



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 5, 2017

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
John M. Connolly	Chair	Present	
Mary Jo Rossetti	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	

Others present: Alderman Katjana Ballantyne, Alderman Lance Davis, Alderman Mark Niedergang, Ade Solarin - ISD, Will Durbin - City of Cambridge, Annie Connor - Legislative Liason, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Alderman Connolly and adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Approval of the February 22, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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201988: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services inspect 33-35 Barton Street weekly for continual overgrowth onto the public sidewalk.

Mr. Solarin told the members that tickets were issued for overgrowth. The property has been owned by an absentee landlord for 15 years and the property is never shoveled. Neighbors complain about the overgrowth as it spills onto the sidewalk and the owner does a little bit of cut back. After 3 days, ISD goes back out to re-issue tickets, if necessary. Alderman Ballantyne has been unable to contact the property owner to meet with the committee.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202335: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services inspect 18 School Street for building and health code violations and contact the property owner to make necessary repairs.

Mr. Solarin stated that building has been inspected and no building violations were found.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202865: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services take steps to revoke all licenses held by the Winter Hill Market at 269 Broadway.

Ms. Connor told the members that the Law Department wasn't able to find out if any licenses had been revoked for this property.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202877: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services report to this Board on the extent to which City inspectors enforce snow and ice removal in the city, broken down by ward, in response to complaints that many sidewalks were never cleared.

Mr. Solarin distributed the information to the committee. There are 699 complaints of which 237 are for snow and ice removal. ISD goes out routinely to observe residences and determines if a property is a repeat offender or not.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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203002: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services inspect 161 Lowell Street for all violations.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202617: That the Administration advocate for sound barriers along I-93 in East Somerville to help reduce air pollution by up to 50 percent.

Ms. Connor stated the mayor raised this concern with the state delegation, whose response was that they are working on it. The DOT has been very slow on this issue. Budgets for the state are due in mid April. The City is trying to use this issue as an environmental concern and a pollution litigation approach may help to move this issue along quicker.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202733: That the appropriate department head request that the commuter rail operator address some early morning noise issues.

Ms. Connor spoke about the multiple requests that have gone to the DPW and the commuter rail operator. She will follow up on this matter.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202913: That the Administration prepare a Home Rule Petition to increase the maximum age of Special Police Officers from 65 years old to 68.

A request has been sent to the Commonwealth. There may be a request to change the age to 70 for special police officers. However, there are some concerns because there are no physical test components for safety. Some police unions favor increasing the age 70. The Chair will invite officers to speak at a future meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203004: That the Mayor work with the State Delegation on an agreement with the State to permit City crossing guards at the crosswalks at Highland Avenue and McGrath Highway, and to permit the Police Department to enforce traffic laws there.

Ms. Connor stated the mayor raised this concern with the state delegation. DCR does not have the resources or funds to support this request. Everyone is on board to have crossing guards at this location. The only thing needed is authorization from DCR.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203020: Asst. City Solicitor responding to #202913 with a draft Home Rule Petition to increase the maximum age of Special Police Officers to 68 years old.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202776: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services, with the assistance of other departments as necessary, forward to this Board's Committee on Public Health and Safety a list of AirBnB-type lodging facilities in the city.

Ms. Connor updated the committee on this matter and reported that a bill has been filed in the legislature and is currently in the Ways and Means Committee. The state budget is coming out mid April. The City of Cambridge is considering its own ordinance. Conversations were held about annual inspections for health and safety and the property must be registered with the state. Alderman Niedergang raised a question about short term rental and the city's ordinance. Mr. Solarin said that ISD has a list of properties and is aware of the concerns and the ordinance. Several properties have been investigated and were found not to be short term rentals. According to ISD, there are 813 AirBnB's in Somerville with 36% (293) of them being homes.

Mr. Durbin shared the City of Cambridge's draft ordinance. He will add Somerville onto the ever growing list of interested parties on this matter and will share a draft of the bill as it gets closer to being finalized. The committee discussed two definitions: Owner Occupy - live on the property and Owner Adjacent.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202782: That the Supervisor of Inspectional Services and the Chief Fire Engineer report to this Board on the cause of the fire at 8-10 Appleton Street, including whether the AirBnB rental there was in compliance with city and state laws, and whether it played any role in the cause of the fire.

See discussion of 202776

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202801: That the Administration advise this Board on the proposed state regulation of

AirBnB properties, and options the city might have for taxation and regulation.

See discussion of 202776

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202907: Conveying statistical and policy information from Airbnb relative to home sharing usage in Somerville.

See discussion of 202776

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202341: That the Commissioner of Public Works request of the commuter rail operator that the trash behind 104 Gilman Street be removed.

Alderman McLaughlin spoke about the amount of trash, including mattresses, at this location.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202515: That the Commissioner of Public Works cause the responsible utility companies to raise or move the low-hanging wires that cross Benton Road between numbers 75, 76 and 79. (second request)

Mr. Solarin stated that a wire inspector was dispatched today to resolve the problem.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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202703: DPW Commissioner responding to various Board Orders submitted 12/8/16.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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19. Note: Pending bicycle safety/educational issues before the PHPS Committee will be discussed at next scheduled committee meeting, when appropriate Bicycle Safety Commission member(s) and City staff are available to update the Committee.

Handouts:

- Snow Tickets (with 202887)
- Guidelines (with 202776)
- AirBnB (with 202801)