



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 25, 2011

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Sean T. O'Donovan	Chair	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Vice Chair	Present	
Rebekah Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Robert C. Trane	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Bruce M. Desmond	Alderman At Large	Present	
Omar Boukili	Administrative Assistant	Present	
Eddie Nuzzo	Supt., ISD	Present	
Brad Rawson	OSPCD	Present	
Robert May	OSPCD	Present	
David Guzman	OSPCD	Present	
Keith Craig	OSPCD	Present	
John Massie	OSPCD	Present	
Stephen Mackey	Chamber of Commerce	Present	

189106 - That the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Meet with the Magoun Square Businesses and the Ward 5 Alderman to Develop a Plan for Magoun Square to Stimulate Business, All in Anticipation of 2015 Green Line Arrival.:

Representatives from OSPCD presented a written progress report and recommendations regarding the business climate in Magoun Square. The data indicates that rents in the square are low as a result of low investment in the area's real estate. Many businesses catering to ethnic populations have chosen to operate in Magoun Square because of these lower rents and not because their customer base is there.

Several factors make it harder for businesses in Magoun Square to compete with other businesses in the city's other square. Among the contributing factors are a lack of parking, fewer destination businesses and a much smaller number of office and service job employees working in Magoun Square as compared to Ball Square or Winter Hill.

Several residents and business owners spoke on the issue expressing their dedication to the square and stated that there is a disconnect between residents and businesses, as many of the square's businesses don't cater to the area's residents. More people need to be brought into the

square. It was stated that people commute through the square, yet some actually don't know it exists.

Alderman Gewirtz suggested creating a resident/business initiative, similar to the one operating in Davis Square, to help in revitalizing Magoun Square and went on to point out that businesses could be helped by getting cars to turn over in parking spaces. It was suggested by some present that although turning over spaces during short cycles might be helpful, it would hurt destination businesses.

Mr. Mackey told the members that business owner/occupants and long term renters are fully vested in their businesses, therefore it's important to engage those individuals in efforts to revitalize the square. Mr. Mackey cautioned that market dynamics often come into play are very difficult, if not impossible, to counter. He also stated that the daytime economy is different than night-time economy and he believes that the focus should be on night life. Mr. Mackey also urged that the parking issues be addressed head-on.

Mr. May stated that there would be forums and vehicles for residents to weigh in on this matter in the future. Chairman O'Donovan intends to have another meeting, in Magoun Square, during the daytime with business owners and residents invited to participate. Flyers will be distributed in the neighborhood when the details are set.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

189727 - That the Director of SPCD Report in Writing to the Committee on Housing and Community Development on the Results of the Meeting with the Magoun Square Business Owners and the Ward Five Alderman, to Discuss Parking and Other Issues Affecting the Decline in Business in Magoun Square.:

See item 189106, above.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

189430 - That the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development Apprise This Board of Aldermen of Any Past or Anticipated Utilization of the Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program by the City of Somerville and Appear Before the Committee on Housing and Community Development to Discuss the Program.:

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

189817 - Conveying an update on the city-wide comprehensive plan known as SomerVison.:

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED