are licensed by the FAA, will be handling the demonstration. Councilor Burnley went on to ask if Boston PD would be paying for their officers to come and do the demonstration. Lieutenant Sheehan relayed he could follow up with other examples, but it is his understanding Boston PD will handle that. Councilor Mbah directed his question to Lieutenant Sheehan on if this process would lead to the PD buying their own drones, Lieutenant Sheehan responded there is no intention of buying or leasing a drone in the city.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

NAY: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

ABSENT: Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0716](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to the Code of Ordinances to add Sections 8-375 through 8-381 to promote and enforce safer construction practices.

Director of Inspectional Services, Nick Antanavica, was present to discuss the amendment asking to require developers and contractors to provide an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliant safety plan prior to receiving their building permit. Councilor Burnley asked about what had changed in the ordinance as the copy attached does not have red lines. Brendan Salisbury, Legislative and Policy Analyst, answered there are no red lines since this is an entirely new article and there are no substantive edits to existing text. Chair Davis later asked if Section 8-17, Workplace Safety history will remain in the new ordinance, Director Antanavica responded it will.

Councilor Ewen-Campen went on to ask Director Antanavica under the applicability section, if it means renovations are exempt of the safety report for owner occupants, and if a contractor was hired would they also then be exempt. Director responded homeowners are not subject to OSHA regulations themselves but if a contractor was hired, they would then be required to follow OSHA, there is one small discrepancy where if the

company has less than two staff members, they would also be exempt. Councilor Ewen-Campen spoke on the good intentions for this ordinance to promote safety and if this were to pass what is the impact on the community in terms of additional regulations and requirements of homeowners. Director Antanavica responded that the call volume on complaints is about 5% and anticipates the most concern will be coming from those who do not want to take the extra time or money on safety protocols. Director went on further that these safety regulations need to be in place because enough incidents have already occurred, and education is important to ensure the contractors and developers know what they are supposed to be doing. On this point, Chair Davis clarified this ordinance does not require a contractor to do anything they are not already required to do under OSHA regulations, Director confirmed that is correct.

Councilor Mbah asked what projects are subject to this ordinance. Director Antanavica related if it is a homeowner, it is personal responsibility, if you are hiring someone or it is a large developer or incorporated company ISD is reinforcing education and safety and wants to make sure everyone on the job site understands the safety regulations that are in place. Councilor Burnley asked if there are flowcharts for residents to understand the renovation process through the city. Director Antanavica said there are some in existence and ISD can work on creating more.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Mayor's
Communication
(ID # [24-0693](#))

Conveying the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for exterior cameras at fire stations.

Chair Davis introduced this item's purpose is to increase security of the building and protect the building and equipment inside. The item on the agenda is an old report and the committee will be discussing a revised report that was sent out by the administration prior to the start of the meeting. The Chair relayed he had asked for a revised impact report to be rewritten in a way that better aligns with the impact report that already exists for the GLX cameras. The cameras being installed at the fire station have the potential to be used in a similar manner to the GLX technology and the administration was asked to revise the report to better align with the technology that already has a report written. On the new report Chair Burnley asked for what

purposed could officers access footage and how would they do so. Lieutenant Sheehan responded on behalf of the SPD that the footage would be used for crime or accident footage. The officers that will be able to utilize the footage will be trained by the technology department and everyone is given a unique code so the department can track who is logging in. Councilor Burnley followed up on this point if officers are directed to not share password, Lieutenant Sheehan stated officers are subject to discipline if it is discovered passwords were shared. Councilor Burnley went on to ask how long the footage is going to be held before it is overridden. Lieutenant Sheehan spoke about criminal investigations, and they are subject to Massachusetts Criminal Law, and it would have to be kept until trial and then the State would determine. Lieutenant Sheehan said he cannot speak on every criminal case but can come back to the committee with more information.

Councilor Ewen-Capen directed a question regarding the impact the installation of cameras on the outside of a building could have on collective bargaining. In house labor Council Matt Sirigu explained the fire suppression contract allows the city to implement new technology advancements, GPS devices, and security enhancements without impacting bargaining. There are requirements to notify the union 60 days in advance and there is preparation in place to oblige by all requirements.

Councilor Mbah asked for clarification around the role of the Boston Office of Emergency Management. Lieutenant Sheehan stated from his understanding the Boston Office of Emergency Management receives funding that each community can apply to grants for and then it gets disseminated to cities and towns, Lieutenant Sheehan offered the Homeland Security sergeant can follow up with more specifics.

Chair Davis moved that the committee recommends that the Council approve a new submission of the Surveillance Technology report that is consistent with the draft discussed in committee.

The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Burnley, Davis) and one absent (Councilor Scott).

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- Legislative Matters - 2024-06-24 Fire Station Exterior Cameras STIR (with 24-0693)