



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 14, 2015

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Michael Glavin - OSPCD, George Proakis - OSPCD, Goran Smiljic - ISD, Lynn Weissman - Friends of the Community Path

1. Approval of the March 3, 2015 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

198503: That the Director of SPCD submit a progress report on SomerVision by March 26, 2015.

The current progress report covers the period through June 2014. OSPCD is waiting for one more piece of data to complete the next report that will cover the period through December 2014. Mr. Proakis indicated that the report will be ready in time for the next committee meeting on May 12th. Alderman Ballantyne asked that the reports use hard numbers rather than graphs.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

196221: That the Director of SPCD provide SomerVision updates twice a year, broken down by ward, showing progress made in residential, affordable units, jobs, public space, trips via transit, bike and walking, and development in transformative areas.

See 198503

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

196368: That the Director of SPCD submit a plan on the use of city owned properties as it relates to projected growth identified in the SomerVision Plan.

Mr. Glavin informed the members that the city's Capital Planning team will be tackling this matter, adding that an inventory needs to be completed. Mr. Proakis stated that prior plans for the use of city buildings have not connected with SomerVision plans.

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

196369: That the Director of SPCD submit a SomerVision implementation and accountability plan as described within.

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

196188: That the Administration work with this Board to revise the SomerVision Plan to provide more detailed goals with regard to affordable housing and the creation of a mix of housing units, especially those with more than 2 bedrooms, for long-term residents of all ages.

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

197983: That the Director of SPCD determine if Central Hill Playground is on a renovation list for the coming fiscal year and inform the Ward 3 Alderman of future plans for the park.

Mr. Glavin reported that OSPCD staff is evaluating this and other parks for renovation and that the decisions will be based on obtaining competitive grant funding.

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

198576: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 3 Alderman on any plans to renovate Central Hill Park.

Mr. Glavin reported that OSPCD staff is evaluating this and other parks for renovation and that the decisions will be based on obtaining competitive grant funding.

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

198096: That the Director of SPCD inquire of the developer of the complex on McGrath Highway, between Otis and Bonair Streets, why they aren't abiding by their promises for resident parking, lighting, and repairs to the McGrath Highway overpass.

Work has been completed.

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

198584: That the Director of SPCD plan a walkway between East Somerville and Assembly Square in conjunction with Federal Realty and Criterion Development.

Mr. Proakis said that the city has received a pledge \$20,000 from a developer towards this initiative. Additional investigation is needed to determine the scope of the project.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

197475: That the Administration discuss with DCR, an agreement by which the City takes joint control of the DCR park area from Shore Drive to the riverbank so the City can maintain that area for the benefit and protection of its residents.

This matter will be discussed with Mr. Boukili at a future meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198508: That the Director of SPCD (Transportation and Infrastructure) schedule with the Ward 5 Alderman a follow-up community meeting for March or April to report on safety improvements planned for the Lowell Street bridge area, since the Community Path Extension will open onto the Lowell Street bridge in the spring.

Mr. Glavin will be meeting with state officials on April 15th regarding the community path and Mr. Boukili is preparing to have a community meeting in the next several weeks to discuss safety issues. Chairman Niedergang noted that the date of that meeting will be May 11th. The state DOT has estimated that their work will be completed in approximately 6-8 weeks. Chairman Niedergang feels that safety is the number one priority and he noted that the speed limit on Lowell Street has been changed to 25 MPH and signage will be posted to that effect.

Lynn Weissman, representing the Friends of the Community Path, (FCP), told the members that safety issues are not a reason to prevent the opening of the path. The ramp is a dog-leg and not set up for speed, so people won't be able to come off the path that quickly. FCP doesn't anticipate that people will be rushing out onto the street. The bridge issues have been there for awhile and FCP doesn't want the path to be the poster child for getting the bridge safety issues fixed. Ms. Weissman spoke about several short term solutions that would be welcomed, e.g., ramps, signage, painting on sidewalks and STOP signs. FCP has written several letters about the possibility of having the expected Green Line stop connect to the community path. Ms. Weissman will forward the information to Mr. Glavin who will request that representatives from the Green Line Extension project attend the May 11th meeting. Chairman Niedergang will contact Senator Jehlen and Representative Provost to request their attendance at that meeting, as well, and to ask for their support in getting GLX representatives to attend.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198107: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the construction plans and timeline for the curb cut at the elbow on Warwick Street to enable bicycle access to the concrete path that leads to the Community Path extension.

OSPCD will work with city departments to determine who can do the design and construction.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

197975: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board the possibility of providing administrative support and funding for a business and community association such as a Main Streets initiative for both the Magoun Square and Winter Hill business districts.

Mr. Glavin feels that OSPCD should host meetings in these areas to explain what a Main Streets program is all about. The next step will be for OSPCD to ask the Board of Aldermen to assist them in getting the business community together with city officials to explain the process and benefits of a Main Streets program.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

198445: That the Director of SPCD (Transportation and Infrastructure) report to this Board on why the Tree Advisory Committee, created under the Tree Preservation Ordinance, appears to be completely inactive, and present a plan for activating it by March 26, 2015.

Mr. Glavin explained that the Tree Advisory Committee was formed to satisfy a requirement in the Tree City nomination program. Somerville has been Tree City community for the past 19 years and is awaiting a response regarding its 20th year application. Since OSPCD has a staff member who meets the criteria of the Tree City requirements, the Tree Advisory Committee is no longer needed.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

198542: That the Director of SPCD apply an economic modeling construct to the proposed zoning ordinance to demonstrate the likely economic impacts on commercial development, jobs, housing, and other factors.

This item was transferred to the Land Use Committee by the Board of Aldermen on April 9, 2015.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

198558: That the Director of SPCD hire an independent consultant to conduct and provide to this Board an expedited economic analysis of the impacts of a range of potential inclusionary zoning affordable housing percentages from 12 1/2% to 25% on affordable and market-rate housing.

This item was transferred to the Land Use Committee by the Board of Aldermen on April 9, 2015.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

197847: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Traffic and Parking advise when the signs limiting entrance and exit from the 118 Holland Street driveway will be installed.

This matter will be discussed with Mr. Boukili at a future meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

197861: That the City Solicitor and the Director of SPCD (ISD) update this Board on the court filing for 75-77 Gordon Street (as requested in July), pertaining to operating a business and storing construction materials at the site.

The Law Department submitted a response explaining that the pending court action was dismissed as a result of the violations being corrected. Mr. Smiljic reviewed the actions taken, to date. Alderman Ballantyne noted that trucks were still coming to take supplies from the property. Mr. Smiljic will attempt to determine if a business is operating out of the premises.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

197862: That the Director of SPCD (Planning) update this Board on the construction start date at 77-83 North Street.

Mr. Proakis stated that the zoning permit has expired and that an extension is needed. Plans for the project have been submitted.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

198212: That the Director of SPCD update the Ward 7 Alderman on asphalt removal at 125 West Adams Street.

Mr. Proakis reported that a zoning review planner inspected the site and it appears that the asphalt was covered with dirt. The question before the city is whether the final circumstance is in violation of the city's zoning rules.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198088: That the Commissioner of Public Works investigate and report back on installing solar powered kiosks in our parks and playgrounds to communicate youth and family activities in our city.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198421: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 11/25/14.

RESULT:

PLACED ON FILE

198193: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Communications revise the Planning and Zoning Depts.' web pages to make them more accessible and transparent.

Mr. Proakis said that overall website improvements are being made throughout the city. Mr. Proakis will contact Alderman McLaughlin to find out what the specific issues are.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED