



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 10, 2019
REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One City Councilor	Absent	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Ward Two City Councilor	Absent	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six City Councilor	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Present	

The meeting was held in the Council Chamber and was called to order by Chairman White at 6:06 pm and adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Councilor Scott has a conflict of interest with two main items on the agenda so was not in attendance and Councilor McLaughlin was unable to attend due to illness.

Others present: Rich Raiche - IAM; Tom Galligani - OSPCD; Eileen McGettigan - Law; George Proakis - OSPCD; Ed Bean - Finance; Chief Breen - Fire; Annie Connor - Intergovernmental Affairs; Candace Cooper - Personnel

Approval of the June 4, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 5, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 6, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 11, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 12, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 10, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 19, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 20, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 18, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 25, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the June 26, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Public Hearing re: transfer of a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority (#204755)

Mr. Galligani presented an overview of the parcel, 82-D-1, a 7,000 square foot lot, (“the Parcel”) which is the only City-owned parcel that is part of the development lot known as D2. The entire block was assembled as part of the Union Square revitalization plan. The intention is to transfer the Parcel to the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA), which, in turn, will convey the Parcel to Union Square Station Associates (“US2”) for development pursuant to the Land Disposition Agreement between US2 and the SRA. Councilor Niedergang asked for clarification on the Community Benefits Agreement (the “CBA”) between US2 and the Union Square Neighborhood Council (“USNC”). Mr. Galligani explained that the City is not a party to the CBA and that there is no mechanism governing the distribution of the funds as set forth in the CBA yet., Ms McGettigan stated that an amendment to the Community Benefits Ordinance may be necessary. Bill Cavellini, co-chair, UNCC, thanked the Councilors for their support and

reported that an agreement has been reached between the UNCC and US2. There will be an opportunity to vote at two upcoming meetings, after which the Neighborhood Council will request changes from the Planning Board and City administration. Greg Karczewski, President US2, thanked the group for a robust community benefits solution that everyone can be proud of. He also announced that the final certificate has been granted from the state as of June 28th. All of the residents in attendance voiced support for the approval of the land transfer. These included: Scott Hayman, Director of Real Estate for Somerville Community Corporation, who noted that there has been much community input, and this creates a bigger and more robust commercial tax base, jobs, and housing, including affordable housing; Seth Grady, Union Square Partners, who expressed excitement for the future development of Union Square and preserving the Post Office building as an important asset. US2 has been responsive to community concerns; Mary Cassesso, Union Square resident and Affordable Housing Trust Fund member, who recognized the hard work of the Neighborhood Council and US2 and supports the transfer of land; and Neil Sharma, COO Solarkal.

Many union carpenters were present to express that this will create a lot of jobs and affordable housing that is much needed. Several members of Local 26 also added support due largely to the commitment of the developers to long-term union jobs for hotel workers. Jim Harvey, Holiday Inn manager, also supported the transfer of land for the fantastic things it will do for Union Square and Somerville. Tom Bent, Jobs Creation and Retention Trust, shared that the Trust is also in favor as the job creation and retention agreed to by US2 is very impressive and urged the City Council to approve the transfer tonight. Stephen Mackey, Somerville Chamber of Commerce, is happy to come together with the other organizations to begin work in Union Square.

204755: Requesting the transfer of a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that there is one part of the Parcel that is not part of this first phase and wondered when that might be addressed. Mr. Proakis shared that there is no specific timeline but it will be addressed as soon as possible. The YMCA relocation is also an issue that the administration is aware of and they are in discussions to find the best possible space, and multiple strategies are being pursued in search of the one that makes the most sense. Councilor Ballantyne asked if someone in OSPCD could put together a list of what is coming out of the community benefits agreement to prepare the Council for what each of the pieces is. Mr. Proakis suggested that because the City is not a party to the CBA, the Neighborhood and US2 provide the requested information. Chairman White asked if the Law Department could simply review the CBA and advise the Committee. Ms. McGettigan agreed with Mr. Proakis that the information should come from the Neighborhood Council and US2.

Councilor Ballantyne moved that a representative of the Neighborhood Council and US2 appear before the Finance Committee to present a checklist of items and a timeline in which they should be completed.

The motion was approved.

Mr. Galligani spoke to the City requesting this transfer now because the project is ready. The community has been collaborating for the past seven years and the pieces are now in place to move ahead. The tax revenue from this project will help pay for the public benefits, and will also help stabilize our commercial tax base.

Councilor Rossetti suggested waiting until after the neighborhood vote to take a vote on the item, as the support expressed tonight has not always been universal. Councilors Ewen-Campen, Neidergang and Mbah noted that there is no need to wait, as the Neighborhood Council and US2 had already completed

the task of negotiating the CBA. US2 did what was asked of them. Chairman White stated that as Chair he had previously committed to not moving the Parcel transfer request for a vote until the CBA was negotiated. Because US2 did what he had requested, White stated that he would honor his commitment and vote to approve the transfer. Councilor Clingan agreed with this point, and although the agreement may not be perfect, it has been negotiated in good faith. Councilor Ballantyne also shared that we should get shovels in the ground and honor the agreement. Councilor Rossetti reiterated that she wants to hear the final vote from the neighborhood, as the Neighborhood Council was only a few individuals. Councilor Hirsch added that many people in Union Square remain unaware that this is happening. She is prepared to vote now even though this is imperfect, and we can learn from the process for the future.

Chairman White noted that this is a relatively unprecedented agreement and thanked everyone for their participation.

Councilor Rossetti moved that Counsel review the language in the community benefits agreement and advise the City Council of any amendments to enact.

The motion was approved.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [8 TO 1]
AYES:	White Jr., Ewen-Campen, Ballantyne, Clingan, Davis, Niedergang, Mbah, Hirsch
NAYS:	Rossetti
ABSENT:	McLaughlin, Scott

206154: Union Square Neighborhood Council Board submitting comments re: US2's proposed development of the D2 parcel in Union Square.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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206455: Special Counsel submitting D2 Block Acquisition and Legal Costs.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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206893: Monica Achen submitting comments re: #204755, a request to transfer a City-owned parcel in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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206916: Andrew Greenspon submitting comments re: #204755, a request to transfer a City-owned parcel in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207020: Alex Wheeler submitting comments re: #204755, transferring a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

RESULT:	PLACED ON FILE
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207021: Meagan Maguire submitting comments re: #204755, transferring a City-owned parcel (82-D-1) in the North Prospect Block to the Redevelopment Authority.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

207341: Special Counsel submitting Notice of D2 Block Eminent Domain Settlements.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

208704: Requesting approval of an Amended Grant of Tieback Easement as part of the GLX project.

Mr. Raiche noted that this easement is requested to maintain the wall, which was affected during excavation for the High School construction project. The engineers have reviewed this to ensure that there will be no structural impact. Councilor Davis confirmed that the affected area would not include the planned field. Chairman White confirmed that there is a maintenance agreement with the MBTA in conjunction with the construction.

RESULT:

APPROVED

208629: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$550,000 in a bond for a custom Fire Pumper.

Chief Breen proposed replacement of the 2002 pump for Engine 3 with a new pump that has been redesigned to be two feet shorter and will come equipped with a camera system to make it safer to operate. Councilor Rossetti noted that unexpended bonds could be used for like purposes and wondered if there were any similar funds that could be used here. Mr. Bean shared that all bonds for vehicles were spent, and other types of bonds would not apply here. Councilor Hirsch wondered if a custom truck could be built more narrowly. Chief Breen replied that he will look into it in the future. Chairman White asked what the cost difference would be for a custom truck compared to an off-the-shelf model, and Chief Breen was unsure at this time.

RESULT:

APPROVED

207671: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$2,000,000 in a bond for Owner's Project Manager professional services to support the renovation of various buildings recommended in the Building Master Plan.

Mr. Raiche shared that the departmental relocation plan evaluated departmental office needs for City and Schools, which included 13 buildings. The Master Plan Working Group found that most spaces do not function well, and thus proposed major renovations to City Hall, the 1895 Building and the Edgerly School. The next steps are to move to implementation, beginning with preliminary design. This will include confirming layouts, determining uses for vacated buildings, and evaluating sequencing, as well as what updates are needed just to make buildings safe and ADA compliant.

Councilor Hirsch continues to be concerned about parking at the City Hall concourse and the impact that adding uses to these buildings will have. She also noted that the Cummings School parking lot was playground space, and should be returned to open space or some other public use. Mr. Raiche clarified that part of the scope will include consideration of additional functions. Part of the evaluation of the best use of the vacated buildings will be to also evaluate programming needs for departments. Councilor Davis

asked about what statutory limitations exist on the potential sale of the City-owned buildings. Mr. Bean shared that it would require a solicitation of bids through the RFP (request for proposals) process, based on MGL Chapter 30B (the uniform procurement process). Councilor Davis also echoed Councilor Hirsch's concerns about parking and that a garage had been proposed in the original High School plan. Councilor Ballantyne asked where this requested \$2M is found in the Capital Investment Plan and was informed that it appears on the Plan under Building Master Plan OPM. Councilor Rossetti asked for clarification around what would happen with the proposed High School field if, in fact, a garage were built. Mr. Raiche noted that, hypothetically, a recommendation could include a sub-surface parking structure, with a field above, but nothing can be determined until the process is executed. Councilor Niedergang noted that we will have to spend a ton of money to maintain current buildings and renting out spaces if we don't act on this, so it is worth exploring how we can potentially improve our facilities dramatically.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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208787: Requesting approval for an extension of time for a Contract with Designlab for construction administration at the West Brach Library, until 12/31/2020.

Mr. Raiche shared that the design work took longer than anticipated. The extension is for time only.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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208786: Requesting approval for an extension of time for a Contract with Design Technique for construction administration at the West Brach Library, until 12/31/2020.

Mr. Raiche noted that there may also be a price amendment, but this extension is for time only, as the contract is expiring.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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208715: Requesting approval to extend the time of a contract with Weston and Sampson by 6 months, to 12/30/19, for the Cedar Street Separation Project.

Mr. Raiche shared that the construction schedule lasted longer than anticipated and the extension is for time only.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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208711: Requesting approval to pay a prior year invoice totaling \$7,945.50 using available funds in the Personnel Department Professional and Technical Services Account for pre-employment drug screening.

Ms. Cooper noted that the funds were encumbered for this in the last fiscal year, but the encumbrance was reduced due to a clerical error, so this fiscal year's funds will need to be used to pay this invoice.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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208710: Requesting approval to pay a prior year invoice totaling \$63,503.53 using available funds in the Redevelopment Authority Ordinary Maintenance Account for Legal services

for the 90 Washington Demonstration Project.

Ms. Connor noted that Mr. Inacio is not available to provide additional information.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207521: Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$1,000,000.00 in a bond for the Union Square Streetscape & Plaza Design.

Mr. Raiche noted that this is an OSPCD item but that he would speak to it. Basically, the design work on the Union Square Plaza should be done but it intersects with the Union Square work that is currently being performed. If the City does not perform the design work, it would be unable to issue a change order with the current contractor that is doing the Union Square roadway project. Otherwise, if the City waited, it might then have to redo the work that contractor is now doing and thereby create a needless expense. The design and community engagement process is projected to be a year-long process. Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that Union Square is under construction already, so it seems like there should be a plan. The amount of pedestrian space is limited and this is a huge opportunity to increase the amount of public space.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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Handouts:

- Parcel 82-D-1 Photos (with 204755)
- Public Comment - J Eshleman (with 204755)
- Preliminary Design & OPM Funding Request (with 207671)