



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 16, 2022

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Beatriz GomezMouakad	Vice Chair	Present	
Charlotte Kelly	City Councilor At Large	Present	

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairperson Clingan and adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Approval of the October 25, 2021 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

DPW

212801: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace any non-working street lights along Broadway, from McGrath Highway to Main Street.

There is a written response attached to the agenda stating this is not a simple request.

The chair stated that DPW met with the street light contractor this fall and the contractor provided a estimate which needs trenching. This request is being addressed.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

212842: That the Commissioner of Public Works address reports of trash barrels being picked up by recycling trucks.

There is a written response to this request stating this fall the city's trash and recycling contractor changed its standard operating procedure and dedicated all its vehicles as (including both those marked as Trash vehicles and those marked as Recycling vehicles) to clearing and dumping all recycling first and then then shifting all vehicles to clearing and dumping all trash. This is a change from the old procedure of doing both services simultaneously, but with dedicated equipment. The purpose of this change is to shorten the time that trash and recycling vehicles are in the street. As a result, it may appear that sometimes trash is being loaded into a "Recycling" truck, and sometimes that recycling is being loaded into a trash truck.

The chair noticed there is a delay of when the trash and recycling is picked up.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad stated her observation that trash barrels are on the sidewalks longer. Both Councilors Gomez Mouakad and Kelly expressed interest in receiving additional information on why the trash barrels are on the sidewalks longer.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad stated that with all the rodent issues, people are very sensitive about trash.

Chair Clingan would like a representative from Boston Carting to come before the committee to address a couple of issues.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212960: That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss the possibility of removing snow and ice from playgrounds after snowstorms.

Director Sahni provided some comments from DPW. There would be a lot of risk to the integrity of the surface given the porous grounds at the playground.

Councilor Kelly talked about the sidewalk snow shoveling pilot. There maybe a delicate way of shoveling the playground and it would be helpful to get data on the pilot to use to clear the playground.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad stated a shovel would puncture the material used at the playground.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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212962: That the Commissioner of Public Works report on all school building deferred maintenance projects completed following the ventilation system assessment, proposed completion dates, and strategies to assess needs for future deferred maintenance projects.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad stated that in 2020 a study was done to improve ventilation and assessment of the buildings. There were issues with Honeywell and the maintenance not being done. She wants the administration to be clear on what was done for the buildings. She understands there are still some things pending for the building. Councilor Gomez Mouakad would like a list of what was fixed and what was not fixed. There should be a push on fixing the schools and libraries and not have the teachers using space heaters.

Director Sahni provided an update from DPW commissioner that all buildings were balanced and readied for students to come back to school. Several schools were updated for COVID upgrades.

Councilor Kelly asked what type of grant money is the city going after to handle these requests.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked who from the city staff is overseeing the school's buildings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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OSPCD/Engineering

212828: That the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development work with this Council to create policies to reduce the length of time that construction projects block sidewalk access, including the possibility of increasing fees to

discourage extended sidewalk closures.

No one from OSPCD or Engineering were available to attend tonight’s meeting. Councilor Kelly asked if there are pedestrian safety plans for private or businesses when planning construction. She stated far too many sidewalks are closed for weeks. Additionally, she suggested there should information available at the city if residents ask questions about the closing of sidewalks. Councilor Gomez Mouakad saw a sidewalk in Ward 5 that was closed and anyone with a wheelchair would not be able to pass on the sidewalk.

Chair Clingan stated more discussion is needed on this request.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Fire/ISD

212961: That the Chief Fire Engineer report on the safety risks for all municipal buildings not fully equipped with automatic sprinkler systems.

Director Sahni read from the written response from the city that any city building that may not have sprinkler is because at the time of construction they were not required. He asked the councilors if there are specific buildings of concern.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad raised the concern about older buildings presenting a risk. She gave an example that the Brown School is not fully sprinklered. She said the chief fire engineer should be flagging buildings of higher risk. The city needs to be a little more watchful of the buildings.

Councilor Kelly is interested in getting a report on which buildings are not equipped with automatic sprinkler systems. A report would be helpful to identify capital projects. She also asked if the new committee is just school buildings or if it includes city buildings.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212965: That the Director of Inspectional Services and the Chief Fire Engineer report on all life safety inspections and testing of life safety systems completed for the Armory building in the past five years, and compliance with testing and inspections following eminent domain actions.

Director Sahni stated a recent report was issued on January 11 this year on egress light, escape window and other areas. He will provide the document to the committee.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad was in the Armory and noticed that the fire extinguishers were expired.

Chair asked Director Sahn to attach the report to the agenda and for the next councilor’s meeting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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212969: That the Chief Fire Engineer provide this Council with the plan for staffing the future Assembly Square fire station.

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Councilor Gomez Mouakad was in the Armory and noticed that the fire extinguishers were expired.

Chair asked Director Sahni to attach the report to the agenda and for the next councilor's meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Economic Development

212963: That the Director of Economic Development report on the maintenance plan for the Armory building, completion of outstanding repairs, and ongoing maintenance and operational oversight of the building.

Items 212963 and 212964 were discussed together.

Chair asked if there is a maintenance plan. Director Sahni stated its best that Director Galligani speak on this matter.

Councilor Kelly asked Director Sahni when it would be best to bring these two items up again so that the appropriate individuals are available to attend the committee meetings.

Director Sahni will coordinate with the key individuals to attend a future meeting to answer the committee members questions.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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212964: That the Director of Economic Development report on the status of existing leases for the Armory building.

Items 212963 and 212964 were discussed together.

Director Sahni will make arrangements for Director Galligani to attend a future committee meeting to answer questions from the committee members. The chair also asked if it's common for the Director of Economic Development to manage leases for the city.

Councilor Gomez Mouakad asked about staffing for the buildings. She also stated the city needs to be clear and transparent with the lease for this building.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Parks and Recreation

212951: That the Director of Parks and Recreation report to this Council on the status of the Veterans Memorial skating rink following its recent privatization.

The chair stated the intent is to have a conversation about the rink and how the city of Somerville is longer managing the skating rinks.

Director Sahni stated that the commissioner stated back in December that Veterans is DCR rink and the city did not bid on it. He will share the previous communication from the commissioner on this matter.

Councilor Kelly asked if DCR could provide a report that shows whether or not there has been a decrease in participation maybe due to increased rate of .50 to \$5.00.

Chair Clingan suggested having the person currently managing the skating rink come before the committee.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED