



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 2, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Clingan at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 6:57 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote: 3 in favor (Councilors Kelly, Gomez Mouakad, Clingan), 0 opposed, 0 absent.

Others present:

Michael Potere – Assistant Clerk of Committees; Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison; Demetrios Vidalis – Director of Water and Sewer; Brian Postlewaite – Director of Engineering; Jake Wilson – At-Large City Councilor.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Jesse Clingan, Vice Chair Beatriz Gomez Mouakad and Charlotte Kelly

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0733](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Public Utilities and Public Works Committee Meeting of May 8, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Chairperson Clingan, Vice Chair Gomez Mouakad and City Councilor At Large Kelly

2. Order (ID # [23-1399](#))

By Councilor Davis

That the Administration report to this Council on the ability to require further repairs on Highland Ave, and if none, an explanation on whether that complies with road engineering regulations.

Chair Clingan stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 5 (ID # 23-1355).

Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the administration is currently working on a memorandum addressing these Items. Councilor Gomez Mouakad requested information regarding the engineering background for the repaving project, including information about whether there is a delay so the road can settle before it is paved, and whether truck traffic is impacting the condition of the road. Chair Clingan added that it should also address questions as to the role of utility companies and any waiting periods that may exist with them.

Legislative Liaison Carrillo asked for clarification regarding what was meant by “further repair” in this Item, and Councilor Gomez Mouakad replied that

part of the information being requested pertains to the way patchwork paving is done and if there are MassDOT and/or city standards that will be applied to the work on Highland Avenue.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Order
(ID # [23-1397](#))

By Councilor Wilson and Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management update this Council on the sewer separation work and any opportunities for prioritizing problematic areas of the city.

Chair Clingan sponsored At-Large Councilor Wilson, who explained that the Item was based on feedback about flooding from Murdock Street residents, and that he has spoken to Director Raiche about the issue, who is interested in coming to this Committee to conduct a presentation about it. Councilor Gomez Mouakad added that there would be difficulty prioritizing Murdock Street due to issues with gravity and the way water flows in the area; Legislative Liaison Carrillo agreed and also added that Director Raiche is planning to address this Committee on the issue.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Order
(ID # [23-1183](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Director of Water and Sewer and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management explain what maintenance will be required for the new Poplar Street Pump Station and Spring Hill Sewer Separation Project, and how these maintenance requirements will be staffed to ensure their proper upkeep.

Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that Director Raiche is also planning to address this Item before the Committee at a later date. Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked if a brief memorandum could be prepared, and added that her concern with this Item is to make sure the new Pump Station is sufficiently staffed in an effort to protect the asset and prevent emergency maintenance.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

5. Order
(ID # [23-1355](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Kelly, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson

That the Director of Engineering re-pave Highland Avenue from Central Street to Walnut Street this year instead of waiting until 2024.

Chair Clingan stated that this Item would be taken together with Item 2 (ID # 23-1399).

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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6. Order
(ID # [23-0997](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
- That the Director of Engineering utilize the partial paving program to address streets in East Somerville that have private trench restoration, to ensure half-paved streets are fully paved.
- Director Postlewaite explained that the city determines which streets to partially pave based on their condition, and that a utility company or other private party “half-paving” a street does not necessarily give that street a preferred position for repaving.
- Chair Clingan asked about the system in place to implement the partial paving program, and Director Postlewaite replied that the program is focused on local and side streets, and determines which streets will be partially paved based on their condition and the level of traffic on the street. Director Postlewaite stated that a follow up communication with Councilor McLaughlin would take place in response to this Item.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
7. Order
(ID # [23-0888](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
- That the Director of Engineering update the Ward 1 Councilor regarding the pavement of Otis Street, which is half completed on one side.
- Director Postlewaite stated that this work has been completed.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
8. Order
(ID # [23-0885](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
- That the Director of Engineering, the Director of Water and Sewer, and the Executive Director of the Arts Council collaborate to start an "Adopt a Catch Basin" program to promote visibility and cleanliness of catch basins in creative and artistic ways.
- Director Vidalis stated that the department has been working with the Mystic River Watershed Association on a program like this called the “Adopt a Drain” program, and posted the following links in the webinar chat:
- <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/programs/stormwater-management> and <https://somerville.mysticdrains.org/>. Director Vidalis added that part of the artistic aspect of the program is that people can choose names for various catch basins to increase awareness for them.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
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9. Order
(ID # [23-0055](#))
- By Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Engineering and the Superintendent of Water and Sewer appear before this Council’s Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works to discuss the notification protocols for street work and water shutoffs.
- Chair Clingan stated the purpose of this Item was to get a better sense of how water shutoffs are handled by the city, and to correct public misconceptions that unannounced shutoffs were caused by contractors. Director Vidalis explained that the attached document explains the steps taken by the department in anticipation of planned water shutoffs, but that some emergency shutoffs may occur when urgent unexpected repairs are needed.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
10. Order
(ID # [23-0892](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Mobility repaint the NO BIKES ON SIDEWALKS signs along East Broadway.
- Director Postlewaite stated that this work has been completed, and added that the new pavement marking contract with the vendor includes “No Bikes on Sidewalks” markings that will be made with higher quality and more durable paint in the future.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
11. Order
(ID # [23-0887](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Strezo
That the Director of Mobility install speed bumps on Myrtle Street, Lincoln Avenue and Virginia Street.
- Legislative Liaison Carrillo explained that this Item is better suited to a 3-1-1 request, as opposed to an Item for this Committee, but that these requests would nevertheless be passed along to the DPW.
- Chair Clingan asked for clarification regarding the process and procedure for requesting speed bumps, and Director Postlewaite responded that Mobility Director Rawson would be best suited to answer that question.
- Councilor Gomez Mouakad added that there should be some clarity for the public as to which requests should go through 3-1-1 first, and which should be brought as Items in these meetings, noting that she would not bring an Item like this to a meeting unless it had first been processed through 3-1-1 and the DPW directly; Chair Clingan agreed.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

12. Order
(ID # [23-1363](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Commissioner of Public Works raise the low-hanging wires in front of 50 Chandler Street so that they do not get snagged on cars.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
13. Order
(ID # [23-0996](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor McLaughlin
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove or raise above human height, the low hanging wire in front of 11 Bonair Street, and report to this City Council who owns the pole.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
14. Order
(ID # [23-0884](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove or raise above human height, the wire wrapped around a street sign in front of 9 Brastow Avenue, and report back to this City Council who owns the pole.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
15. Order
(ID # [23-0883](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove or raise above human height, the wire wrapped around a pole in front of 54 Porter Street, and report back to this City Council who owns the pole.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788),

18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

16. Order
(ID # [23-0783](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or raise above human height, the wire wrapped around a pole at 336 Washington Street, and report to this City Council who owns the pole.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

17. Order
(ID # [23-0788](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or raise above human height, the dangling wires in front of 143 Hudson Street, and report to this City Council who owns the poles.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

18. Order
(ID # [23-0789](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or raise above human height, the dangling wires in front of 43 Hudson Street, and report to this City Council who owns the poles.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

19. Order
(ID # [23-0780](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or raise above human height, the dangling wire tied to a street sign in front of 88 Foskett Street, and report to this City Council who owns the pole.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
20. Order
(ID # [23-0524](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Clingan
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or raise to a safe height, the cables attached to a utility pole at 54 Ten Hills Road, and report to this City Council who owns the pole.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
21. Order
(ID # [23-0525](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Commissioner of Public Works remove or raise above human reach, the overhead wires tied to a porch railing at 76 Curtis Street, and report back to this City Council who is responsible for the wires.
- Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
22. Order
(ID # [23-0328](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Commissioner of Public Works immediately remove, or raise to a safe height, the cables attached to a pole at the intersection of Harvard and Monmouth Streets, and report to the City Council who owns the pole.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

23. Order
(ID # [23-0790](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove or relocate the wires tied around a pole in front of 21 Properzi Way, and report to this City Council who owns the poles.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

24. Order
(ID # [23-0787](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove, or move to a safer location, the heavy cables tied to wires and suspended above the sidewalk in front of 67-69 Merriam Street, and report to this City Council who owns the poles.

Chair Clingan stated that Items 12 (ID # 23-1363), 13 (ID # 23-0996), 14 (ID # 23-0884), 15 (ID # 23-0883), 16 (ID # 23-0783), 17 (ID # 23-0788), 18 (ID # 23-0789), 19 (ID # 23-0780), 20 (ID # 23-0524), 21 (ID # 23-0525), 22 (ID # 23-0328), 23 (ID # 23-0790), and 24 (ID # 23-0787) would be taken together, with a request to the DPW to follow up with the sponsoring Councilor(s).

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

25. Order
(ID # [23-1187](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr.

That the Commissioner of Public Works appear before this Council to discuss what actions have and can be taken to ensure that trash and recycling barrels do not obstruct sidewalks after pick-up.

Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the DPW is currently preparing a memorandum in response to Items 25 (ID # 23-1187), 26 (ID # 23-1184), 27 (ID # 23-0891), 28 (ID # 23-0889), and 29 (ID # 23-0610), and as such Chair Clingan stated that, with the exception of Item 28, these Items would be taken together and kept in committee.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

26. Order
(ID # [23-1184](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad
That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on recent air conditioning failures in City Hall and what repairs have been or will be completed to address those issues.
- Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the DPW is currently preparing a memorandum in response to Items 25 (ID # 23-1187), 26 (ID # 23-1184), 27 (ID # 23-0891), 28 (ID # 23-0889), and 29 (ID # 23-0610), and as such Chair Clingan stated that, with the exception of Item 28, these Items would be taken together and kept in committee.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
27. Order
(ID # [23-0891](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Commissioner of Public Works inspect the tree wells in front of 173 Broadway for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the DPW is currently preparing a memorandum in response to Items 25 (ID # 23-1187), 26 (ID # 23-1184), 27 (ID # 23-0891), 28 (ID # 23-0889), and 29 (ID # 23-0610), and as such Chair Clingan stated that, with the exception of Item 28, these Items would be taken together and kept in committee.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
28. Order
(ID # [23-0889](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Commissioner of Public Works fill the potholes on the unfinished side of Otis Street.
- Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the DPW is currently preparing a memorandum in response to Items 25 (ID # 23-1187), 26 (ID # 23-1184), 27 (ID # 23-0891), 28 (ID # 23-0889), and 29 (ID # 23-0610), and added that although the work has been completed for this Item, it would still be addressed therein. Councilor Gomez Mouakad added that this Item represents the type of request that should be first addressed with 3-1-1.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
29. Order
(ID # [23-0610](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Wilson
That the Commissioner of Public Works report on leaks and building system failures that have caused the shutdown of municipal buildings, excluding school buildings, in the last five years.
- Legislative Liaison Carrillo stated that the DPW is currently preparing a memorandum in response to Items 25 (ID # 23-1187), 26 (ID # 23-1184), 27 (ID # 23-0891), 28 (ID # 23-0889), and 29 (ID # 23-0610), and as such Chair Clingan stated that, with the exception of Item 28, these Items would

be taken together and kept in committee.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad stated that this Item reflects an interest in understanding the current state of other municipal buildings in the city and plans for their future, given that a lot of attention is currently being paid to schools, and added that if attention is not being paid to these other buildings, the city could end up facing substantial emergency repairs.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Referenced Documents:

- PUPW - 2023-10-02 Water interruption notice 2023 (with 23-0055)
- PUPW - 2023-10-02 Water Shutdown Process (with 23-0055)