



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 4, 2019
REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Absent	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

The meeting was held in the Council Chamber and was called to order by Chairman Niedergang at 3:07pm and adjourned at 3:36pm.

Others present: Mayor Curtatone; Ben Ewen-Campen - Ward 3 City Councilor; William White, Jr. - City Councilor at Large; J.T. Scott - Ward 2 City Councilor; Wilfred Mbah - City Councilor at Large; Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office; Kimberly Wells - Assistant Clerk of Committees

Councilors McLaughlin, Hirsch and Rossetti had other commitments and regretfully could not attend.

Approval of the March 7, 2019 Minutes

Chairman Niedergang moved to amend the minutes to add "Committee of the Whole". The motion passed on a voice vote.

The minutes were approved as amended.

RESULT:	ACCEPTED AS AMENDED
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Public Hearing on Item #207393 Chairman Niedergang clarified that if approved, this would be specific to Somerville and would apply only to City elections. The public hearing will be open for written submissions through April 12. Emails can be sent to citycouncil@somervillema.gov and/or cityclerk@somervillema.gov. The report of the Clean and Open Elections Task Force, which recommended this proposal, can be found on the City's website.

Jack Torres of Vote 16 voiced that high school students have a viewpoint on the education system and students don't feel like issues at the high school are being properly addressed. Not everyone feels comfortable coming before bodies of power to share their voice, but

those voices are important, particularly on the issues that impact them. This is also a great step toward being a pioneer in enhancing civil rights. Felix Brody, also of Vote 16, agreed that 16 and 17 year-olds have a unique perspective and carry a lot of responsibilities, including working and paying taxes. At 16, the decision making processes are as mature as they are at 18. Kenneth Van Buskirk urged the Council to approve this measure, as it is a great way toward increasing ballot access and would bring fresh ideas to how city government is run. Brandon Klugman spoke on behalf of Generation Citizen, a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to engaging citizenship. Lowering the voting age fosters a lifelong dedication to civic engagement. Voting is a habit that can be developed and age 16 is a better time to establish that habit. Cities that have implemented this have seen positive results.

Laura Luiza Cabral Gouvea shared that teenagers want to vote most in the elections where they see the most impact. Local elections are where that happens. Waiting until 18, when the impact is not as clear, is less motivating to voting and understanding what is best for the City. Elias Kern added that more people should believe that they have a voice. This right would give them belief in themselves and that voice. People are civically engaged and want to share their views but need a platform. Sarah Sweeting was taught that your vote gives you a voice and giving students this voice will make them feel heard and give them a new perspective on how the world works. The more availability students have to this will increase their positivity about their surroundings.

207393: Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to provide legal voting rights in municipal elections for residents aged 16 and 17 years old.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206811: Conveying the Report of the Clean and Open Elections Task Force.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207392: Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition providing for legal voting rights in municipal elections for non-citizen residents.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206403: That the City Solicitor draft a home rule petition to grant Permanent Residents the right to vote in municipal elections.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206368: That the Administration present this Board with legal options for granting non-citizen residents the right to vote in local elections.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206804: Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to provide legal voting rights for residents aged 16 and older.

Subsequent Home Rule petitions have separated the two items (16-17 year-old voting and non-citizen voting), therefore this item is now not needed.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

Handout:

- Empower Act (with 207393)