



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

January 23, 2018

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Mark Niedergang, Alderman Wil Mbah, Carrie Normand - School Committee, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Rich Raiche - Engineering, Bill Zamparelli - Eversource, Rich Delano - Eversource, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:31 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Approval of the December 7, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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203867: That the Mayor's Office, working with the Director of Engineering, report to this Board on improving Eversource's communications with, and responsiveness to, this city's residents, concerning gas meter replacement, street construction and utility work.

Neighbors said the correspondence from Eversource was very vague and that more information would have made the process easier. Residents expressed concern about the lack of communication, the relocation of gas meters, holes being dug in yards without notification, Eversource chaotic and disorganized performance and threats of having gas service shut off.

Mr. Zamparelli will provide a letter that was sent on 8/14/17 and one to Mr. Plumb on 10/10/17 and said that he feels that Eversource was successful in resolving the issues with neighbors. Chairman White inquired about all letters sent out by Eversource between March and August 2017. Mr. Zamparelli said he didn't respond to Mr. Plumb's letter because it was insulting. Mr. Zamparelli submitted an email dated 12/3/17 and said that the Eversource point of contact felt Mr. Plumb's correspondence was defamatory. Alderman Davis said that there must be a completely different approach, going forward, adding that he doesn't like the idea that Mr. Zamparelli didn't respond to a customer because he didn't like the tone of the letter. Alderman Niedergang said the people on Hudson Street have been frustrated and would like better

customer service. Alderman Scott asked how each property owner gets notified and asked if each house requires a separate permit. Mr. Delano explained how the communication with property owners happened and said that a subcontractor performs the work and there is an inspector that monitors the work. There are main line permits of about 6 to 10 along with 100's of service connection permits.

Mr. Raiche said that a plan was put together and will be submitted to the BOA regarding managing reactive construction. He discussed the jurisdiction of the city on a project like this and offered suggestions as to how a project could be planned in the future. He will also work on notification language.

Chairman White asked if placing meters outdoors is a state requirement and Mr. Delano explained how several factors come into play when replacing meters. He spoke about when equipment gets replaced and explained that locating meters outside allows for the equipment to be checked, makes it easier to shut a meter off and allows meters to be inspected without bothering a homeowner. He said meters on historical homes can sometimes be left inside. He explained how regulators work on gas meters and said that they should be cleared of snow. Mr. Zamparelli pointed out that the old meters in the houses aren't compatible with the new system.

Chairman White's motion **that the City Engineer not issue any street opening permits for gas work by Eversource, excluding emergency work, until an adequate description of the work to be performed is prepared by Eversource in coordination with the Director of Engineering, prior to the issuance of any such permits,** was approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204263: That the Commissioner of Public Works request that the appropriate utility company address the low hanging wires on Mt. Vernon and Washington Streets.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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200773: That the Commissioner of Public Works describe to this Board, the rationale for treating multi-unit residences the same as single family residences for purposes of volume-based escalation of water rates.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202330: That the City Engineer install the curb cut at the Warwick Street elbow, by the Community Path Extension ramp, that was promised many years ago as part of the Maxwell's Green development.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202331: That the City Engineer install curb cuts and sidewalk ramps at the two curbs by Maxwell's Green at the intersection of Clyde and Warwick Streets.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202332: That the City Engineer repair the curb cut and sidewalk ramp at the intersection of Murdock and Clyde Streets.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203507: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide shaded areas for public pools including Foss Park and Dilboy.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204551: That the Director of Capital Projects or the Director of Communications share with this Board the plan for keeping community members informed on a regular basis about the High School building project.

Alderman Niedergang said there wasn't much communication about the high school building project and he wants to make sure that communication and progress are being made. Ms. Normand stated that several presentations have been made, adding that a notice will be created with the information that parents will need and will be sent to all families, with particular focus on those having students going to school during the construction period. Alderman Scott suggested sending information home with the students. Alderman Davis said that information can be found at <http://www.somervillema.gov/highschool>. Ms. Connor told the committee that there will be more active outreach in March targeting parents. Alderman Niedergang would like a slide about this presented at every ResiStat meeting and Alderman Davis would like the information as a link in every ResiStat newsletter.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204552: That the Director of Capital Projects or the Director of SPCD update this Board about the transportation management and parking plans for both the construction and the post-construction phases of the new High School.

Mr. Rawson discussed the outreach with respect to the parking situation and noted that there is an informational paper on the matter. He discussed incentives for using public transportation and bicycles. Alderman Niedergang asked about the post construction parking plan and reported that he heard some teachers will be quitting. He wants communication on the matter to start now. Alderman Davis would like to see a parking garage built and said that the city can't follow the plan of Kendall Square because they are totally different situations. Mr. Rawson said that the Administration was working on the plan with a working group and would be prepared to present it to the committee in April. Chairman White asked that this item be placed on the agenda when a committee meeting is set for April.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204731: That the Commissioner of Public Works make the following repairs on Carver Street: fill the pothole behind the sewer cover; straighten the two curbstones on the south side of the street; and remove the pile of cement at the end of the street.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204732: That the Commissioner of Public Works patch the uneven roadway on Cedar Street around the Community Path as it presents a safety hazard for bicyclists.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204856: That the Director of Engineering and the Commissioner of Public Works work with this Board to consider possible strategies to address the persistent issue of snow being plowed onto sidewalks during large snow storms.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204877: That the Commissioner of Public Works report to this Board why snow plows cannot go at a slower speed to avoid throwing snow over curbs and onto sidewalks.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204878: That the Commissioner of Public Works deploy a shoveling crew after major snowstorms to shovel out the sidewalks of elderly and disabled residents that get buried by city snowplows, and that the Director of Health and Human Services and the Director of Communications work together to register such residents so they can contact 311 to get their sidewalks re-shoveled after they have been buried by snowplows.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204879: That the Director of Communications coordinate the messaging about when to shovel with the Commissioner of Public Works so that residents are not told to shovel their sidewalks when snow plows are still plowing snow over curbs and burying sidewalks.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204944: 23 residents submitting a petition re: the trees removed on Beacon Street.

Alderman Davis discussed the reasons why people are concerned with the removal of trees and said that he was not satisfied with the response as to why the trees were removed. Alderman Scott said that all of the trees in question were supposed to be preserved and that their removal was not communicated to residents.

Alderman Davis' motion that the City Solicitor advise the Board of Aldermen regarding how the trees were taken down and whether the incident on Beacon Street was compliant with state ordinances and the city's Tree Ordinance, was approved.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204949: That the Commissioner of Public Works advise this Board on the priority policy

for clearing snow from sidewalk curb cuts at intersections.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204950: That the Administration advise this Board on the city's ability to clear sidewalks that have not been cleared and charge the property owner for the cost.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Handout:

- Eversource Communications (with 203867)