



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 16, 2017
REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Absent	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	

Others present: Alderman Matt McLaughlin, Alderman Lance Davis, Eileen McGettigan - Law, David Shapiro - Law, Shannon Phillips - Law, Frank Wright - Law, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting was conducted as a REGULAR meeting due to the lack of a quorum for a Committee of the Whole meeting and took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Rossetti and adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Approval of the November 2, 2017 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

203097: Assistant City Solicitor submitting the US2-City Development Covenant.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203098: Assistant City Solicitor submitting an Ordinance to create a Community Benefits Committee.

Ms. Connor told the committee that the Administration has been looking at the draft and attempting to resolve the public/private and is now exploring the feasibility of having developers contribute funds directly to the community councils. Mr. Galligani explained that there could be an approach to credit US2 based on payments made to community groups. Nothing has been formalized yet. Chairman Rossetti commented that she is pleased that the Administration is trying to find ways to give neighborhood councils more authority. Ms. McGettigan noted that the city would not be able to decide which groups would receive funds. Another option would be to create a stabilization fund and have BOA decide where the funds go.

Alderman White inquired if it made sense to have a public hearing on the current proposal in the event a different method is selected. Alderman Niedergang said that he likes the new direction explored tonight and that it is better than the draft being worked on now. He pointed out that the city currently has several groups that distribute funds, so perhaps funds received from developers could be allocated to them rather than having the BOA decide. Alderman Niedergang requested that a document listing the highlights of the two proposals be prepared and provided to the committee and he suggested conducting a public hearing, showing both the draft and new proposal. Ms. McGettigan will prepare a summary of the current draft and a one page highlights page of the new method in time for the December 7th meeting of the Legislative Matters Committee. Chairman Rossetti will schedule the public hearing sometime after the New Year.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203192: Union United submitting comments re: the Union Square Development Covenant.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203555: The Chamber of Commerce, Union Square Main Streets, and Somerville Local First submitting comments re: the Union Sq proposed zoning, the US2 Covenant, and the Community Benefits Ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203556: The Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice submitting comments re: #203098, the Community Benefits Ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203839: That the City Solicitor draft an amendment to Ordinance 11-38(d)(2) to strengthen the language regarding rodent eradication prior to developments being constructed.

Mr. Shapiro reviewed the changes made to the draft and reported that the Inspectional Services Department had concerns about what type of activity would trigger potential rodent issues. Chairman Rossetti suggested that substantial renovations done on some properties, even without any digging or excavation, could be a potential trigger. Alderman McLaughlin explained that he raised this issue due to the problems experienced at places where no digging was being done and he suggested that personnel from ISD be present at a future committee meeting to discuss the matter further and provide an opinion on how long bait should be left in place. Alderman Davis suggested that perhaps demolition might capture more of the intent. Alderman Niedergang suggested eliminating the specific causes, thereby broadening the scope. Alderman Davis said that he has more thoughts on this and has suggested additional language, including that a certified expert be used to confirm that conditions have been met. Chairman Rossetti requested that the Superintendent of Inspectional Services attend the December 7th meeting of the committee.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204238: That the City Solicitor draft an amendment to the ordinance regarding construction, so that rodent eradication is required on all construction, not just demolition.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204364: That the City Solicitor and the Director of SPCD submit to this Board, amendments to the Tree Preservation Ordinance with criteria for removal and notification to add safeguards for street reconstruction projects.

Ms. Phillips told the committee that some language was added to the draft to clarify that the ordinance does not apply to public shade trees. Alderman White requested that definitions be added for park projects and capital projects. Ms. Phillips will add the definitions and noted that park projects usually have at least 3 public meetings. Chairman Rossetti spoke about comments she received from residents, e.g., including in the public notice, a reason why a tree is being removed; tagging the tree with a notice 1 week prior to its removal to ensure that the correct tree is removed. Alderman White asked that language be added making it clear that no city entity, other than the tree warden/deputy, shall authorize the removal of a tree. Ms. Phillips will make the requested changes and have a revised draft ready for review by the committee at its December 7th meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Handouts:

- Draft Ord Sec 11-38 (with 203839, 204238)
- Draft Ord Sec 12-106 (with 204364)