



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Davis at 6:01pm and adjourned at 7:07pm on a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Strezo, Mbah, Scott, and Davis), 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Ewen-Campen).

Chair Davis lost connection at 6:55pm and Councilor Scott took over as Chair of the meeting until he returned at 7:01pm.

Others present: Sean Sheehan - Captain, Police Department, Neha Singh - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Morena Zelaya - Housing and Policy Coordinator, Madalyn Letellier - Legislative Services Manager.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah and City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo

Absent: Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-0163](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of January 28, 2025.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Mbah and City Councilor At Large Strezo

NAY: Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen

2. Mayor's Communication (ID # [25-0142](#))

Conveying the 2024 Surveillance Technology Annual Report.

Councilor Scott opened questions directed at Captain Sheehan around the ShotSpotter report and discrepancy in the number of reports outlined on various pages. Captain Sheehan shared filings adjusted from fiscal year to calendar year and displayed 18 months of data and highlighting two different time periods. Chair Davis asked for clarification around the time this data was collected and why the adjustment was made. Captain Sheehan stated the adjustment in time was due to following other departments who file an annual report under a calendar year cycle. Councilor Scott went on to ask about Grey Key how the devices are secured

where they are only used when a warrant is obtained, the response stated there is a room that is contained in a dedicated car key access only room where only three people have access.

Chair Davis inquired about the method of collecting revenue through tickets for Parking and Director Singh confirmed the process as stated in the report. Chair Davis asked Caption Sheehan regarding changes to the impact report on newly obtained technology, the Caption confirmed grant funding allowed the Police Department to make upgrades to various security cameras in the department for the fixed cameras that exist in the City. The cameras that were replaced two were kept and used as pole cameras, which are used for specific investigations.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

3. Mayor's Request
 (ID # [25-0213](#))

Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to prevent landlords from passing realtor's fees on to tenants.

Housing Policy Coordinator Morena Zelaya outlined the proposals in the Home Rule Petition (HRP) that aims to make a more equitable playing field in the renting market. Councilor Strezo asked the realities of getting this HRP passed and what challenges are anticipated. Policy Coordinator Zelaya stated that there is a lot of momentum to get this through either through the state budget and proposed amended language or through an HRP, and she is seeing a lot of enthusiasm for this topic. Councilor Strezo asked if this proposal does not go through as an HRP is there a plan B like a ballot question at the city level. Policy Coordinator shared additional pathways have not been explored but if need be additional avenues will be explored. Councilor Singh further elaborated that Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) will track this HRP and will flag advocacy opportunities for the Council when appropriate.

Chair Davis asked if there were any substantive differences between the proposed HRP and Boston's, Boston included for commercial transactions and the city is focused on residential transactions which also aligns with the Governor's budget priorities considering some concerns it would not be supported and not being well versed in commercial rental usage.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, Ward Two City Councilor Scott, City Councilor At Large Mbah and City Councilor At Large Strezo

ABSENT: Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen