



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 13, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Clingan at 6:03 pm and adjourned at 7:21 with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Kelly, Councilor Wilson, and Chair Clingan), none opposed, and none absent.

President Ewen-Campen appointed Councilor Wilson to replace Councilor Gomez Mouakad on the Committee for this meeting only.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo – Mayor’s Office, Rich Raiche – IAM, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Jesse Clingan, Charlotte Kelly and Jake Wilson

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [23-1503](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Public Utilities and Public Works Committee Meeting of October 2, 2023.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Chairperson Clingan, City Councilor At Large Kelly and Wilson

2. Order
(ID # [23-1596](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen

That the Commissioner of Public Works install a water fountain for people and dogs at Nunziato field.

Liaison Carrillo said that the Mayor’s Office is looking into the item and that a collaboration will be needed between DPW and PSUF. There are no details or updates on the timeline yet.

Chair Clingan sponsored Audrey Birkett to speak. Ms. Birkett commented on the increased risk of heat injury in the summer caused by the lack of water and trees. Councilor Wilson added that the nearby athletic field sees frequent use by youth soccer groups, and he requested that a water fountain be installed on the fence line between the two facilities.

RESULT: **KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

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3. Resolution (ID # [23-1437](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Administration report on capacity to allow parallel staffing and funding for the development of the 1895 Building, School Building Master Plan and the Fire Department Master Plan Building Study.
Liaison Carrillo said the Administration is not ready to speak to this item yet.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
4. Resolution (ID # [23-1436](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Administration collaborate with the School Department on determining the best and future use of the 1895 Building.
Liaison Carrillo said the Administration is not ready to speak to this item yet.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
5. Order (ID # [23-1435](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on ongoing deficiencies of City Hall and the City Hall Annex that could impair the future use of these buildings.
Liaison Carrillo said the Administration is not ready to speak to this item yet.
RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE
6. Order (ID # [23-1434](#)) By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management report on recent damages to the City Hall clock tower and share any concerns regarding potential damage to the building structure.
Dir. Raiche said that they mobilized an emergency contractor, who stabilized the tower with cribbing and plaster. However, he noted that this is a temporary solution. Dir. Raiche said that the city wants to find a more robust temporary solution in the meantime, which ultimately will require the removal of the clock faces.
RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED
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7. Order
(ID # [23-1433](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo
- That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide an update on the repairs of the Teele Square Fire Station, including a timeline for such repairs.
- Taken together with item 23-1432. Chair Clingan reviewed the attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 IAM Order Responses (with 23-1423 23-1433)”, which addresses the two items.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
8. Order
(ID # [23-1432](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Davis
- That the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management provide a report on the status of the Fire Department Master Planning Study, including projected timelines for the feasibility study, design, bidding and construction, and prioritization strategies.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
9. 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.
- Liaison Carrillo said that the attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 Highland Paving (with 23-1355 23-1399)” explains why paving cannot happen sooner than 2024, and that Councilor Davis had told her the intent of the item is to ensure that the road will be in better condition by winter, which Dir. Postlewaite had confirmed. Chair Clingan asked if utility companies would cover any of the cost of short-term repaving. This led to a discussion of what utility companies are obligated to do and how the freeze-thaw cycle affects the timeline of repaving. Dir. Raiche also spoke to the importance of good relationships with utilities. Councilor Wilson asked if the surface of Highland Ave would improve as the asphalt settled from freeze-thaw, to which Dir. Raiche said he would defer to Dir. Postlewaite.
- Councilor Kelly reviewed the memo and asked questions about the timeline of different projects on Highland. Dir. Raiche said that his understanding was that the gas work will be completed in June 2024, after which another phase of sewer separation will start. Councilor Kelly requested an updated memo with more clarity around the timeline.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
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10. 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.
- Councilor Wilson said that he submitted this item after a series of conversations with residents of Murdock Street, who have been having overflow issues. Dir. Raiche gave a presentation about sewer separation prioritization (agenda attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 CCPUPW Sewer Priorities (with 23-1397)”). The presentation summarized several earlier presentations and shared links to other resources, as well as listing current in-flight projects in each branch, and describing the upcoming Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control Planning Program that will be coordinated between Cambridge and Somerville. Dir. Raiche said that a third public meeting on the CSO control plan will be hosted virtually by the City of Somerville, City of Cambridge, and MWRA on Wednesday, November 15 at 6 pm. He said that it will be important to have Somerville voices at this meeting.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
11. 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.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
12. 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.
- Chair Clingan reviewed the memo from DPW (attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 CC Response (with 23-0891 23-1184 23-1187)”), which said that newly implemented trainings seem to be improving the situation. Chair Clingan asked residents to get barrels in sooner if able.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
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13. 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.
- Chair Clingan reviewed the memo from DPW (attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 CC Response (with 23-0891 23-1184 23-1187)”).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
14. 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.
- Liaison Carrillo said the Administration is not ready to speak to this item yet.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
15. 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).
- Chair Clingan reviewed the memo from DPW (attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 CC Response (with 23-0891 23-1184 23-1187)”).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
16. 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.
- Chair Clingan reviewed the memo from DPW (attachment titled “PUPW - 2023-11-13 CC Response (with 23-0891 23-1184 23-1187)”).
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
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Referenced Documents:

- PUPW - 2023-11-13 Highland Paving (with 23-1355, 23-1399)
- PUPW - 2023-11-13 CCPUPW Sewer Priorities (with 23-1397)
- PUPW - 2023-11-13 IAM Order Responses (with 23-1423, 23-1433)
- PUPW - 2023-11-13 CC Response (with 23-0891, 23-1184, 23-1187)