



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 20, 2019

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Wilfred N. Mbah	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five City Councilor	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Absent	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Absent	

Others present: Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Jason Grossfield - Law, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:35 PM by Chairman Mbah and adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Approval of the November 14, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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206055: That the City Solicitor draft an ordinance banning plastic straws.

There were discussions on how significant amount of plastic impacts our environment. Mr. Grossfield sent out a redlined version of the ordinance last week. See attached.

The chair motioned and it was accepted to **change timeframe in 3A from a year to 9 months.** In the same section **the word "enactment: was changed to "ordinance"**. There were discussions about food establishments will not be able to have plastic straws out and the straws must be requested by the customer.

The chair motioned and it was accepted to **change language in 3b to "Alternatives straws including reusable, paper straw are allowed to be used instead of plastic straws but by customer REQUEST only. Therefore straws can be used if necessary but not to be handed out by default."** This was voted on with Councilors Mbah and Niedergang voting in favor and Councilor Scott voting against. This motion was approved.

There was a **change to the draft Section 3c to read as "Distribution or use of a plastic beverage straw or plastic stirrer by any person due to medical necessity or their request,**

pre-packaged beverages containing a plastic beverage straw a health care facility (as defined above) and in the event of locally declared emergency. See attached document.

This change was motioned by Councilor Niedergang and accepted by all three members, Mbah, Scott and Niedergang. This motion passed.

The chair wanted to add other plastic utensils, but this request is outside the scope as only straws and stirrers are included in the draft ordinance.

Cynthia Waite, healthcare professional and advocate weighed in on the use of straws for medical use and how the Seattle law is read. See attached document on exclusions for San Francisco and Seattle. Councilor Scott talked about challenges of using bamboo straws with hot beverages or squeezing the straw too tightly. Councilor Niedergang had a conversation with Councilor Ballantyne and would like to move this draft forward.

Councilor Ballantyne had previously raised a question about how this would affect schools, but no one had spoken to the school and the business community on this matter.

Ms. Connor will reach out to departments to coordinate who will attend the next meeting. It was suggested that perhaps Councilor Ballantyne could coordinate with the school committee since she is a member of their committee. It was also suggested to have a public hearing to get feedback from the community. The chair stated he had spoken with the Chamber of Commerce and they do not have any concerns.

There were other motions to make changes to the draft ordinance.

Councilor Scott motioned to make change to Section 3 (a)(1) by adding “without also providing non-plastic alternatives available to customers or individuals in the same manner and at the same point of distribution or sale”. This motion was defeated with Councilor Scott voting yes and Councilors Niedergang and Mbah voting against.

Another motion was made by Councilor Scott, **Section 3 (a)(2) to STRIKE “purchase or”** and this was accepted by all three members.

Councilor Scott motioned for another change to Section 3 (a)(2) to add “without also providing non-plastic alternatives available in the same manner and at the same point of distribution” which was defeated, two against and one in favor.

Mr. Grossfield will update the draft document in time before the next OSEE meeting on March 20th.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207150: That the Director of SPCD work with the DPW Commissioner to institute a curbside composting program.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia has been before the committee several times on this matter. In 2015, a RFP was released for a pilot compost to test out equipment and participation with the intent to scale up across the city. The RFP showed very high cost about 2.5-5x for composting, which was very surprising. There was analysis presented to the committee, looking at other cities with two key things: trash goes to landfills with high emissions and trashing hauling is very high. Additionally organic waste produced very small emissions. Mr. Sellers-Garcia asked the committee what problem they were trying to solve. Mr. Sellers-Garcia will send an email to the

chair with notes from previous meetings on this matter. There were conversations about recycling costs have increased over the years.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205456: That the Administration revisit the decision to abandon plans for curbside composting and move forward with a pilot program.

See #207150

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206307: That the Administration and the Director of Communications work with the Somerville Garden Club on their “Pod Patrol: Spread the word...not the weed” educational campaign to control the invasive Black Swallow-wort vine that is spreading rapidly and is harmful to songbirds, monarch butterflies and native plants.

There were discussions about how aggressive Black Swallow is and how it crowds out other plants. Councilor Niedergang received communication February 15 from Ms. Taylor to layout an aggressive and effect plan to work with the Somerville Garden club, which satisfies the need for this order.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205935: That the Administration inform this Board of any opportunities to incentivize waste reduction, such as opt-in composting, PAYT, or charges to phone book distributors for disposal costs.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia will check with the law office and ISD and get back to the committee on this matter. This matter will raise awareness, less consumption, waste reduction to help households manage waste. There will be a flyer in March. This item was left in committee for Councilor Hirsch to weigh in on the matter.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205708: That the Administration immediately pursue creation of a public athletic field and recreation complex atop the 36,000 square foot parking deck proposed for construction in the Union Square eminent domain parcel currently designated "D-2".

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204355: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the city’s landscape architects maintain the 30-foot slide at the North Street Veterans Park, check the entire structure for safety, and inform the Ward 7 Alderman of the slide's warranty.

There was a bolt that was missing and has been ordered. Ms. Connors will speak with Councilor Ballantyne to let her know the slide is safe.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

205702: That the Administration consider hiring licensed site professionals for oversight of acquired land and providing them with the authority to impose their recommendations on developers, to protect human health and the environment.

Ms. Connor stated that there is a LSP for Conway Park and they work with them to develop a plan to bring the park into state regulations. It was stated that the city does not have a general LSP, and they are hired for specific projects. Ms. Connor suggested that the director of SomerStat reach out to Chair Mbah to share what she has learned and what tests have been taking at Conway. Councilor Scott explained that LSP work in the private industry, not in the public sector. It was suggested that the chair speak with Mr. Snyder from the Mayor's office for a thorough investigation on the process for using a LSP.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED****Handouts:**

- Draft Ordinance (with 206055)
- Plastic Straw Sample (with 206055)