



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Davis at 6:02 pm and adjourned at 8:13 pm with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Scott, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Kelly, and Chair Davis), none opposed, and none absent.

Others present: Neha Singh – Mayor’s Office, Brendan Salisbury – City Clerk’s Office, Jill Lathan – DPW, Nicholas Antanavica – ISD, Michael Feloney – OSPCD, Lorraine Moorehouse – DPW, Andres Bueno – OSPCD, Stephanie Widzowski – Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Lance L. Davis, Vice Chair Charlotte Kelly, Willie Burnley Jr., Matthew McLaughlin and Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

Committee Minutes
(ID # [23-0518](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of March 28, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Order
(ID # [22-0043](#))

By Councilor Davis

That the Commissioner of Public Works, the Director of Procurement and Contracting Services, and the Director of Mobility report to the Legislative Matters Committee on enforcement of and annual reporting on the Ordinance to Safeguard Vulnerable Road Users.

Fleet Manager Moorehouse gave a presentation on the inspection process and the nature of the collaboration recommended with ISD for proper enforcement. She added that the City of Somerville has had little to no pushback on the ordinance from contractors. Liaison Singh added that compliance with vehicles leased through the state might make local compliance easier, and asked if, given that ISD will be a large part of the enforcement process, the Committee is considering amendments to the Ordinance to Safeguard Vulnerable Road Users to reflect that. Chair Davis replied that if specific language suggestions come up, he is happy to consider them, but would wait to revise the ordinance until that point. Chair Burnley asked how the state law requiring signage for the minimum space needed when passing cyclists interacts with the Ordinance to Safeguard

Vulnerable Road Users.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Order
(ID # [22-0038](#))

By Councilor Davis

That the Code of Ordinances be amended by requiring the Mayor to annually submit to this Council a report on the status of housing.

Dir. Feloney explained that of the information requested by councilors, the Housing Division has access to some areas, such as for affordable units, but not others - for example, information for unrestricted housing without inclusionary requirements. Dir. Feloney went through the list of requested information in a predecessor to this item, Agenda Item 211811, and the feasibility of each request. He noted that the item relating to loss of affordable units had broad language and that greater specificity would be helpful.

Chair Davis asked if information for units without an inclusionary requirement could be obtained through ISD. He also stressed that his priority is to collect and share information that is easily accessible first, building on the capacity of the report as a tool over time. There was a discussion of staff capacity and how to allocate resources to compile the data. Chair Davis also reiterated that the original draft called for a deadline of September for the report, not June. Chair Davis requested that the Administration submit written responses to this item separately, and that something for this item be passed before the end of the fiscal year.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Ordinance
(ID # [22-1994](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott

Amending Sections 7-41, 7-43, 7-44, and 7-47 of the Code of Ordinances, related to Fair Housing.

Taken together with item 22-1991. Dir. Feloney explained that he and a former staff member hired back temporarily, Andres Bueno, reviewed Fair Housing complaints from the past five fiscal years and their outcomes. However, he asked for more time to process that information into a report for the Committee. He added that the actions that would help the most toward enforcement are to get Fair Housing specialist staff back in a sustained manner and to approve budget requests for program improvement. Multiple councilors expressed that they want to move forward with these items now to prevent future discrimination cases, but Councilor Kelly added that she would want to have another item submitted for discussion when the report is finished.

Dir. Feloney shared preliminary results from the search: that most

complaints were under MCAD protection, and that the most common classes of complaints were by source of income, then disability, then a category marked “unclear/not available”, and then race. Mr. Bueno noted that there may be overlapping classes in the data.

Councilor Kelly moved *That the Director of Housing submit a report to the City Council on the yearly number of Fair Housing complaints filed, sorted by those that are MCAD-protected and those that are not.* The motion passed with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Scott, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Kelly, and Chair Davis), none absent, and none opposed.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Order
(ID # [22-1991](#))

By Councilor Burnley Jr. and Councilor Scott
That the City Solicitor work with this Council to amend the Code of Ordinances to include nondiscrimination provisions based on relationship status.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Order
(ID # [22-1271](#))

By Councilor Clingan, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Scott, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
That this City Council and the City of Somerville formally recognize the Gilman Square Neighborhood Council.

Chair Davis moved *That the City Council hold a public hearing on item #22-1271 at the May 25, 2023 City.* The motion passed with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor Scott, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Burnley, Councilor Kelly, and Chair Davis), none absent, and none opposed. The item was discharged without recommendation.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE DISCHARGED WITH NO RECOMMENDATION

AYE: Chairperson Davis, Vice Chair Kelly, City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr., Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin and Ward Two City Councilor Scott