



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 3, 2017

REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Absent	
Mark Niedergang	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Present	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Dr. Vanessa Boukili - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Ballantyne and adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Approval of the July 12, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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201695: That the Director of Sustainability and the Environment report to this Board on reducing food waste and expanding composting at city schools.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia informed the committee that the plan is to piggyback school composting on a DEP grant (of about \$40,000 - \$50,000) in an effort to increase recycling at schools. The grant would allow a team to be put together with representatives from each school, to work on ways to reduce food waste and to increase composting, and will serve as a learning tool for students. Alderman Davis thinks that the city should provide resources to get the schools on board and he noted that a student mentioned to him that school staff are dumping recycle materials (from the recycle bins) into the regular trash. Alderman Niedergang said that it looks like educators aren't making this a priority and adults are sending the wrong message to kids. He suggested having a meeting of the School Committee and the School Department's Administration, the DPW, the BOA, the City Administration and any other department that may be involved, to determine out how to best get this program working. Chairman Ballantyne will submit an order to that effect at the next BOA meeting.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

201857: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment inform the Special Committee on Open Space, Environment and Energy which elements of the AMA's 2016 guidelines on LED lighting could be or have been used to minimize potential harmful effects.

Ms. Connor reported that the Administration is dealing with the LED matter on a complaint basis and she reviewed the process of how those complaints are being addressed. Essentially, after a complaint is reported to 311, an inspector from Lines and Lights checks the direction of illumination, dims the light if needed and evaluates the safety effects of any changes made. Ms. Connor stated that people have been appreciative of the adjustments. The lighting conversion, citywide, will be completed by October 20th.

The conversation turned to the brightness of the lights, people not sleeping well and community safety. It was noted that it is difficult to make a correlation between better lighting and lower crime.

Alderman Niedergang inquired if anybody on the city's staff has read the AMA's recommendation and given an opinion. Alderman Niedergang submitted an email from Louis Morales and asked that it be reviewed and responded to by the appropriate city staff.

Alderman Davis said that there is scientific evidence from the AMA regarding the effects of lighting and that the city has a list of people with complaints. He would like a clean and effective plan implemented to address those complaints. Alderman Davis also said that, color temperature aside, the city has more lighting trespass with the LED lights.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

202019: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Director of Sustainability and Environment report to this Board, and to the School Committee, on the type, brand, cost, and use of all cleaning agents used in city and school buildings, and report on how "green," non-toxic cleaning products would compare with current practices.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia reported that he met internally with the Purchasing and Building and Ground Departments on this matter. The Building and Grounds staff will review all products currently being used and will also try to purchase environmentally friendly products through a dedicated state contract set up for that purpose. At this point, it's not known in what area the biggest switch of products might be made. No further information will be available until the end of this year. Alderman Niedergang expressed his frustration about the progress on this matter, saying that it has taken a year to get to this point.

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

202973: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with the tree planting plan for the city, by Ward.

Dr. Boukili has prepared a contract for the acquiring, planting and maintaining of 230 trees between fall and spring, with 100-120 being planted this fall. She has reviewed all of the

requests submitted and said that there are 218 constituent requests and 213 internal requests, for a total of 431. Her plan is to clear the oldest requests in the fall. Some of the funding will come from CDBG funding. Dr. Boukili still has to visit the sites to see which can be planted and she also needs to determine which species are available. The trees must be purchased from the state contract list and it is unlikely that any of the vendors would have only native trees. Chairman Ballantyne asked Dr. Boukili to forward the list of available species and indicate how many will be native.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203387: That the Mayor update this Board on discussions with DCR about the fields at Draw 7 Park and Foss Park.

Ms. Connor told the committee that the Administration is pushing for an athletic field at Drawer 7 rather than an outdoor concert venue. Alderman Niedergang asked about the planning schedule meeting referenced in a memo from DCR and Ms. Connor replied that she wasn't aware of any planning session and thus believes that it didn't take place. Ms. Connor also said that the Administration is willing to put capital into Foss Park if DCR will do so as well and is trying to advance that interest with DCR. The last proposal from the city to DCR was several months ago and as yet, no response has been received. The city's state delegation is advocating for the city.

Chairman Ballantyne noted that the mayor had stated that he wants artificial turf on some DCR parks in the city and that DCR has unequivocally refused that option. She inquired whether the mayor is still pursuing this with DCR. Ms. Connor didn't have any information on this.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203832: That the Director of Sustainability and Environment update this Board on the Somerville Forward Community Meeting held on June 26, 2017.

Mr. Sellers-Garcia recapped the Somerville Climate Forward Community meeting and said that over 100 people were in attendance. Participants at that meeting discussed the scope of the plan which is to engage the community in the areas of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and carbon neutrality. The city will work with this organization's 9 different working groups. Those groups are: Transportation, Climate Preparedness, Equity and Community, Zoning and Development, Consumption and Waste, Natural Systems, Energy, Buildings and Incentivizing Change. Each of these groups has previously met. Alderman Davis asked if concerns about gas leaks has come up in the SCFC meetings and Mr. Sellers-Garcia replied that this issue is one of the matters that they want to address. He noted that the activist community has been working with and making recommendations to utility companies on this subject.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

203858: That the Director of SPCD replace the unhealthy trees on Somerville Avenue from Porter Square to Union Square, determine why so many are unhealthy, and advise whether the replacement costs can be recouped from the Mass Highway Project.

Dr. Boukili told the committee that the trees in question were part of a MA DOT project about 6 years ago. The city doesn't have any warranty info available, but Dr. Boukili said that the

warranty was probably for 1-year and did not include maintenance. Most likely, there was no oversight of the project and the manner in which the trees were planted was not conducive to good tree health. Those factors and a combination of several others, contributed to the reduced chance of the trees surviving.

Dr. Boukili is specifying smaller trees with a 2-year warranty and maintenance programs included. She also spoke about the tree wells throughout the city, saying that new tree wells will be made larger and the size of older wells will be increased during sidewalk repairs. Other steps will be taken, such as the addition of permeable materials in the wells, to encourage good health for the trees. Alderman Davis asked Dr. Boukili what she needed from the BOA to replace the effected trees along Beacon Street and she responded by saying that she would be able to answer that question after reviewing what was promised by the original contractor.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203979: That the Mayor consider allocating sufficient funding to plant trees in all the locations for which a tree has been requested as of August 24, 2017, clearing out the backlog of tree-planting requests.

See discussion of item #202973.

Dr. Boukili thinks that there is funding available for 230 plantings, which would allow the 218 constituent requests for trees to be taken care of. Approximately another \$230,000 will be needed to complete the 213 internal requests.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204121: DCR Commissioner responding to #203388 re: plans for Draw 7 Park.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- Email - L Morales (with 201857)
- Tree Planting Info (with 202973 & 203979)
- Som. Climate Forward info (with 203832)