



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Public Utilities and Public Works Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 2, 2025

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Clingan at 6:03 pm and adjourned at 6:50 pm on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Scott, McLaughlin, Clingan), 0 opposed, and 0 absent.

Others present: Jill Lathan - DPW Commissioner, Kimberley Hutter - Legislative Liaison, Aliya Ewing - Director of Teen Empowerment, Stanley Pollack - Director of Teen Empowerment, Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Ward Four City Councilor Jesse Clingan, Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott and Ward One City Councilor Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [25-0481](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Public Utilities and Public Works Committee Meeting of March 10, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Four City Councilor Clingan, Ward Two City Councilor Scott and Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Order
(ID # [25-0744](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That Commissioner of Public Works increase the lighting at Chuckie Harris Park along the fence abutting properties on Minnesota Avenue.

Legislative Liaison Kimberley Hutter emphasized the importance of involving the community members in this decision and Councilor McLaughlin said that he talked to people on this street and they decided they do want lighting to increase safety in a dark area of the park. Previously the nearby community members did not want lighting here, but they changed their mind.

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

3. Order
(ID # [25-0477](#))

By Councilor Sait

That the Commissioner of Public Works remove the unused switch box on the sidewalk at 533-535 Medford Street.

Commissioner Jill Lathan from the Department of Public Works explained that the box contains a service pipe that requires access. Additionally, it is used for storing holiday lights and other materials, and the City is

considering painting it to improve its appearance.

Councilor Scott requested clarification, noting that there appear to be two switch boxes at the location. Director Lathan confirmed that staff have visited the area and verified that they are actively being used for storage.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [25-0214](#))

By Councilor Mbah and Councilor Wilson

That the Director of Constituent Services submit in writing, the protocol for proper handling of downed wires.

Chair Clingan reviewed the submitted memo entitled PUPW - Downed Wires Memo with 25-0214.pdf and noted that it provides a clear response to the concern. He referenced a previous instance when a constituent contacted 311 about a downed wire and was told the service was closed and to contact the utility company directly. The memo clarifies the appropriate steps and responsibilities for such situations.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order
(ID # [25-0089](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator provide an estimate for the costs of upgrading 165 Broadway for ADA compliance.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

6. Resolution
(ID # [25-0088](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Administration prioritize 165 Broadway for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to ensure full use of youth-related activities in the building.

Chair Clingan explained that while there was previously a \$6 million plan for a full renovation of 165 Broadway, the City is now focused solely on addressing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Aliya Ewing, Director of Teen Empowerment, said the organization's contract with the City requires them to host public events which is something they are currently unable to do because the space is not accessible. Given the building's historic status, Chair Clingan suggested Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding could be explored and asked for information on the application process. Liaison Hutter confirmed that CPA is currently accepting applications and offered to follow up at a later date with additional information.

Councilor McLaughlin noted that the full cost of renovations is closer to \$15 million, not \$6 million, and asked whether it would be possible to install an elevator first as a phased approach to ADA compliance. Liaison Hutter

explained that installing an elevator would trigger additional ADA requirements throughout the building, substantially increasing the cost. She also pointed out that CPA funding is only a couple million dollars a year, so it would not be sufficient to cover the full scope of work.

Councilor McLaughlin raised additional questions about whether Teen Empowerment could be relocated to a more accessible space, how much the City is currently spending on youth services, and whether this project could be prioritized. He also asked whether Teen Empowerment's contract allows for flexibility in hosting events elsewhere and requested an update by the next Council meeting. Chair Clingan noted that the current contract ends in June and suggested accessibility be considered in future agreements.

Another Director of Teen Empowerment, Stanley Pollack, recommended a chair lift as a potentially more affordable solution and noted that while events have been held in the space for many years, ADA accessibility concerns are receiving more attention now. Councilor McLaughlin concluded by stating it is unreasonable to require Teen Empowerment to meet accessibility standards that the City itself has not yet achieved and he believes that if the organization is expected to host public events, the City should provide an ADA-compliant space in which to do so.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK
COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- Public Utilities and Public Works - 2025-06-02 Downed Wires Memo (with 25-0214)