



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Rodent Issues Special Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Kelly at 6:03 pm and adjourned at 6:39 pm with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Wilson, and Chair Kelly), none opposed, and none absent.

Others present: Colin Zeigler – ISD, Nicholas Antanavica – ISD, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Charlotte Kelly, Vice Chair Jake Wilson and Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0183](#)) Approval of the Rodent Issues Special Committee Minutes of January 30, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

2. Order (ID # [23-0797](#)) By Councilor Kelly, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Strezo That the Director of Inspectional Services and the Environmental Health Coordinator update this Council on spring rodent mitigation programs and SMART box phases.

Taken together with item 22-0057. Mr. Zeigler shared data from 311 calls and SMART box capture rates and gave programming updates in a presentation. One highlight from the presentation was a list of upcoming alterations to the residential program, such as exterminator and inspector recommended alternative treatments that will be added to the RFP and available on a case-by-case basis. The new 5-week service program is expected to reduce waitlist times. Mr. Zeigler also stressed that a second Environmental Health Coordinator position would help rodent mitigation efforts.

Councilor Wilson asked if carbon monoxide or dry ice extermination methods were in the budget request for FY24, to which the answer was no. Dir. Antanavica explained that they did increase their budget to explore options for technology, but that those methods would require four times their current budget to be effective. He said that ISD will be coordinating with DPW to test technology in municipal buildings, then look to implement in residential programs. Chair Kelly asked if low-performance SMART boxes will be moved to East Somerville and/or along Broadway, and when they will be moved. Mr. Zeigler said the intent is to move some to East Somerville, but ISD is waiting for the final reports on the SMART box data that should come out next week. Chair Kelly also asked for elaboration on “new technologies”, which Mr. Zeigler explained include carbon monoxide pumps and rodent Rx systems already being employed in Boston.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Order
(ID # [23-0238](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Inspectional Services provide Smart Boxes throughout East Somerville to address rodent issues.

Councilor McLaughlin stressed the importance of increasing rodent control in East Somerville, adding that rats are still the largest visible health issue there. Mr. Zeigler said that MacArthur is still seeing heightened rodent activity with the SMART boxes, and ISD will be reaching out to the neighborhood in the coming weeks to move forward. Dir. Antanavica added that, since commercial areas have seen the highest rodent activity so far, the intent with Phase III is to look at the dumpster permitting process. Phase III will likely be implemented in Spring of 2024.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [22-0057](#))

By Councilor Kelly

That the Director of Inspectional Services and the Director of Health and Human Services report on progress regarding planned internal rodent control meetings and regular joint departmental meetings.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- Rodent Committee - 2023-05-23 Spring 2023 Rodent Committee Update (with 23-0797)