



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 4, 2019

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Ben Ewen-Campen	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:02pm by Chairman Ewen-Campen and adjourned at 8:08pm.

Others present: Wilfred Mbah - City Councilor at Large; Rich Raiche - Infrastructure & Asset Management; Kristen Stelljes - SomerStat; Brad Rawson - OSPCD; Tom Galligani - OSPCD; Daniela Carrillo - OSPCD

Approval of the May 13, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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Approval of the May 21, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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COMMUNITY PATH AND GLX ACCESSIBILITY

207890: That the Administration work with MassDOT and the GLX team to address the 3 primary safety issues with the Community Path Extension between Washington Street and Lechmere that have been identified by the Friends of the Community Path.

Mr. Rawson and GLX Project Liaison Viola Augustin presented the Community Path improvements for accessibility and safety, the design of which is now approximately 90% complete. Updates on station accessibility are included in the documentation as well.

Chairman Ewen-Campen confirmed that there will be an MBTA compliant elevator in Union Square, designed by US2. It will be co-funded by both US2 and other Boynton Yards developers on a pro-rated basis, as the benefit will be shared; the funding will be entirely private.

Alan Moore of the Friends of the Community Path, presented suggested changes to the width of the path, based on suggested guidelines and projected usage. The legislative delegation have shared these

concerns with Secretary Pollack, who was not receptive to the changes. The advocates subsequently met with the Secretary and reiterated the concerns. There are additional concerns about the fencing and lighting encroaching on the usable width. Mr. Moore requested updates from the design team, as the City staff have signed a non-disclosure agreement and are not permitted to share this information.

Mr. Rawson and Ms. Augustin confirmed that the path width has increased to 12' on the viaduct, though the fence will remain straight. Mr. Moore added that although this is an improvement, further updates should be able to be made with minimal delays.

Councilor Hirsch shared that there are already complaints about people not feeling safe on the current Community Path, and we need to clarify who the target users are. Mr. Rawson replied that the intent is to design for the most vulnerable users. Access and respite points are fundamental, but are not provided from Washington Street to North Point. Chairman Ewen-Campen noted that he will follow-up.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207906: Friends of the Community Path submitting comments re: #x, a Resolution to address 3 primary safety issues on the Community Path Extension between Washington St and Lechmere Station.

See 207890

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207735: Calling for improved accessibility at the forthcoming Union Square Green Line Station.

See 207890

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207736: Calling for accessibility and safety improvements at the 7 forthcoming Green Line Stations.

See 207890

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208226: MBTA GLX Program Manager responding to #207736, #207737, and #207890, 3 resolutions calling for accessibility, design, and community path enhancements.

See 207890

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207714: That the Director of SPCD apprise this Council on the redesign of the various GLX stations with respect to the removal of elevators and the accommodations that had been made to provide reasonable access for all users.

See 207890

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

HEALEY SCHOOL UPDATE

207160: That the Administration prioritize the redevelopment of the Healey Schoolyard Tot Lot as soon as the 2019 school year.

Mr. Rawson shared that this work was completed in time for the start of the school year. Councilor Clingan noted that people are looking forward to the whole re-design, but this is much safer and a great start.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

207164: That the Director of SPCD work with the Housing Authority to enable wheelchair access from the Mystic View apartments to the Healey School.

The City has been working with the Somerville Housing Authority on legal and technical details for design, finance and construction of this project. Councilor Clingan suggested researching what grant funding is available for this work.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206820: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on the Healy schoolyard redesign and consider making it a top priority.

Mr. Rawson noted that there have been a series of community engagement efforts, and the designer is working and will bring back some alternatives.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

CANNABIS POLICY

208615: That the Administration consider expanding the Marijuana Advisory Committee to include communities that have been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition, advocates working in this area, and members of the public with related expertise, and consider other steps to increase transparency in the selection process.

Chairman Ewen-Campen explained that the first draft of forming this committee detailed that it will be comprised of 4 people from various City departments, however there are a number of other stakeholders who may have more expertise in this arena. Mr. Proakis and Acting Mayor Ballantyne (the Mayor has recused himself from this matter) shared a plan to add four more members to the current committee, including three members of the public, one of whom is to have a background in finance and business.

The process of evaluating applications is heavily influenced by this committee in a process that is not public, so this change represents an important step to increase equity in granting host community agreements.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208484: That the Director of SPCD disclose where the public may find information about

current applications for adult-use recreational marijuana store licenses.

Mr. Proakis shared a memo detailing that recommendation memos will be released which will include application names and locations. He will work with the Law Department to determine if and when additional information will become part of the public record.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS DIRECTORY

206940: That the Director of SPCD provide this Board with data on the longevity of minority-owned businesses in the city and ways in which the city is working to preserve them.

Mr. Galligani, Ms. Carrillo and Segun Idowu, the Executive Director of the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA), presented about the current initiatives to support minority-owned businesses. Ms. Carrillo identified an opportunity to create a voluntary business-diversity registry for the City. The goal is to create a tool to promote businesses and the services offered. There have been 41 responses thus far, and further outreach is planned. Councilor Mbah asked where the businesses are located and 79% are in Union Square.

Mr. Idowu noted that BECMA was created to address growing racial inequality in Boston and its goal is to address the racial wealth gap by growing minority-owned businesses. It expanded statewide and is focused on advocacy as well as connecting members to opportunities. He added that the list being created could be more useful if the City developed goals around spending with minority-owned businesses (and conducted a disparity study). Additionally, the City should work with other anchor institutions to adopt and use this list for their own spending. The City should also work with community partners who may already have lists. Working with existing accelerators to connect businesses with technical assistance may also be a service that the City could provide. Reporting is also an important function to demonstrate value and attract further businesses to sign up.

Mr. Galligani added that OSPCD and Purchasing have also hosted seminars to help businesses get certified to do business with the state. More seminars are being planned for the future.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204847: That the Director of SPCD update this Board on what is being done to preserve minority owned businesses in the city.

See 204847

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

208263: That the Administration provide this Council with a list of the all the shops, both union and non-union, being used by Suffolk Construction on the construction of the new high school.

Mr. Raiche shared via email that in accordance with Mass General Laws, even if a shop is non-union, laborers working on the publicly funded project are required to be paid prevailing wage, which essentially

matches union wages. Contractors are required to submit certified payroll records to the City demonstrating compliance with that requirement.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

208264: That the Administration inform this Council of any efforts by Suffolk Construction to hire Somerville residents, both union and non-union, for the high school project.

Mr. Raiche shared via email that Suffolk has posted at various locations around the site their contact information encouraging interested Somerville residents seeking employment. Through that hotline, Suffolk directs potential applicants to the correct subcontractor that would match their skills.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION TASK FORCE REPORT

208618: Reporting on the status of the Open Space Acquisition Task Force and requesting feedback on possible next steps.

Ms. Stelljes presented on behalf of the Open Space Creation Task Force. The focus has recently shifted more from acres to access (currently 94% of the City's residents are within a 5 minute walk of open space). Task Force member Michael Fager spoke about the group's recommendations, the most important goal of which was to create new publicly accessible open space. Some ideas for this were: to create an open space acquisition linkage fee; to increase the CPA surcharge from 1.5% to 3%; to explore using DIF for open space creation; to create privately owned publicly accessible open spaces; to create a community foundation; to encourage private gifts. She elaborated on some strategies for this, beginning with developing an acquisition plan for targeted parcels.

Chairman Ewen-Campen shared that there is a need to make this more concrete rather than abstract. Councilor Hirsch also noted that there should be a focus on privately owned public spaces (POPS) and the ones that exist need better signage to indicate that they can be utilized.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

ITEMS TO COMPLETE

207889: That the Director of SPCD help create a new high-quality open public space in Union Square by actively supporting the community-led "Alternative Design" for the D-2 Parcel, and urgently work to identify opportunities to help offset the added cost of locating the proposed parking garage underground.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206061: That the Commissioner of Public Works repair the water feature at the Walnut Street playground so it doesn't spray onto the slide, and replace the deteriorating rubber mat beneath the play structure.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204995: That the Commissioner of Public Works and the Arts Council Director determine the feasibility of creating a mural (or another graffiti deterrent) on the back side of the Argenziano School.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203709: That the US2 Master Developers use Area Standard Contractors for the construction of development parcels in Union Square.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203876: That the City Solicitor provide this Board with a written opinion on #203709 re: using area standard contractors, by the July 10, 2017 meeting of the Committee on Housing and Community Development.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204231: Assistant City Solicitor responding to #203876, requesting an opinion on #203709, which recommended the use of Area Standard Contractors.

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.

Councilor Clingan will follow up directly with the City Solicitor.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208489: That the Director of Inspectional Services issue fines as appropriate the owner of 33-35 Barton Street for vegetation growing into the public way along Hamilton Road.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206063: That the appropriate city department assist Teen Empowerment with their previously requested removal of old furniture and repairs to the roof.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206226: That the Administration staff a contracted or salaried person with experience in systems architecture and coding, to integrate and link existing and new systems so they can support wrap-around services.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207369: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on possible incentives the City

could offer to so-called "High Road" businesses.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

Handouts:

- Open Space Creation Task Force Strategy Memo_FINAL-2 (with 208618)
- Friends of Community Path Letter (with 207890)
- Community Path Info (with 207890)
- Sec Pollack letter appendices-Aug1 (with 207890)
- Proakis memo (with 208615, 208484)
- OSCTF overview for HCD (with 208618)
- SHS - Project Subcontractor List (with 208263)