



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

August 28, 2018

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	Alderman at Large	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Ben Ewen-Campen	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Alderman at Large	Present	

Others present: Frank Wright - Law, Eileen McGettigan - Law, Michael Glavin - OSPCD, George Proakis - OSPCD, Orsola Susan Fontano - ZBA, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairman Scott and adjourned at 9:53 PM.

Alderman Niedergang distributed a document with his comments about items 204694, 204652, 204655 and 205224, in case he did not have an opportunity to speak at the meeting.

Approval of the July 10, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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204649: Requesting the re-appointment of Nancy Busnach to the Redevelopment Authority.

Mr. Glavin introduced Ms. Busnach to the committee with a brief statement. Ms. Busnach lives in Somerville and was appointed to this position by Mayor Gay in 1999. Her resume and all of the candidates resumes were sent to the BOA prior to the meeting. Ms. Busnach received the Fitzgerald award of Lifetime Achievement.

Alderman Niedergang referenced his notes that were given to all of the aldermen, as well as, to the candidate and others in the room. He stated he could not support the re-appointment of this candidate as he believes that Ms. Busnach ‘rubber stamped’ in her role on the committee. Mr. Wright cautioned the committee that the statements may need to be stated in executive session, if this person’s character is questioned and the candidate would need to be given three days notice before the meeting. Alderman Niedergang stated his comments were not personal and relate only to business. Alderman White stated that Ms. Busnach should be able to speak on the statements presented by Alderman Niedergang. Ms. Busnach spoke about her experience with the Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) and said that as one of five members, she prides herself for never siding with one side over another. She has never had lunch with any of the developers nor had any conflict of interest.

Alderman Rossetti asked if the SRA board process was any different than the other boards. Ms. McGettigan who has attended all of the SRA meetings, stated that Chapter 121B rules are different than other boards or commissions. Questions were raised about not allowing the public to speak at SRA meetings. It was stated that it is the discretion of the chair whether to allow someone to speak at the SRA meetings. Alderman Ewen-Campen asked Ms. Busnach why public hearings were not allowed at a couple of meetings and Ms. Busnach stated that those who were on the agenda were allowed to speak.

Alderman Mbah asked questions about Union Square and Mr. Glavin discussed the plan that was approved in 2012 with written recommendations from the community advisory committee. It was stated that the SRA took the recommendation and made a selection among the final two developers. The committee was informed that the SRA has the use of city staff to use as their own and inquiries were made whether OSPCD played a major role in decision making. Alderman Hirsch talked about the selection of US2, FRIT’s waiver and its perception to the community, the breakdown of trust and the need to figure a way to rebuild the trust with the community. Alderman McLaughlin commented about the SRA and its poor process and agrees that it seems to be more of a rubber stamping process with no transparency. He also stated that he could not support the re-appointment of Ms. Busnach.

Alderman Davis, as did most of the aldermen, thanked Ms. Busnach for her 19 years of service, but shared some of the same concerns raised by other members.

Alderman White made a *motion to approve the re-appointment*, however the motion was not seconded.

Alderman Ewen-Campen's *motion to not approve Ms. Busnach’s re-appointment* was approved, with all members who were present concurring, with the exception of Alderman White. Alderman Ballantyne was not present for the vote.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED
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204651: Requesting the re-appointment of Rebecca Lyn Cooper to the Planning Board.

Ms. Cooper was not able to attend this meeting.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204652: Requesting the re-appointment of Joseph Favaloro to the Planning Board.

Mr. Proakis introduced Mr. Favaloro, who has been with the Planning Board for 23 years and described the board’s duties. At the present time, there is one vacancy on the board. Mr. Favaloro spoke about the process of listening to the staff before weighing in. He has served the last several mayors as a member of the Planning Board and has not had any conversations with any of them about the Planning Board’s decisions.

Alderman White reported that he received several emails that were very critical of the Planning Board’s decisions. (As Alderman Niedergang had to leave this meeting,) Alderman Ewen-Campen summarized Alderman Niedergang’s letter mentioning specific issues regarding the public process, the FRIT waiver and affordable housing. Alderman McLaughlin spoke about the lack of transparency and about a question he had asked previously at a meeting about the financial windfall for FRIT. Alderman Davis talked about criticism and his frustrations with the Planning Board over the years. He discussed the budget and the \$3 million payment made to the city that was dated June 29, 2018 and booked as part of FY-18. Alderman Davis said that, by law, this would have to be voted in by a certain date to be included as a revenue source.

Alderman Rossetti thanked Mr. Favaloro for his many years of service to the city and said that she is still responding to constituents about the FRIT vote to this day, adding that she will not be able to support his re-appointment. Alderman Clingan also spoke about the public perception and the FRIT waiver, adding that he will not be supporting the re-appointment.

Alderman Davis’s *motion to not approve the re-appointment of Mr. Favaloro* was approved with Alderman White voting against the motion. Alderman Ballantyne was not present for the vote.

RESULT:	NOT APPROVED
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204654: Requesting the re-appointment of Richard Rossetti to the Zoning Board of Appeals

This item was withdrawn. Alderman Rossetti was recused from all discussion pertaining to this item.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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204655: Requesting the re-appointment of C. Anne Brockelman as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Zoning Board Chairperson Orsola Susan Fontana introduced Ms. Brockelman.

Chairman Scott stated that Ms. Bockleman’s resume was impressive, however he noted that there have been some conflicting cases.

Alderman Ewen-Campen stated that Ms. Brockelman is totally qualified for this position and that she has been on the board since 2015.

As zoning rights can be objective and the community can influence projects, it was suggested that Ms. Brockelman should practice deliberating in public and continue to welcome community comments. Ms. Brockelman stated she pushes developers to get them to explain more. Alderman Davis was impressed with Ms. Brockelman’s expertise and would like her to take a more active role. Alderman McLaughlin also indicated that the candidate was highly qualified.

Alderman McLaughlin's ***motion to approve re-appointment of Ms. Brockelman*** was approved. Chairman Scott voted against the motion. Alderman Ballantyne was not present for the vote.

Chairman Scott spoke about property owners taking the city to land court and said that he was not pleased that Adrian Street did not stand out in Ms. Brockelman's mind., as he feels that project was detrimental to the community.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205224: Requesting the reappointment of Elaine Severino to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Severino told the committee that she is passionate about the city and loves working on the board. She has been on and off committees for the city of Cambridge and has been on the Cambridge Citizen advisory council for 15 years, watching out for the City of Somerville. She has been involved with tree planting as part of the Porter Square project and the mural on Elm Street.

Alderman Davis noted that Ms. Severino represents the community well and he hopes that she will continue to push landscaping for the city.

Alderman Ewen-Campen's ***motion to approve Ms. Severino's re-appointment*** was approved. Alderman Ballantyne was not present for the vote. Chairman Scott voted against the motion based on comments he received from his constituents. He has heard from constituents about more green space and he asked Ms. Severino how far she push for it.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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205225: Requesting the re-appointment of Pooja Phaltankar as an Alternate Member to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

This item was withdrawn.

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN
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Handout:

- Ald. Niedergang Comments