



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 5, 2016

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Matt McLaughlin, Mike Glavin - OSPCD, Goran Smiljic - ISD, Rob King - Capital Projects, Barbara Ruble - Tufts, Rob Chihade - Tufts, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:32 PM by Alderman Niedergang and adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Approval of the October 27, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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202190: That the Administration work with this Board's Committee on Housing and Community Development to respond to the Tufts Residential Strategy Working Group's recommendation to convert nonresidential buildings to residential uses.

Mr. Chihade stated that Tufts has not acquired property in Somerville since 2007. The college is working on a plan to modify existing dorms in order to house more students, including juniors and seniors. Bed optimization and retrofitting of wood framed assets are options being considered. Mr. Chihade said that by increasing dorm space, more students would be brought onto the campus. Presently, 68% of Tufts students live on campus and 850 live in Somerville. Alderman Ballantyne said that she wants to be sure that properties on the tax rolls stay on the tax rolls and Mr. Chihade committed to that.

Resident Jim Monagle, from Ossipee Road, doesn't want Tufts to use the Dover Amendment and said that he is concerned about increased enrollment. Ms. Ruble discussed the growth of Tufts and said that there is no plan now to increase enrollment. Residents expressed their concerns about increased enrollment without enough housing accommodations, the tax impacts resulting from students moving into neighborhoods and the lack of communication with neighbors.

Alderman Ballantyne wants the Institutional Master Plan completed and wants better communication from Tufts. Alderman Lafuente said that student rents affect tax assessments and higher rents impact housing stock.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202257: Tufts submitting comments responding to Agenda Items 24 (#202190) and 25 (#202191) re: converting nonresidential buildings to residential uses.

See discussion of item 202190.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200771: That the Administration provide this Board with an opinion relating to housing compliance, following the review of each University Spring Accountability Report, as recently submitted.

Mr. Smiljic explained the legal and inspection processes and noted that 31 inspectors were involved. He reported that the inspections were successful and that no overcrowding was found. Alderman Lafuente wants to get rid of absentee landlords as he feels that they push up the cost of taxes, rents, etc. He wants the city to stay on top of landlords. He also said that he is not in favor of Tufts increasing residential housing and he doesn't want Tufts to charge market rate rents.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202302: Tufts University submitting its Fall 2016 University Accountability report.

See discussion of item 200771.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202301: Harvard University submitting its Fall 2016 University Accountability report.

See discussion of item 200771.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201855: That the Supervisor of Inspectional Services advise this Board on regulating Air BnB rentals through inspections.

Chairman Niedergang recused himself from all discussion and action on this item because he rents his property to AirBnB guests.

Mr. Smiljic spoke about Bed and Breakfast and tourist homes and said that property owners make too much money from AirBnB. He pointed out that there are multiple scenarios involved

and that the city is looking at them on a case by case basis. Alderman Lafuente asked Mr. Smiljic to provide information to the BOA when he has it put together.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202308: That the Director SPCD request a redesign and upgrade to the asphalt playground, tot lot and “cave” courtyard at the West Somerville Neighborhood School.

Mr. Bitone said that the city made great investments in playgrounds, but the facilities have been outgrown and the children need something better. Alderman Ballantyne supports the item and discussed various improvements that would be good for the area. She asked if the School Department is involved in the process. Mr. Glavin said that the OSPCD staff would work toward the goal, adding that support from other sources could accelerate the process. Mr. Snyder said that the administration would also work towards achieving these goals and will contact the DPW to cut back the shrubbery.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202480: West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA submitting comments re: WSNS playground spaces.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201892: That the Administration and the Director of Capital Projects reactivate the West Branch Library renovations project ASAP to inform the community of the latest information available, including informational meetings and the likelihood of the start of renovations.

Mr. King reported that there have been great community meetings on the subject and Alderman Niedergang stated that abutters are concerned about the size of the addition.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200186: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 7 Alderman on the start date of the bike path project behind the Tannery Brook Condominiums.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202021: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the feasibility of demolishing the bus shelter at Broadway and Cedar Street and replacing it with a garden, small park or sitting area. (2nd request)

Mr. Glavin said that logistical issues must be evaluated as the shelter provides protection from headlight glare to the pitchers on the mound. He will report back to the committee on the issue in the

spring. Alderman Niedergang commented that the item is not a priority, however he would like it considered.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202498: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services provide the Ward 7 Alderman with a list of fines issued in relation to 35-37 Barton Street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202033: That the Administration study the impact of the proposed changes to Union Square traffic per the most recent plan from Parsons Brinckerhoff, and present the findings in a public meeting before final decisions are made about changing the traffic patterns and roadways.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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198971: That the Administration detail plans for the Davis Square infrastructure project and confirm when the project will begin.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- Tufts Map (with 202190)