



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 5, 2020

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Stephanie Hirsch	Chair	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Councilor Katjana Ballantyne, Councilor Mark Niedergang, Ann Connor-Mayor's office, Denise Taylor-Communications, Tom Galligani-OSPCD, Kelly Donato-OSPCD, Sarah Lewis-OSPCD, Hannah Carillo-OSPCD, Mike Feloney-OSPCD, Melissa Woods-OSPCD and Rich Raiche-Infrastructure and Asset Management. Joseph Lynch and Heather McCormack also attended from Somerville Media Center.

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Hirsch and adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Approval of the November 6, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Space for Community Organizations

209611: That the Administration discuss terminating the Somerville Media Center and MAPS tenancies, including any plans to help them relocate, such as allowing them time to find a new location.

Ms. Taylor, Mr. Galligani and Mr. Raiche appeared before the committee to answer questions about the tenants of the SCAT building. Mr. Raiche stated he hired an on-call contractor to do some temporary repairs last November. The building has extensive deficiencies and renovation will need to be bid out. Ms. Taylor stated that both organizations met in December and there was a discussion about the urgent need to relocate for 2-3 months. The committee asked Mr. Raiche why this work was not on the CIP and it was stated that the city did not know the extent of the work at the time. The SCAT building is much worse than originally thought and did not have an estimate to put on the CIP. This work will require an OPM which was approved for a city building previously. The city is interviewing candidates for OPM on Monday and the person will help select an architect in the coming months. Mr. Raiche stated that he is hoping to have the tenants out by June and there will be 2-3 years for full design and construction. Ms.

Taylor stated that the city has been searching for possible sites for the tenants. The city solicitor is also reviewing the possibility of financial support to cover as much of the rent as is permitted by law (due to the “anti aid amendment”).

Mr. Lynch, SMC President, stated that he has two concerns: 1. Deterioration of building and 2. Tenancy going forward. Mr. Lynch also stated he has not seen the report stating the issues with the building. The building has been deteriorating for many years. He needs a better understanding of the condition of the building since they entertain 50-100 students from within and around Somerville. He also questioned who would be paying for the move and lease and that the move could deplete SMC funds. It was stated that timeline of 30-60 days to leave the building is not enough time due to the number of services needed to arrange a move. It was suggested to use trailers as a possible temporary fix. There is an additional discussion about the formula by which the City helps fund SMC via the cable franchise fees. Councilor Ballantyne submitted an order to the finance committee on this matter.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206487: That the Administration discuss with this Board a plan to create a permanent space for the Groundworks Somerville program, currently known as the South Street Farm, which is planned for displacement.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208810: That the Administration consider ways to encourage the Somerville YMCA to relocate in or near Union Square in order to fulfill the goal of a new community center for people of all ages in Union Square.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208986: That the Administration update this Council on plans to preserve onsite affordable senior housing and care for the current and future residents of the Little Sisters of the Poor facility.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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SomerVision 2040

209370: Relaying information about the SomerVision 2040 draft revision, comment, and endorsement process and timeline.

Mr. Feloney, Ms. Lewis, Ms. Woods and Ms. Carrillo answered questions about what’s in SomerVision 2040 for housing. Chair Hirsch raised concerns about what appeared to be a less ambitious goal for the housing chapter. Ms. Woods stated they spent the summer and early fall engaging people in the community asking what the city should be spending its time on.

Councilor McLaughlin made a **resolution for the Administration to work with the Housing and Community Development Committee to develop a plan to achieve 30% deed restricted units as a percent of all housing in Somerville.**

Chairperson Hirsch suggested a monthly housing group to track program. Ms. Lewis stated that the next step after adoption of the new SomerVision draft is to execute the key steps, including forming a new task force to map out how to achieve the affordable housing goal. Chair Hirsch asked if it's possible to begin the work even prior to adoption of SomerVision, and Melissa Woods said that it is. There were other discussions to recommend an amendment for additional 10% workforce housing.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

209573: That the Committee on Housing and Community Development provide feedback on SomerVision 2040's chapter on Housing with respect to metrics and key tasks, including the questions listed within.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Related Housing Items

204990: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the Affordable Housing Universal Wait List plan and consolidating the process of applying for affordable housing into a single, universal, persistent application, lottery, and wait list.

Mr. Feloney and Ms. Donato talked about receiving 2 proposals based upon the SOW. Interviews have started and they will update the city council in a future meeting.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

205334: That the Committee on Housing and Community Development investigate the condition of affordable housing units in the City, gathering testimony and data, to determine whether there is an affordable housing crisis that constitutes a public emergency, which may inform any home rule petitions related to affordable housing.

It was stated that a follow up memo was sent by Mr. Feloney to the city council 4/30/18. This request was in relationship to the transfer task.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

205670: That the Director of SPCD provide a progress report on the 100 Homes Program since its inception.

It was stated there had been updates semi-regularly in this committee. The chair requested that the regular updates continue for this committee. Mr. Feloney stated there are 71 units today under the general heading of 100 homes, not including Clarendon Hill.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

205824: That the Administration implement the 2015 Sustainable Neighborhood Working Group recommendation to include as a preference for inclusionary housing "Families with children in Somerville Public Schools classified as homeless and in temporary out-of-

district placements.”

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205899: 5 residents submitting comments re: #205334, a possible affordable housing crisis.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205932: That the Director of SPCD or the Director of Housing Stability develop an evidenced-based scale of qualifying income levels that reflects the cost of housing, to guide residents’ access to subsidies for City or District programming.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206233: That the Director of SPCD develop an affordable housing program targeted especially at city employees whose income is below a certain threshold level.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206266: That the Director of SPCD, the Director of Housing Stability, or the City Solicitor explain under what circumstances a current resident could be given preference for a deed-restricted unit.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206773: That the Administration establish a widely-advertised Fair Housing enforcement program that proactively tests for illegal housing discrimination.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206899: That the Director of Housing Stability invite the Public School Superintendent to join in convening with Alderman Hirsch a focus group of benevolent landlords, to better understand what factors contribute to their ability to rent at below-market rates and to rent to children and families.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207505: That the Director of SPCD work with this Council towards establishing a goal for the target number of deed-restricted units, so that a path to that goal can be analyzed as part of the next Housing Needs Assessment and discussed as part of the SomerVision 2040 process.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207728: That the Director of SPCD discuss an “Urban Renewal Displacee” preference in

affordable housing lotteries.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207888: That the Director of SPCD report on the impacts of the City's 20% inclusionary zoning ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208251: That the Director of SPCD appear before the Committee on Housing and Community Development to discuss the specific steps required to fill inclusionary units in new developments, and any suggestions for ways to increase the efficiency of this process.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208266: That the Director of SPCD report to this Council, within 30 days, the impact on our residents if President Trump's public charge and HUD's new proposed rule change on public housing is adopted.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208576: That the Director of SPCD provide a quarterly update regarding implementation of a universal waiting list for affordable housing opportunities.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208637: Director of Housing Stability responding to #208266 re: proposed changes to federal housing policy and public charge rules.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208679: That the Administration, in conjunction with the Somerville Homeless Coalition, create programs with specific goals to end homelessness in the City.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209263: That this Council consider allowing owner-adjacent short-term rental landlords more flexibility if they provide a predetermined number of days of temporary affordable housing per year at a predetermined charge per day.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209288: That the City Solicitor provide guidance on whether the City can take property by eminent domain to create affordable housing.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

209290: That the Director of SPCD provide an update on affordable housing units created in 2019, relative to the projected 51 units outlined in SomerVision update documents.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

209360: That the Director of SPCD provide this Council, in conjunction with its FY21 budget review, a list of upcoming commercial development, including the square footage and linkage payment projections with corresponding payment dates.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

209429: That the Administration consider promoting grants for homeowners willing to build a third deed restricted affordable unit, as allowed under the new zoning overhaul.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

209475: That the Director of SPCD, the Director of Finance or the City Solicitor inform this Council how the City will be able to ensure that deed restrictions remain during the transfer of a property.

Ms. Donato talked about concerns around foreclosure and provide housing with notice, and calculated maximum sales price. New deed rider goes on the property. It was stated that housing does not have a database to make it easier to track down data to share across other programs. The chair asked what housing would need to make their jobs easier and it was stated that they could use an administrative assistant and a database.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

Items to Close

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.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

208613: That the Administration provide options for how the City Council and/or members of the public may formally approve or revise the SomerVision 2040 plan.

RESULT: **WORK COMPLETED**

206820: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the Healy schoolyard redesign and consider making it a top priority.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207164: That the Director of SPCD work with the Housing Authority to enable wheelchair access from the Mystic View apartments to the Healey School.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208811: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD consider less dust-producing surfaces for the Nunziato Dog Park, and present alternatives, in writing, to the Ward 3 City Councilor.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208987: That the Commissioner of Public Works commence regular sidewalk cleaning outside the Nunziato Dog Park, and provide the Ward 3 City Councilor with a written policy for scheduled sidewalk cleaning.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203190: Publishers Circulation Fulfillment responding to #203057 re: Globe Direct distribution.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- Updated SNI Memo 2.5.20 (with 209370)
- Somerville Housing Supply - interim update_2 5 20 (with 209370)
- Draft HNA 2019-20_ selected excerpted data_ for H+CD 2 5 20 (with 209370)
- Copy of Updated SNWG Recommendations + Subsequent Housing Initiatives 2.5.20 (with 209370)