



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 29, 2019

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Present	

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order by Chairman Clingan at 6:00 pm and adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Others present: Chief Fallon - Police; Doug Kress - HHS; Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison; Kimberly Wells - Assistant Clerk of Committees

Approval of the April 29, 2019 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

208162: That the Administration advise the City Council in writing not later than May 23, what specifically is being studied and what specifically is preventing installation of port-a-potties in City parks and playgrounds.

Ms. Connor shared that port-a potties will be in every park where they can be physically located based on both space and servicing. This will be evaluated beginning next week with a list to be provided by the second week in June and installation will begin after a contract is signed, as soon as possible but with a timeline still to be determined. Councilor Hirsch noted that a lot of summer programs use the parks, so timeliness of installation is important.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

207276: That the Administration provide any analysis, considerations, or existing practices for reducing ordinance violation fines for lower-income households.

Ms. Connor noted that there is no significant update since the last time this was discussed, but the administration remains interested and will continue to work on the issue.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206585: That the Administration share a more comprehensive set of goals related to air

quality based on CAFEH study results, when or if available.

Ms. Connor shared that the City participates in a coalition, but has not yet developed a more comprehensive set of goals. Councilor Hirsch shared that she would like to see an air quality plan for the City, based on the research from the CAFEH study.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207622: That the City Solicitor file a lawsuit to compel the State to provide air pollution mitigation along I-93, similar to the lawsuit that awarded the City the GLX.

Ms. Connor shared that Mr. Wright will speak to this.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206856: That the Administration consider a public information effort to inform the community about code violations that impact public safety, such as improper lead paint removal.

Ms. Connor noted that there are piecemeal efforts to inform residents about code violations, but a more consolidated information effort will be looked at by the Communications team once staffing is available. Councilor Hirsch noted that it should be targeted to all residents so they know what to look for that qualifies as a violation, effectively a "cheat sheet" of the most common code violations that impact public safety and encourage residents to contact the City if they see these.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207328: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board of the protocol for notifying the public and families when there is an incident in a public building.

Chief Fallon shared that there is an incident command system used for any incident in the City, which immediately triggers communication with the Mayor's office. There is a dedicated phone in the commander's office in the police station to notify the administration in real time. For any threat to the public, the information is also disseminated to neighborhoods and abutters. It is a collaboration with Police, the Mayor's office, and Communications staff. Councilor Hirsch noted that there have been complaints about lack of information and the department should consider erring on the side of informing residents, particularly when schools are notified. In these instances, abutters also want to be notified rather than hearing it from their school children. The ability to also notify when the threat is no longer viable is an important consideration for the Police. The department also wants to be cautious about not making such notifications too routine as well as verifying before information is released. Chief Fallon will continue to work with Communications on messaging.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207574: That the Chief of Police develop a kindergarten pedestrian safety program for all children entering public schools.

Chief Fallon shared that the department is working on developing a safe routes to school program, to include both pedestrian and bicycle safety. They will work with the adults to check that physical routes are unobstructed and provide education for children on safe routes and how to remain alert and safe.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED****207329: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board on school-related safety policies and procedures listed within.**

There is a modified version of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) active shooter training that the City uses, which includes lockdown drills twice per year in each school. The Police Department trains the teachers how to assess whether they can escape and how to do so as safely as possible. The department also has a safety plan. Chairman Clingan wondered if there could be a better way to communicate with teachers or others within the schools while a lockdown drill or incident is occurring. Chief Fallon noted that they can focus on the messaging before the drills to highlight the intention to keep children safe. Councilor Hirsch added that these drills are very traumatic for children and wondered whether the potential benefit outweighs that impact. Chief Fallon clarified that the training to secure is for situations other than just an active shooter and Councilor Hirsch asked that the messaging be updated to make this more clear.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED****207670: That the Chief of Police and the Director of Health and Human Services promote the drug court system and monitor cases of transfer and eligible candidates from Somerville to the court in Cambridge.**

There was one case this week that was adjudicated in Somerville Court and sent to drug court. The Police Department is working with District Attorney Ryan and is looking forward to more success stories in the future. They will also continue to follow the cases referred to identify best practices and lessons learned. Mr. Kress added that checking in and follow-up is an important component to the drug court model, and is part of the mandate.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED****207730: That the Chief of Police create a restorative justice program similar to that used in Cambridge, Arlington and Boston.**

Chief Fallon has researched the nonprofit that Cambridge and Boston are using, and has discussed with the District Attorney to evaluate if there are cases in Somerville that might fit this model. The utilization in other communities and potential utilization in Somerville is still being studied to determine whether it will be worthwhile to implement. Mr. Kress noted that it has been investigated previously, but the offenses that can be referred to this type of program are often limited, and the benefits did not outweigh the costs at that time. The Police Department is also very engaged in other programs that address some of the concerns that a restorative justice program would entail.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE****207441: That the Director of Health and Human Services report to this Board on the feasibility of siting a Safe Injection Facility here.**

Mr. Kress clarified that safe injection sites are illegal, but they are looking into various options for what can be done. It is his understanding that this issue is on hold in Cambridge as well. The Board of Health is now allowing needle exchange programs, and Fenway Health has been awarded the contract to be the vendor for that program. Chairman Clingan noted that anything that can help people get treatment should

be explored. Councilor McLaughlin shared that he had discussed with AIDS Action that there may be an area where a City could provide services that a nonprofit could not. Mr. Kress will continue to explore what can be done.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207503: That the Director of Health and Human Services provide an update on opioid overdoses, including both current year deaths and historic data.

Mr. Kress noted that 2018 numbers are still being confirmed, but the data show the following for opioid deaths of Somerville residents: 2013 - 11; 2014 - 15; 2015 - 18; 2016 - 21; 2017 - 16; 2018 - 7. Another opioid task force is being convened for the region through the District Attorney's office. For those opioid deaths occurring in Somerville, the data are: 2014 - 14; 2015 - 14; 2016 - 19; 2017 - 12; 2018 - 8. Councilor McLaughlin asked what factors contributed to the 2018 decrease and Mr. Kress shared that education about naloxone has been significant. There are no useful data about naloxone use, as there can be instances where multiple doses can be used for one individual and it is also available to the public, which cannot be tracked.

Councilor McLaughlin added that there is an initiative in Plymouth County where the Police or Fire departments work with hospitals and conduct follow-up to assist individuals with getting services. Mr. Kress added that recovery coaches can play this role within emergency departments.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207722: That the Director of Health discuss any information about increased exhaust odors associated with commuter rail operations.

Mr. Kress asked for clarification on what information the Committee would like and Councilor Hirsch shared that a constituent voiced concern about exhaust odors in recent months. Chairman Clingan suggested that the GLX liaison might have additional information.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206427: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services report on whether or not an increased amount of construction can lead to more lead exposure, and what measures ISD uses to ensure contractors limit the release of lead into the soil or air.

Ms. Connor noted that the Director of ISD is unavailable to attend Wednesday evening meetings, but can discuss at another time. Chairman Clingan asked if he might respond in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205829: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services and other enforcing departments report to this Board on enforcing business signage laws, especially for alcohol, tobacco or marijuana advertisements.

Ms. Connor noted that the Director of ISD is unavailable to attend Wednesday evening meetings, but can discuss at another time. Chairman Clingan asked if he might respond in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207879: That the Director of Inspectional Services consider making dumping snow on vacant lots a punishable offense.

Ms. Connor noted that the Director of ISD is unavailable to attend Wednesday evening meetings, but can discuss at another time. Chairman Clingan asked if he might respond in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205933: That the Director of SPCD inform this Board of plans to regulate or enable dockless bikes, and share information on the City’s contractual relationship with Hubway/BlueBikes.

Mr. Rawson is attending a SomerVision meeting but can speak to this at a later date. Resident Scott Mullen works for Lime scooter, who is running the scooter pilot in Brookline and also has bike options, and shared that he is happy to be a resource for the Committee. They are operating in 100 cities worldwide, and there is a need to change culture while providing mobility options. Councilor Hirsch noted that adding any more options during the construction and bridge closures is likely too much.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206396: That the Director of SPCD and other City staff report to this Board on the Bird electric dockless scooter program and how the Administration plans to deal with it.

Ms. Connor noted that there is no legal way to use scooters in MA due to signaling requirements. The only sanctioned use in the area is a pilot in Brookline. The infrastructure and regulations are not set up to accommodate scooters, and the potential for injuries is serious.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205828: That the Administration update this Board on maintaining bus shelters or installing new shelters, such as the #90 bus stop at Assembly Square.

Chairman Clingan asked that a letter be sent to the state legislative delegation and the MBTA to encourage action on maintaining and improving bus shelters.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204860: That the Director of SPCD arrange a meeting with the MBTA and this Board to discuss the elimination of the Route 95 bus stop on Mystic Avenue across from Fremont Street, and how that stop can be restored with proper lighting, markings, etc.

Chairman Clingan asked that a letter be sent to the state legislative delegation and the MBTA to encourage action on the Route 95 bus stop.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205934: That the City Solicitor inform this Board of any applicable regulations related to the use of drones.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207102: City Solicitor responding to #205934 re: drone use regulations.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205697: That the Administration update this Board on a municipal ID program for all residents, including any input from local immigrant advocacy groups, residents and non-profit organizations.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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