



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

July 10, 2017

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Thomas Galligani - OSPCD, George Proakis - OSPCD, Barbara Rubel - Tufts, Robert Chahade - Tufts (via phone), Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Niedergang and adjourned at 8:06 PM.

203222: That this Board's Committee on Housing and Community Development meet with representatives of Tufts University for an update on the conversion of wood frame office-houses into residential housing in Medford and Somerville.

Alderman Ballantyne said the goal is to not have the university spread into the neighborhood, thereby competing with residences for housing and added that Tufts should build more on-campus housing. The stress on the residential housing stock will get worse if Tufts continues to spread into the neighborhoods.

Mr. Chahade said the school continues to investigate building more on-campus housing and noted that Tufts is not expanding into the neighborhoods. Mr. Chahade discussed where the subject properties are located and said that they are currently used as Tufts offices and will not be taking residential housing from the neighborhoods and will keep students on the campus and not send them into the neighborhoods. There is a pilot version of this process in Medford. Ms. Rubel told the committee that the properties will be improved and will bring students to the campus and out of privately owned properties.

Alderman Ballantyne said Tufts hasn't listened to the neighbors and increased enrollment is not being supported by the building of new dorms. Alderman Lafuente asked if there is a plan to build dorms in the foreseeable future and he inquired about the type of properties being converted in Medford. He also asked if private landlords renting to students is considered expansion into a neighborhood. Neighbors discussed a former Tufts Master Plan in which Tufts buys houses in the neighborhood. They said increased enrollment should coincide with increased on-campus housing. A neighbor asked how many students will be added, if the

housing would be tax exempt and how many students would be housed in the subject properties. Ms. Rubel said there will be 100 new students at Tufts this year and some will be at the Museum of Fine Arts and housed in Brookline. Juniors and seniors are not required to live on campus, but every freshman and sophomore must live on campus. Ms. Rubel told the committee that a “Fact Book” is available that gives a history of the student population

Alderman Ballantyne said she speaks to students and they talk about the hardships of getting housing. Mr. Chahade said that Tufts is sensitive to the issues and is working with the community. Chairman Niedergang sees new beds as a positive initiative.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203605: That the Director of SPCD provide all cost estimates and data used to support the affordable housing waiver for the 500 unit apartment complex at Assembly Row.

Mr. Proakis will circulate the numbers he has to the BOA.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203217: That the Director of SPCD provide, by 4/18/17, an assessment of the FRIT Assembly Square development's compliance with the PUD and the intent of the Ordinance, and of its compliance with the levels in effect at the time of the PUD preliminary master plan approval.

Mr. Proakis said FRIT has requested amendments to the PUD 3 times. The 2014 amendment changed the design. Chairman Niedergang asked if the city is unhappy with the PUD system. Mr. Proakis said there are more nimble ways to get design approval.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203593: That the Director of SPCD provide a bi-annual progress report on the 100 Homes Initiative, specifically relating to the new affordable off-site housing units granted by the Planning Board to FRIT on May 18, 2017.

The committee discussed the SCC’s ability to make a program work. There is not another entity at the present time that can do what SCC does. Alderman Lafuente asked if other entities could participate in the program and Chairman Niedergang encourages other entities to participate in the program.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203261: That the Director of SPCD begin the process of seizing the abandoned Cobble Hill Plaza by eminent domain with the intention of building a land trust and open space at the site.

Mr. Snyder informed the members that the Administration has no intention to take the property. Mr. Proakis explained the lawsuit surrounding the property and noted that the city is also frustrated with the delay of development. Mr. Galligani said taking the property for open space

is not consistent with the plan. Alderman Ballantyne wants to be educated on how a city can take a property by eminent domain.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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201772: That the Administration provide this Board with an update on the Winter Hill Star Market site and the associated lawsuit.

Mr. Proakis spoke about the current status and said that the issue revolves around putting in a Job Lot store. Mr. Galligani said eminent domain could be a possibility.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203564: That the Director of SPCD incorporate into the initial notice to abutters of development projects, that they may submit their e-mail address to the Planning Department for updates as the designs or plan change.

Chairman Niedergang said he is a full time alderman and it takes a great deal of time. He said if city staff could do it, that would be great, however, Mr. Proakis said there is a workload challenge. Alderman Ballantyne wants to make sure the committee knows what the email policy is, from a legal standpoint.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203749: That the Director of SPCD focus workforce development plans on vulnerable adults, determine if additional funds are needed, and provide this Board with a quarterly progress report.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203606: That the Director of SPCD work with Partners Healthcare to create a local jobs program for available jobs onsite.

Mr. Galligani discussed Partners Healthcare and an 8 week employment and training program, offered three times per year. It is designed for entry level positions and is a rigorous program. The committee discussed those who are at risk with respect to finding employment and discussed ways to perform outreach. Alderman Ballantyne said she is aware of people in public housing who take public transportation and work 2 jobs. She is interested in getting data on how things are going for them.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202181: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the development of a strategic plan for the city's role in workforce development and job training, and the city's intention on implementing the recommendations in the 2013 Somerville Jobs Advisory Committee Report.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

203759: Director of Economic Development requesting to brief this Board about opportunities to advance public private partnerships (P3) and the upcoming P3 Showcase.

Mr. Galligani explained the P3 process and said that in Massachusetts, it can't be done legally. There are some exceptions, however, and he wants to present the P3 possibilities to Partners Healthcare. The possibility of petitioning the state for a pilot project was discussed as were various P3 examples.

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

- Training Flyer (with 203606)