



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

December 4, 2019

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Wilfred N. Mbah	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Absent	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Present	

Councilor JT Scott was absent due to a Boynton Yards community development meeting.

Others present: Doug Kress, Oliver Sellers-Garcia, Vithal Deshpande, Angela Allen, Hannah Payne, Luisa Oliveira, Chief Fallon, Jill Lathan and Khushbu Webber.

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chairman Mbah and adjourned at 10:00 pm.

Approval of the October 2, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
----------------	-----------------

208382: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment and the Director of Health and Human Services report to this Council the best approaches to banning or regulating plastic alcohol nip bottles, and report on any discussions that have taken place on this topic with liquor store managers and owners.

Director Kress spoke on the City of Chelsea banning nips in 2018. He stated that the Office of Prevention, partnered with the City of Cambridge, Town of Arlington and City of Everett to reduce access and exposure of nips to young people. Residents of the City of Somerville took photos of nips in various areas. Director Kress made a couple of recommendations and submitted a document to the committee: 1) to increase the number of trash barrels, especially in East Somerville, and 2) work with ISD to enforce littering regulations. He also discussed best practices resolution that Somerville work with the state to follow through on an effort to expand the existing "Bottle Bill." Director Kress discussed the possibility of liquor stores have the nips behind a counter, do a returnable of nips and look around their property and adjacent property to have cleaner area. There are currently 29 liquor licenses in Somerville. Please see attached email from Director Kress with additional information and articles from the cities of Medford

and Chelsea on this matter. Councilor Niedergang will put in an order to draft legislation to ban nips in Somerville very similar to Chelsea.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

207031: That the Chief of Police and the Chief Fire Engineer discuss the routing process and geo-locating capacity for 911 calls, especially calls from cell phones.

Chief Fallon updated the committee on this initiative stating that all calls used to come into regional dispatch center and then transferred to Somerville prior to October 2018. Chief Fallon distributed a 3 page document on wireless calls direct for Somerville Phase 2 to Phase 1. On December 10, 2019 at 11 a.m., the city will switch over to Phase 1 to receive over 80% of calls directly to Somerville Police. Additionally, there will be the ability to text 911 to Somerville police department with accuracy. This item was kept in committee and will be discharged to Public Health and Public Safety committee.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

200299: That the Director of SPCD, the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment consider the pros and cons of artificial turf and identify alternative designs for publicly accessible open space.

Ms. Oliveira, Ms. Lathan and Mr. Sellers-Garcia talked about a conversation in 2015-2016 and in the process of a community engagement on this matter. The last update time the information was updated was in October. Ms. Oliveira distributed a document dated November 2016 on city owned fields vs. proposed master plan. There are 5 grass fields and 6 turf fields. The last page of the document shows a comparison metrics with Portland, Oregon on petroleum based, sand, plant based and living grass. Ms. Oliveira stated this is a long discussion and will continue to work on this matter with the community. All of this information is available on the city's website. Ms. Lathan stated the number of playing hours have not changed for the fields and is closely monitored. She also stated that other communities have the ability to rest their fields for a season, whereas Somerville fields can only rest during the winter months. Grass fields need monitoring; turf fields have much less limitations.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

205711: That the Administration present a Heat Island Impact Analysis on the proposed replacement of Conway Park's grass fields with artificial turf.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated that the heat analysis does not exist presently and would like more information.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

209049: That the Administration report whether any per- and poly-fluoroalkyl chemicals are present in any artificial turf in the City.

Ms. Oliveira stated that this chemical was not used in the three recent turf fields. Additionally she stated there are no standards for this chemical other than for trash and drinking water.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

208920: That the Director of SPCD develop a plan to plant a native species pollinator garden along the Community Path.

Ms. Oliveira stated the land does not belong to Somerville and needs to work with the MBTA. This item kept in committee and will be discussed again in the spring.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

207167: That the Director of SPCD share biannual CIP progress reports for all new open space and parks projects.

Councilor Ballantyne spoke with Ms. Connor last night and showed her the various reports on CIP. Somerstat has some information and will update the report at a later date.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

209152: That the Director of Parks and Recreation update this Council regarding quality control review, contractor warranty policy, and field use data of the Lincoln Park athletic field.

Ms. Oliveira stated this request had been responded to previously. See attached document with status of parks. She also stated that Lincoln Park Soccer field Youth soccer had 45 days/274 hours in the fall. Youth Ultimate Frisbee had 24 days/24 hours in the fall. In 2019, the field was closed from April to September for 16 days due to rain and/or saturated field conditions. There were discussions about installing a temporary fence mid-winter to keep people off the field and the permit use has been cancelled. Additionally, there will be scheduled seeding for the field. Ms. Oliveira stated she believes the design was high performance, but there was a lot of rain, causing the grass not to grow. Councilor Ballantyne asked for Ms. Oliveira to have Mr. Franzen to send an email stating whether he is pleased with this contractor's work. Councilor-at-large Hirsch, who lives in the immediate area, spoke to the errors of work on this field. Ms. Oliveira stated that contractor removed the wrong soil and put in the correct soil according to specifications, all at their own expense. There is a one-year warranty that expires in 2020. There will also be a walk through by the parks and recreation representative on this field. Mr. Franzen is working with the contractor on the active punch list.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

208232: That the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Commissioner of Public Works explore starting a monthly volunteer trash pickup day for the Dilboy DCR and Alewife Brook areas.

Councilor Ballantyne provided background on this request. There are 30-40 people for the spring cleanup and some have asked if they can do cleanup monthly. In some cases, the cleanup

has been removing tires and other items. The request is to leave out rakes, gloves and trash cans for those who would like to cleanup. Ms. Webber reached out to Mr. Jenkins from the Arts Council and DPW, since originally the cleanup started with Art Council. She will have an answer for the committee relatively soon.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

207910: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment present the upcoming plan for Community Choice Electricity Aggregation.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

208380: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Council on Newton's electricity aggregation program that provides as the standard service 60% of its electricity from renewable sources, and whether it could be adopted here.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated that Newton got extremely lucky and purchased reqs at a historic low. Additionally, Newton has different standards than Somerville for what they are seeing everything as Class 1. As of January 2020, the percentage will be 26%.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

209155: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment update this Council on the Community Choice Aggregation bulk purchase of electricity.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

207376: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Director of SPCD formalize and implement a modern urban forestry management plan, including best practices and a resilient species list.

Ms. Oliveira states that the city is already doing this working with Dr. Boukili. A grant was written to use funds to hire someone to assist with the urban forestry management plan. The first draft is back and may have the finished plan in June.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

207373: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment develop an electric vehicle charging infrastructure program.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia and Ms. Payne discussed electric vehicles. There are 8 public electric charging stations throughout the city. The sustainable website shows a map with the locations. They have reached out to other communities requesting information about their charging providers. It was stated that there is not a lot of consensus across the board with interdepartmental groups having discussions on mobility goals and policies. A question was asked how this fits in with the plans for the city. They are looking at two more locations for charging stations. There was also a discussion about a grant to work with other cities to identify strategies for renters. Each charging station has two plugs, 1 for each car.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207374: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Director of SPCD improve bus reliability and trip time and report to this Board, quarterly, on progress made.

Ms. Webber distributed a document from Mr. Rawson, who could not attend tonight's meeting. It was stated that Mr. Rawson will have the trip time by January. Additionally, city is encouraging the MBTA to continue to prioritize bus reliability. Mr. Rawson has been collecting data over last couple of weeks since the new bus lanes and will share the information at a future meeting.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

207912: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Director of Purchasing discuss the Procurement Sustainability Policy, to purchase products from environmentally responsible companies.

Councilor Ballantyne has spoken with Ms. Allen offline and they are sourcing sustainable products. Many products are purchased from the state's contract list. Ms. Allen stated there are a number of areas they look at when procuring products: environment and safety, toxic issues, cleaning products, generating waste, water treatment, social equity, how vendors treat their employees, small businesses, economic factors, and long term costs/maintenance.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

209156: That the Director of Purchasing and all departments procure services from environmentally-responsible companies for city operations (e.g. electric vehicles for garbage pickup, zero emissions equipment for landscaping, etc.).

The city owned trash pickup vehicle is a hybrid.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208825: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment explore the feasibility and utility of mattress recycling, such as Cambridge's UTEC program, as well as any plans for reusing or recycling other large household items.

Mr. Deshpande and Mr. Sellers-Garcia talked about the cost for the pilot program in the City of Cambridge to pick up mattresses. There are a lot of changes in the solid waste industry. DEP is working on a solid waste master plan. The City of Somerville currently sends its trash to Saugus.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208042: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment inform this Council about New York City's "Climate Mobilization Act," which includes dramatic emission reductions

for tall buildings, and explain which aspects could be adapted here.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

207911: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment discuss the FY18 and FY19 recycling and trash tonnage, impacts, proposed changes and other issues pertinent to this topic.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia and Mr. Deshpande provided a document on trash and recycling tonnage and hauling. They stated there are two costs: hauling and recycling. Trash has been substantially reduced. There has been an update to the waste wizard app. Additionally, a mailer will be going out to help residents with recycling. It was stated that its' the states effort to reduce trash by 2030. The major challenge is recycling focusing on zero contamination.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

201432: That the Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment and the Commissioner of Public Works explore alternatives, such as a "pay as you throw" program, to limit the amount of curbside trash, and integrate curbside composting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

205935: That the Administration inform this Board of any opportunities to incentivize waste reduction, such as opt-in composting, PAYT, or charges to phone book distributors for disposal costs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

209154: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment and the Director of SPCD plan to incentivize property owners to use clean ways of cooking and heating, since buildings are the greatest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia proposed zoning substantial requirement for new development and is working with housing. He is also working with an internal group on rental programs and community members on social responsibility. There was a discussion on the National Gas Ban like in Brookline.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

209153: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment provide this Council with an update on Somerville Climate Forward's goal #11, the plan for implementation in the short term.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia has made of lot of progress with the City of Somerville leading by example. An excellent energy manager was hired from DCAM to focus on: energy efficiency, schools and other buildings, solar on newer roofs, huge cost reductions and renewable energy.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

206201: That the Director of SomerStat share an update on implementing a work order system for asset management, CRM requests, preventive maintenance, and related functions, for departments like Public Works, Engineering, and Urban Forestry.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

208614: That the Administration inform this City Council whether the new High School, and eventually other municipal buildings, will have dishwashing capacity, to reduce or eliminate reliance on single-use flatware and dishes.

Ms. Webber stated this will not be included in the new high school for a variety of reasons. For larger pots and pans, would need a different type of washer than for flatware and dishes. The high school is already oversized for what the MSBA would pay. There are a variety of schools who have been studying this issue. Some schools use compostable trays and flatware. This idea will require more time to review.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

205708: That the Administration immediately pursue creation of a public athletic field and recreation complex atop the 36,000 square foot parking deck proposed for construction in the Union Square eminent domain parcel currently designated "D-2".

Ms. Webber stated that USQ D2 parcel does not include public space on the roof. The staff is currently working to grow the D7 parcel.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
----------------	-----------------------

205709: That the Administration immediately pursue creation of a public fields and recreation area in the Inner Belt District pursuant to the Fields Master Plan.

Ms. Webber stated this item was previously addressed May 1, 2019. The administration will propose to initiate a community-based district planning process with Inner Belt stakeholders upon completion of current planning processes for Assembly Square and Brickbottom. Consistent with recent neighborhood plan processes for Union Square and Boynton Yards, stakeholders will be engaged around the key questions of planning for new public space resources. Although the City's Athletic Fields Planning process has not specified the Inner Belt district as a near-term project opportunity, the Administration will continue to work with stakeholders in the athletic community as well as private landowners and business stakeholders to ensure that public recreation opportunities are examined and prioritized.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
----------------	--------------------------

208805: Affirming the federal Green New Deal resolution by establishing goals, identifying actions necessary to meet these goals, and calling for the federal government to enact policies to advance a Green New Deal.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

208808: That the Administration update this Council on the Climate Preparedness Week Resolution (#208611) that was submitted in July.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated a grant from the state environmental office hosted a great event with the COA and posted a lot of community group events for three sustainable weeks.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

209157: That the Administration enforce vehicle idling laws for city vehicles, commercial vehicles and personal vehicles.

Chief Fallon stated that MGL Chapter 90, Section 16A addressed excessive engine idling states the police officer must witness the vehicle for a period of five minutes. He stated there are first and second offense fines. Councilor Ballantyne asked Chief Fallon how many citations were handed out. Chief Fallon would work on doing more training with the officers on this matter and work with Mr. Sellers-Garcia to cross train departments. Councilor-at-large Hirsch suggested that this be tied to parking permits with a riders test.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Handouts:

- Fields Data (with 200299)
- Response (with 205709)
- Info (with 207031)
- Performance Metrics (with 207374)
- Trash & Recycle Data (with 207911)
- Response (with 208382)
- Misc Info (with 208382)
- Response (with 209152)