



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 21, 2015

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Present	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Absent	

Other present: Alderman Niedergang, Alderman Rossetti, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman White, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Rachel Kelly - OSPCD, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Omar Boukili - Mayor's Office, representatives from Vertex

197851: That the Administration develop a comprehensive de-paving plan for city properties, especially school playgrounds, to alleviate flooding by reducing the 73% of Somerville that is covered by concrete, asphalt or other impervious surfaces.

Mr. Boukili spoke about a pilot program at the Healey School; which is the most paved property in the city. Mr. Boukili added that some areas maybe de-paved, e.g., playgrounds.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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197977: That the Director of the Office of Sustainability implement a plan to prohibit all departments, commissions and other bodies from distributing single-serve bottles of water at meetings, events, and other functions.

Mr. Sellers Garcia discussed the long term effects on the environment of not using bottled water and said that the city needs to think about water alternatives for outdoor events. The city has installed centralized bubblers in its buildings.

Alderman McWatters' motion *that the Administration take an inventory of water fountains in the city's parks and develop a plan to install fountains in those parks where none are present,* was approved.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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198353: That the Commissioner of Public Works meet with this Board's Committee on

Energy and Environment to discuss the use of salt and salt substitutes during the winter.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198736: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment update this Board on the progress of the Curbside Composting Task Force toward developing a citywide composting program.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia attended a compost meeting this evening and reported that research has been done on different composting methods in the city. The task force is a very well informed group and has met with the Administration. There are 1000 households in the pilot project slated to begin this fall. A number questions still need to be answered and the team will continue to look at research and cost data. An grant application is being worked on for submission by the June 10th deadline.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

199097: Submitted by Vertex Companies Inc to install 2 groundwater monitoring wells in the grassy area just north of the Community Bike Path, 180 feet and 250 feet west of Cedar St.

Mr. Gibbons, a licensed site professional from Vertex, distributed a map of the proposed well locations and noted that petroleum was found on the property. Previously, testing was done for the soil at the location, but not for ground water. Vertex was hired by the owners of the Cedar Street property to further investigate. The property owners have an obligation to report the situation within a specified number of days. There is a ranking criteria with different triggers that generate reports. Mr. Gibbons explained that remedies would depend upon the risks in the area and at this point, Vertex is trying to define those risks. A timetable for drilling should be known in a couple of weeks.

Chairman Ballantyne requested that the test results be published in a communication and provided to the committee. Mr. Gibbons will consult with Rob King.

Alderman Ballantyne's motion *that the City Engineer, the City Solicitor and the Director of Capital Projects examine the permitting documents for 35R Lexington Avenue to determine if there is any way to encourage testing on this site*, was approved.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

199125: That the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change appear before this Board to discuss their activities, and submit a brief report with the highlights of their work.

Mr. Boukili informed members that the Commission could not make this committee meeting.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

199133: That the Director of SPCD determine if any of the city's trees have been infected by the Emerald Ash Borer, and report back to this Board with any strategy to save them, possibly by spraying Tree Azin.

Ms. Kelly and Mr. Rawson responded to this item, noting that there are roughly 12,000 trees in the city with approximately 100 of those being Ash. Some of the trees are not in good shape, but their condition is not due to the Emerald Ash Borer. Twelve Ash trees were sprayed as part of normal maintenance. Ms. Kelly reported that in the City of Cambridge, Davy Tree Company has treated 325 trees. Mr. Rawson said that the city does not have a specific timeline for spraying or treating trees and Mr. Boukili added that the city would do some research over the next few weeks to find out how much it would cost and then bring that information to the Board of Alderman for funding approval.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**