



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 11, 2024

7:00 PM

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the City Council's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

1. OPENING CEREMONIES

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen.

- 1.1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
(ID # [24-0049](#))

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

- 1.2. Remembrances Remembrances.
(ID # [24-0050](#))

Councilors Wilson and Ewen-Campen requested a moment of silence in memory of Devon Halley.

RESULT: APPROVED

- 1.3. Minutes Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, November 21, 2023.
(ID # [24-0051](#))

RESULT: APPROVED

2. CITATIONS

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 3.1. Grant of Location Eversource applying for a Grant of Location to install a new manhole and 253 feet of conduit in Columbia Street, to a point of pickup at 495 Columbia Street.
(ID # [24-0018](#))

Jacqui Duffy, representing Eversource, spoke in favor of the item and explained the purpose of the request. There being no further speakers, the Public Hearing was closed. Councilor Scott asked that the grant be conditioned so that the time of placement be communicated to and coordinated with the city and the neighboring business.

RESULT: APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

4. ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

- 4.1. Order
(ID # [24-0039](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Commissioner of Public Works re-install the bench, previously donated and installed in honor of longstanding Brown School principal Marilyn Haggerty, on the Brown School grounds.
- RESULT:** APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Public Utilities and Public Works Committee
- 4.2. Order
(ID # [24-0041](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Director of Parking ensure that the parking meters in front of the Tufts Administration Building (TAB) are reserved for TAB building visitors with disability placards, Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM, to assist with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility.
- Councilor Strezo commented that she has been hearing that there are not enough ADA spaces.
- RESULT:** APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Traffic and Parking Committee
- 4.3. Resolution
(ID # [24-0040](#))
- By Councilor Strezo
That the Administration and the Director of Water and Sewer update this Council, in writing, on the plan to support residents who cannot afford the recent water bill increases.
- RESULT:** APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Public Utilities and Public Works Committee
- 4.4. Order
(ID # [24-0042](#))
- By Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Wilson, Councilor Davis and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment provide this Council with any updated plans and timelines for a municipal composting program.
- RESULT:** APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Open Space, Environment and Energy Committee
- 4.5. Order
(ID # [24-0043](#))
- By Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Economic Development update this Council on the "Mitigating Commercial Displacement in Somerville" report, released in December 2023, and any action steps taken as a result of the report.
- Councilor Pineda Neufeld explained that she would like to have the Council get ahead of any recommendations made in the report and Councilor Strezo said that she has spoken with OSPCD and was informed that Economic Development staff is ready to make a presentation on the report.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.6. Resolution
 (ID # [24-0044](#))

By Councilor Pineda Neufeld and Councilor Strezo
 That the Administration honor the Commonwealth's Fourth Annual Crossing Guard Appreciation between March 1-20, 2024 by planning appreciation events and opportunities to thank our crossing guards.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld stated that such events occur throughout the Commonwealth, but not in Somerville and she would like to tag on to events happening elsewhere in the state.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.7. Order
 (ID # [24-0046](#))

By Councilor Mbah
 That the Director of the Office of Housing Stability report on the progress of the organization and start-up of the Municipal Housing Voucher Program.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.8. Order
 (ID # [24-0047](#))

By Councilor Mbah
 That the Director of Housing and the Director of the Office of Housing Stability report on the feasibility of fair housing enforcement.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Housing and Community Development Committee

4.9. Order
 (ID # [24-0048](#))

By Councilor Mbah
 That the Director of Housing and the Director of the Office of Housing Stability provide a ten-year progress report on the implementation of the city's efforts to prevent and mitigate displacement.

RESULT: APPROVED

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

7. COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

7.1. Mayor's Request
 (ID # [24-0010](#))

Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$122,627 grant with no new match required, from Mass General Hospital/Cambridge Health Alliance to the Health and Human Services Department for recruitment and training of Community Health Workers.

Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7,

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- 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
- 7.2. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0035](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$91,211.79 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to the Fire Department for staffing costs.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
- 7.3. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0014](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$76,867 grant with no new match required, from the Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs to the Council on Aging for social, educational and physical wellness programming.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
- 7.4. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0036](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$53,200 grant with no new match required, from the Mass Cultural Council to the Arts Council for the Local Cultural Council grant program.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
- 7.5. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0015](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$3,600 grant with no new match required, from Massachusetts Councils on Aging to the Council on Aging for the Somerville Memory Cafe.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
- 7.6. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0013](#)) Requesting approval to accept and expend a \$3,000 grant with no new match required, from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services to the Council on Aging for senior transportation.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
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RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee

- 7.7. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0011](#)) Requesting approval to pay prior year invoices totaling \$28.75 using available funds in the Human Resources Department Wellness Account for an employee Weight Watchers wellness benefit.

Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee

- 7.8. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0017](#)) Requesting confirmation of the promotion of Mark Matthews to the position of Fire District Chief.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld moved to waive the readings of items 7.8 and 7.9 and refer them to the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

- 7.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0016](#)) Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Anandavalli Thiagarajan to the Public Library Board of Trustees.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld moved to waive the readings of items 7.8 and 7.9 and refer them to the Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee.

RESULT: **REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**

FOLLOWUP: Confirmation of Appointments and Personnel Matters Committee

8. COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1. License (ID # [24-0019](#)) New Automatic Amusement Device License, Lucky Strike, 325 Revolution Drive, for 138 devices.

President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

- 9.2. License (ID # [24-0020](#)) New Billiards and Bowling License, Lucky Strike, 325 Revolution Drive, for 5 billiard tables and 8 bowling lanes.

President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits

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- Committee.
RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.3. License
(ID # [24-0021](#))
Renewing Dog Kennel License, Riverdog Daycare, 321 Somerville Avenue.
President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.4. License
(ID # [24-0022](#))
New Extended Operating Hours License, Dunkin, 504 Broadway, opening 24/7 for in store and take-out services.
President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.5. License
(ID # [24-0023](#))
New Extended Operating Hours License, Lucky Strike, 325 Revolution Drive, opening Monday-Sunday until 2am for in-store service only.
President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.6. License
(ID # [24-0024](#))
New Garage License, Broadway Gulf Inc, 212 Broadway, 3 vehicles inside, 7 vehicles outside, for mechanical repairs and storing vehicles, Mon-Fri: 6am-10pm, Sat: 7am-3pm, Sun: closed.
President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.7. License
(ID # [24-0025](#))
Renewing Lodging House License, Walnut Hill Properties, 100 Packard Ave.
President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
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- 9.8. License
(ID # [24-0026](#))
- Renewing Lodging House License, Walnut Hill Properties, 25 Whitfield Rd.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.9. License
(ID # [24-0027](#))
- New Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Broadway Gulf Inc, 212 Broadway, 3 vehicles inside, 10 vehicles outside, Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm, Sat: 8am-2pm, Sun: closed.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Licenses and Permits Committee
- 9.10. License
(ID # [24-0028](#))
- Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Auto Plus LLC, 229 Lowell St.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.11. License
(ID # [24-0029](#))
- Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Gene Automotive, 56 Joy St.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.12. License
(ID # [24-0030](#))
- Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, John's Auto Sales, 181 Somerville Ave.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.13. License
(ID # [24-0031](#))
- Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Joy St Motors, 24 Joy St.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.
RESULT: APPROVED
- 9.14. License
(ID # [24-0032](#))
- Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Teele Square Auto, 1284 Broadway.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7,
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9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: APPROVED

9.15. License
(ID # [24-0034](#))

Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Pat's Enterprises, Inc, 308 McGrath Hwy.

President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: APPROVED

9.16. License
(ID # [24-0033](#))

Renewing Used Car Dealer Class 2 License, Pat's Enterprises, Inc, 182 Washington St.

President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.1, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 9.10 through 9.16 and approve them this evening.

RESULT: APPROVED

10. SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

10.1. Order
(ID # [24-0062](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Wilson and Councilor Davis

That the Director of Health and Human Services provide monthly updates to this Council's Committee on Public Health and Public Safety regarding ongoing efforts to address homelessness.

Councilor McLaughlin explained that he plans on holding monthly meetings on homelessness.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION

FOLLOWUP: Public Health and Public Safety Committee

10.2. Order
(ID # [24-0063](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Mobility update the Ward 1 City Councilor on the status of the Kensington Connector.

Councilor McLaughlin said that some progress has been seen, but there is more to be done (e.g., lighting) and he would like to get it finished.

Councilor Strezo asked that the connector also be made less odorous.

RESULT: APPROVED

10.3. Order
(ID # [24-0064](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin

That the Director of Public Works address the trash and littering along East Broadway.

RESULT: APPROVED

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- 10.4. Order
(ID # [24-0065](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Public Works address the overflow of trash at Symphony Park.
- RESULT:** APPROVED
- 10.5. Resolution
(ID # [24-0061](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Administration update this City Council on the status of Charter reform.
- Councilor McLaughlin stated that the charter reform exercise was a multi-year process that involved contractors, public input, and a tremendous amount of work by the City Council's Special Committee on Charter Review. He went on to say that he doesn't know where it went or what stage it is at, adding that he thought it would be at the state house already. By this resolution, he's requesting an official response on the matter. President Ewen-Campen informed the Council that the Administration will be providing an update soon.
- RESULT:** APPROVED AND SENT FOR DISCUSSION
FOLLOWUP: Charter Review Special Committee
- 10.6. Resolution
(ID # [24-0066](#))
- By Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Ewen-Campen
That the Administration reconstitute neighborhood cleanups, particularly on Earth Day.
- Councilor McLaughlin noted that these cleanups haven't happened for the last 2 years and he would like to have them operational again.
- RESULT:** APPROVED
- 10.7. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0037](#))
- Requesting ordainment of an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances to amend Article 9: Use Provisions, and the Permitted Uses tables of all zoning districts, to establish a Recreational Camp for Children use within the Recreational Services use category.
- RESULT:** REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Land Use Committee
- 10.8. Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0045](#))
- Requesting the appropriation of \$260,836.34 from the GLX Developer Contribution Fund Account for procuring an owners project representative for the 100 Chestnut Pedestrian Bridge.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT:** REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION
FOLLOWUP: Finance Committee
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- 10.9. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0012](#)) Requesting approval of a time-only extension to the contract with WSP, Inc. for design work on the Somerville Avenue Utilities and Streetscape Improvements project.
- Councilor Wilson moved to waive the readings of items 7.1 through 7.7, 10.8 and 10.9 and refer them to the Finance Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Finance Committee
- 10.10. Mayor's Request (ID # [24-0058](#)) Requesting that City Councilors submit budget funding priorities by March 28, 2024.
- Councilor Wilson informed the Council that he will be working on the process and will contact each Councilor prior to having an update available on January 25th.
- RESULT: PLACED ON FILE**
- 10.11. License (ID # [24-0060](#)) New Extended Operating Hours License, Everfitness, 14 McGrath Highway, opening Monday-Friday 24/5 for in-store service only.
- President Ewen-Campen moved to waive the readings of items 9.2, 9.4 through 9.6, 9.9, and 10.11 and refer them to the Licenses and Permits Committee.
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Licenses and Permits Committee
- 10.12. Public Communication (ID # [24-0059](#)) Gregg Donovan requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning district of 321 Washington Street from Fabrication (FAB) to Commercial Industry (CI).
- RESULT: REFERRED FOR RECOMMENDATION**
- FOLLOWUP:** Land Use Committee

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 7:21 PM.