



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 1, 2019

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Wilfred N. Mbah	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Present	

Others present: Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Jason Grossfield Law, Vithal Deshpande - OSE, Steve Mackey from Somerville's Chamber of Commerce, Annie Connor, , Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:05 PM by Chairman Mbah and adjourned at 7:53 PM.

Approval of the March 20, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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206055: That the City Solicitor draft an ordinance banning plastic straws.

Chairman Mbah provided an overview of this item to reduce the use of plastic straws. It was stated that plastic straws are important for those with medical disabilities and can be made available upon request. Additionally, reusable straws can be available upon request. Schools will be given one year exception for the use of straws. Mr. Grossfield distributed an updated draft ordinance based upon the feedback from the committee at the last meeting. He highlighted changes on page one under Purpose, Section 3(a) 1, 3(a) 2 and 3(d) exemptions for schools. A question was asked if there would be an exception for age, such as for children who may want a straw. It was suggested that a sign be posted that straws would be made available upon request.

The chair motioned and it was accepted new language added to the draft ordinance at the end of 3(a)1 "If a food establishment that have self-service areas with single use items for food consumption should provide a print sign 'Plastic straws are available upon request' in areas where single use items are available."

Councilor Scott inquired about senior citizens use of plastic straws and it was confirmed that Health and Human Services and Council of Aging would be included in the exception for

medical conditions. There were discussions about plastic straw alternatives such as bioplastic which could melt in hot liquids. Mr. Sellers-Garcia will provide information on bioplastic straws at a future meeting and referenced there may be some similarities from previous discussions about plastic bags. It was stated that ISD should be involved in reviewing this ordinance since they would be responsible for rolling out this ordinance. Mr. Grossfield has not received any feedback from ISD.

Mr. Killick, from the public, previously sent an email to the chair which was discussed in the committee meeting. Some of the discussions were on plastic straw alternatives such as corn or beets which can trigger food allergies. Compostable can be labeled to avoid allergies.

Councilor Hirsch motioned and it was accepted to amend the current draft in Section 4 (a) to “not later than 90 days” instead of 30 days.

Councilor Scott motioned and it was accepted to adopt the draft presented to the committee at tonight’s meeting. Councilor Scott amended the motion and it was accepted to adopt the ordinance as amended. This was recommended for adoption at the next full City Council meeting.

Councilor Ballantyne stated that Somerville Public Schools portion has not been confirmed and Mr. Sellers-Garcia will meet with the school next week on this matter. The committee is hoping to hear the school’s feedback by next week Thursday.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207871: Ulysses Lateiner submitting comments re: #206055, an Order that the City Solicitor draft a plastic straw ban ordinance.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206586: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide information on challenges with recycling items that go into recycling bins in parks and on streets.

Mr. Deshpande, the city’s environmental coordinator, discussed the strategy to put recycling in areas where there is more foot traffic. There are approximately 75-100 places offering recycling. Recycling is picked up 4x a week and trash is picked up every day. It is very challenging to reduce the contamination in recycling. Some recycling materials are deemed to be trash due to the contamination. It was suggested that education can help change the way people think about recycling. Additionally, signage will be posted to educate the community how to recycle. Mr. Deshpande stated that most landfills are closing due to being at full capacity. There was a discussions about going back to recycling glass and paper due to contamination.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206425: That the Administration and this Board convene several meetings with residents who have expertise in waste reduction strategies to explore our recycling and solid waste disposal model, to see if better options exist, both in terms of labor and environmental impact.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205234: Director of Sustainability and Environment submitting an update on the Administration's sustainability initiatives.

Members of the committee believed this order was put in and responded to previously. Mr. Sellers-Garcia will include sustainability initiatives in his budget hearing for 2020.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205247: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board on the progress of the Mayor's initiative to attain carbon neutrality by 2050.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated this item is similar to one that was already responded to previously.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205437: That the Director of Parks and Open Space update this Board on all current parks projects.

Ms. Connor from the Mayor's office, distributed a written response from the director of parks and open space. The director of parks and open space was not able to attend the meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204506: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 10/12/17.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204966: That the Administration consider including an anaerobic digester at the new High School.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia stated this did not work and there was not a great site. This effort would need a bigger site and concerned with traffic. This effort is much better suited for sites with a mix of day and night usage.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205709: That the Administration immediately pursue creation of a public fields and recreation area in the Inner Belt District pursuant to the Fields Master Plan.

Ms. Connor from the Mayor's office distributed a written response to the committee, but no one was at tonight's meeting to address this item. This item was kept in committee until someone appears before the committee to respond to this request in person.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Handouts:

- Draft Ordinance - 4-24-19 (with 206055)
- Comments - C Killick (with 206055)
- Response (with 205437)
- Response (with 205709)