



# City of Somerville, Massachusetts

## City Council Sustainability and Infrastructure Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Clingan at 6:00 p.m. and adjourned at 8:06 p.m. on a Roll Call Vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Scott, Hardt, and Clingan), 0 opposed.

Councilor Scott joined the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Others present:

Yasmine Raddassi - Legislative Liaison, Eric Weisman - Department of Public Works Interim Commissioner, Michael Potere - Assistant City Clerk.

#### Roll Call

**Present:** Ward Seven City Councilor Emily Hardt and Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan  
**Absent:** Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-0262](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Sustainability and Infrastructure Committee Meeting of February 9, 2026.

**RESULT:** ACCEPTED  
**AYE:** Ward Seven City Councilor Hardt and Ward Four City Councilor Clingan  
**ABSENT:** Ward Two City Councilor Scott

2. Resolution (ID # [26-0149](#)) By Councilor Sait and Councilor Mbah That the Commissioner of Public Works remove snow from dead end streets, private ways and alleyways in a timely manner.

Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9.

Department of Public Works Interim Commissioner Eric Weisman made a presentation FY26 Snow Operations for Sustainability & Infrastructure, which is included as an attachment to this meeting agenda.

Chair Clingan stated that this is the largest storm we have had since the Community Path was constructed and asked who is responsible for clearing it, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that the city plows it using equipment that is also used on normal city streets, and added that the Community Path is prioritized due to its high level of use, and that the more cyclists and pedestrians who are able to use the Path, the fewer there are on

city streets.

Councilor Hardt asked what “back dragging” means, and Interim Commissioner Weisman stated this is when the plow drives into the snow with the plow lifted, and reverses to pull the snow back to clear it from bus stops and other narrow areas.

Chair Clingan asked when it is necessary to call in contractors, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that there are 27 plow routes throughout the city, and that it depends on amount of snow, the rate it is falling, and the amount of available staff, who are called before contractors are called.

Councilor Hardt asked how bike lanes can become completely filled with snow, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that normally snow can be plowed to align with the flex posts that separate lanes, but in this instance the volume of snow made that impossible in certain locations.

Regarding the pilot program for issuing tickets for snow removal, Councilor Hardt asked if the enforcement area is all of Broadway, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that the area is all of Broadway as well as all of School Street.

Chair Clingan asked how many tickets were issued for enforcement of the pilot program on Broadway and School Street, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied there were 9 tickets in the January snowstorm and 14 in the February storm.

Chair Clingan asked about delays for plowing dead ends and private ways, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that, in retrospect, using only three trucks to clear dead end streets was insufficient to handle the volume of plowing needed on those routes. Chair Clingan asked how many streets are on each of the 27 plow routes identified in the presentation, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that these are long-established routes that go back many years, but he does not have an exact number.

Councilor Scott asked about plans for snow melting and noted that it can be quite expensive compared to utilizing other vacant property or private property rented for a lower cost. Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that snow melters could be beneficial because, in a city as dense as Somerville, there are other higher priority uses of space than for storing snow, such as developing them into housing. Interim Commissioner Weisman continued that snow melting allows for melting snow in a much smaller footprint, and that preparing for snow melting now will help the city for the future when more and more space is occupied for other operational uses.

Regarding enforcement, Councilor Scott noted that the largest amount a

snow removal ticket is \$300, which has not been a deterrent, particularly for larger property holders, and at a certain point, the city ends up clearing the snow. Councilor Scott then asked if it would be possible to bill property owners for that removal, and Interim Commissioner Weisman stated that it could be possible to calculate the cost and bill property owners for the service. Councilor Scott suggested that the amount billed could be based on the hourly rate paid to contractors hired by the city for snow removal, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that that is another possible way a bill to a property owner could be calculated.

Councilor Scott asked about how the city decides when to hire outside contractors for plowing, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that, in the past, the city had a longer internal list of employees who would be willing to plow during big storms, but that over the years there are fewer and fewer volunteers, and as a result, outside contracting has become more common. Interim Commissioner Weisman continued that one of the priorities in the department is to continue hiring more people, who will also be trained to drive the plows, and added that existing staff are trained on the snow routes during a pre-season drill every November. Interim Commissioner Weisman added that the city always exhausts its internal list of employees before engaging with contractors.

Councilor Scott asked why during snow emergencies one side of the street must be cleared of cars, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that it is to allow the plows sufficient space to maneuver down the road.

Chair Hardt asked about the reason behind the even-odd rule for parking during snow emergencies, and Interim Commissioner Weisman stated that in the past it was even-side only, but then residents who lived on the even side complained that their driveways were always plowed in, so a decision was made to alternate the prohibited side of the street for parking during snow emergencies to balance that out. Interim Commissioner Weisman added that the restriction on parking during snow emergencies also makes it easier for plows to avoid damaging parked cars and other personal property.

Chair Hardt asked about the impact of global warming and the possible increase in bigger snowstorms, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that future storms would be handled as they come, and that it is possible that more snow emergencies will be called to accommodate snow removal.

Councilor Scott asked about issues related to private construction contractors clearing snow by dumping it on neighboring private property and blocking an ADA ramp, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied he did not have all the details regarding the issue but could follow up with ISD to develop a future enforcement plan.

Councilor Scott asked if there was a minimum amount that needs to be spent

annually to keep contractors available during snow emergencies, and Interim Commissioner Weisman stated there is not, but that there are some fixed costs for snow fighting, including for salt, ice melt, and overtime costs.

Chair Clingan asked about the reasons that plows do not often plow as close to the curb as some residents may want, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that some drivers do not want to damage the curb, the plow itself, or plow snow onto cleared driveways and sidewalks.

Chair Clingan asked why some residents were reporting up to eight hours of seeing no plows during the second big storm, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that there are required breaks for drivers during each 24-hour period, and that breaks are given to drivers in a strategic manner.

Councilor Hardt stated that residents in Ward 6 and 7 can park at a Tufts garage in that area, but that the spaces need to be reserved in advance.

Councilor Hardt asked about the availability of parking in the Dilboy lots, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that these lots are used as staging for towing.

Councilor Hardt asked about properties that are effectively abandoned and have sidewalks that are never plowed by the property owners, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that certain enforcement issues would need to be taken in conjunction with ISD, but that he would look into options for the future.

Councilor Scott asked about the relocation of bike lane barriers as a result of snow removal, and Interim Commissioner Weisman replied that he is aware of this damage and that DPW will be out replacing fixtures in the near future.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

3. Resolution  
(ID # [26-0236](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen

That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council whether the sidewalk snow clearing pilot worked as intended this year, or whether there are other strategies to improve pedestrian mobility following a large snowstorm.

Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

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4. Resolution (ID # [26-0237](#)) By Councilor Ewen-Campen  
That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council lessons learned from the recent large snowfall about resources and policies needed to improve snow clearance, including Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) bus stops, business district sidewalks and parking, private ways and dead ends, accessible ramps and bike lanes.
- Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
5. Public Communication (ID # [26-0259](#)) Christopher Beland submitting comments re: items #26-0175, #26-0176, #26-0177, #26-0178, #26-0179, #26-0180, #26-0181, #26-0182, #26-0183, #26-0184, #26-0185, #26-0186, and #26-0187, Eversource applying for Grants of Location.
- Chair Clingan stated that this item will be kept in committee so he can contact a representative from Eversource regarding this resident's comments.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
6. Order (ID # [26-0352](#)) By Councilor Hardt  
That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council, the policy of prohibiting parking on alternating sides of the street during a snow emergency, and whether it is the best way to meet snow removal needs.
- Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
7. Order (ID # [26-0353](#)) By Councilor Hardt  
That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council the frequency of street sweeping throughout the period of April through November.
- Chair Clingan stated that this item will be kept in committee because it was placed on the agenda earlier than intended, and that the topic will be discussed at a later meeting.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
8. Resolution (ID # [26-0337](#)) By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Hardt, Councilor Link, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Sait, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wheeler  
That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council how to ensure that handicapped parking spaces are not used for snow storage and are cleared at the same time as other spaces.
- Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 2, 3,
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4, 6, and 9.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

9. Resolution  
(ID # [26-0338](#))

By Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Hardt, Councilor Link, Councilor Mbah, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Sait, Councilor Scott, Councilor Strezio and Councilor Wheeler That the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council how to ensure that accessible sidewalk ramps are cleared following snowstorms, and ensure that 311 reports on this issue are promptly responded to.

Chair Clingan stated that this item would be taken together with items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8.

**RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**

Referenced Documents:

- S&I - 2026-03-18 Presentation (with 26-0149, 26-0236, 26-0237, 26-0337, 26-0338, 26-0352)