



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 30, 2016

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Absent	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Steve MacEachern - DPW, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Oliver Sellara-Garcia - OSE, Doug Kress - HHS, Vanessa Boukili - Arborist, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:36 PM by Alderman Ballantyne and adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Ms. Boukili, the recently hired city arborist, gave a history of her experience. Mr. Rawson said the planning and policy season is coming up. Construction season will be in the spring.

Approval of the September 27, 2016 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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197851: That the Administration develop a comprehensive de-paving plan for city properties, especially school playgrounds, to alleviate flooding by reducing the 73% of Somerville that is covered by concrete, asphalt or other impervious surfaces.

Alderman Ballantyne spoke about incentives offered for using pavers instead of asphalt in Germany. Mr. Rawson will continue to work towards replacing asphalt.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200299: That the Director of SPCD, the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment consider the pros and cons of artificial turf and identify alternative designs for publicly accessible open space.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200428: Submitted by Envirotrac for Speedway LLC, to advance 3 soil borings in the sidewalk at 24 and 26-28 Kensington Avenue, and install monitoring wells in 2 of those borings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200638: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with the 2016 tree planting/replacement plan for all Wards.

Alderman Niedergang would like a prioritized list, by ward. Alderman Sullivan asked if the city trees are the correct species. Ms. Boukili said it is not always the species of tree that is causing root problems, but sometimes it has to do with soil. Locations of plantings must be considered. Mr. MacEachern spoke about the process for removing trees and about improvements being made by the DPW with respect to planting trees appropriately.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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200749: That the Supervisor of Inspectional Services report to this Board on the differences between the Stretch Energy Code and the International Energy Conservation Code 2012, and which Code the City is applying.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200896: That the Commissioner of Public Works request that the city's LED lighting contractor review the report by resident Luis Morales and provide their written comments.
See discussion of item 201840

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201378: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment provide an energy master plan for the most effective systems to approach net zero for Union Square and other "transformative zones" as outlined in SomerVision.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201432: That the Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment and the Commissioner of Public Works explore alternatives, such as a "pay as you throw" program, to limit the amount of curbside trash, and integrate curbside composting.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia handed out a Solid Waste Management Policy Alternatives Analysis, dated November 30, 2016. He said the city could charge per bag of trash or there could be an annual

fee, noting that the incentive to compost is not there if trash pickup is free. Alderman Ballantyne said she saw a composting system in Brooklyn, NY, but has heard people don't use it. Alderman Niedergang asked how the city gets paid for the trash bags bought and Mr. Sellers-Garcia said that the city would make a profit of \$1.50 from each \$2.00 bag sold. Alderman Niedergang wants to charge people for trash pickup to make sure they recycle. Alderman Niedergang asked if the administration has a recommendation and Mr. Snyder said the administration will work with the board on the item. Alderman Sullivan said he sees property owners put trash out in the city from properties outside the city. He would like to see pay as you throw. Fall River's pay as you throw program was discussed.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201488: That the Director of SPCD confirm that only native trees are being used in the Lincoln Park renovation and advise of the species.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201489: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide alternative trash disposal options, e.g., limiting the size of disposals, charging fees, etc.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201567: That the Arborist check the health of the tree at 143 Powerhouse Blvd.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201585: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the dead tree at 50 Hall Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201614: That the Commissioner of Public Works report to the Ward 2 Alderman on the removal of a tree at 25 Durham Street, and on its replacement.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201690: That the Director of Communications maintain the city's website with information on the Emerald Ash Borer Program, including the revised list of trees to be removed, any schedule of planned phasing, and any other relevant information.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201695: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on reducing food waste and expanding composting at city schools.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia said he met with the DPW and that there will be different characteristics in each school. The program will start small and the School Department will designate recycling champions. He will update the committee in March.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201696: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment and the Commissioner of Public Works report to this Board on reducing landfill waste and expanding recycling at city schools.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201737: That the Administration update this Board on the progress on instituting a curbside composting program.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201753: That the Mayor re-establish the Tree Advisory Committee, to be staffed by the full-time Arborist, expand its membership to 9 or 11 members, and broaden the scope of the Committee's duties.

Mr. Rawson spoke about the arborists and said that the tree ordinance will be evaluated. The committee will be operational by April. Alderman Davis would like to broaden the scope of the committee's duties.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201840: That the Director of Health and Human Services report to this Board on the potential harmful human health effects of the recently installed LED street lights.

Mr. Snyder said some lights will be redirected away from houses. Studies show LED lights are not harmful. The city is committed to limiting exposure to impacts. Mr. Kress said the research supports the conversion. The blue shades of lighting are the ones that cause problems. Impacts on the nervous system, night glare and melatonin were discussed as were computers and televisions as causes of sleep problems. Alderman Davis asked if the city will dim the brightness of lights in response to complaints from residents about the impact. Mr. MacEachern said there is a safety concern if the lights are dimmed. He said he went out at night to document complaints and some lights were dimmed and some had shields installed on them. Mr. Sellers-Garcia said there is sensitivity with balancing energy savings and lighting impacts. Alderman Niedergang would like to see the data.

Alderman Davis' motion, that the Commissioner of Public Works provide the committee with a list of lights that have been identified as problematic and what was done to address each of them, was approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201857: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment inform the Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy which elements of the AMA's 2016 guidelines on LED lighting could be or have been used to minimize potential harmful effects.

See discussion of item 201840

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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201861: That the Commissioner of Public Works dim the brightness and install a filter and/or directional screening on the LED street lights in the area of 47 Hall Avenue.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201870: That the Commissioner of Public Works explain why the trees at the Healy School where removed and what trees are going in their place.

Mr. MacEachern said there is no plan at this time to replace the trees. The trees in question were taken down because they weren't in the right place. Alderman Niedergang said many people disagreed with the city response about the removal of the trees. He would like to amend the ordinance to protect the trees on city property and would like to include people in the decisions. Alderman Davis would like the School Committee and Superintendent to have some input. Alderman Ballantyne said the trees at the Healy School are the same as at the WSNS.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201903: That the Commissioner of Public Works inform this Board about plans to re-landscape any school properties, since both the Kennedy and Healey School yards were re-landscaped this summer without public notice.

See item 201870

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201904: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on keeping city trees alive by watering them during this and future droughts.

Alderman Davis discussed ways to help water trees and mentioned having residents help. Mr. Rawson spoke about programs in Cambridge. Mr. MacEachern explained how the DPW watered trees in the city and Alderman Niedergang said mulching tree wells would be nice.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202018: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board, and to the School Committee, on the use and necessity of pesticides in city-owned or city-maintained properties, and report on how organic maintenance would compare to current practices.

The city is working with the landscapers to use safer products and the DPW is also addressing more environmentally friendly measures. Alderman Niedergang is delighted to hear the city is working towards better alternatives and said many cities and towns have already started using alternative organic products. He would also like to see no herbicides used by the city. Alderman Davis said that there is evidence that pesticides hurt the ecosystem and animals.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202019: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board, and to the School Committee, on the type, brand, cost, and use of all cleaning agents used in city and school buildings, and report on how "green," non-toxic cleaning products would compare with current practices.

See discussion of item 202018.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202189: That the Administration discuss with this Board's Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy, the costs identified by Lynn Weissman, attached, regarding natural grass and artificial turf fields.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202276: That the Chair of the Conservation Commission report to this Board with an update on that Commission's activities, primary concerns, and issues that are being worked on.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

200860: Conveying a Presentation from SPCD, Recreation, and SomerStat on Fields.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

202009: Conveying the Department of Public Works' response to questions about landscaping at the Healey School.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202136: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 8/25/16.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Handouts:

- Tree Data (with 201870)
- Solid Waste (with 201432)