



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 2, 2020

REPORT OF THE EQUITY, GENDER, FAMILIES AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Wilfred N. Mbah	Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Vice Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	City Councilor At Large	Present	

Others present: Melissa Woods-OSPCD, Annie Connor-Mayor's Office, Lisa Robinson-Human Health Services, David Jacobs-Somerville Homeless Coalition, Ben Wyner-Somerville Homeless Coalition and Lisa Brukilaccho-Cambridge Health Alliance

The meeting was held in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Mbah and adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Approval of the January 30, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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209572: That the Committee on Equity, Gender, Families and Vulnerable Populations provide feedback on SomerVision 2040's chapter on Youth and Education with respect to metrics and key tasks.

Ms. Woods attended the meeting to answer questions from the committee members. It was stated that the student population is very diverse. The chair asked how the guidance office functions and how many students per counselors. Councilor-at-Large Hirsch stated the Somerville Learning 2030 was a very rigorous process and asked about the change findings and justification compared to SomerVision 2040. There were discussions about high level metrics and how the SomerVision 2040 does not provide much guidance. It was also stated there are gaps between the groups. Councilor-at-Large Hirsch stated there should be more concrete measures like for early childhood. It was also stated that Somerville has the second lowest percent of children in the "tween" group in the Commonwealth by product of the housing market. Councilor Ballantyne inquired about the steering committee and who were apart of the working group to work on this chapter. She also asked for a report to compare Somerville Learning 2030 vs. SomerVision 2040.

Councilor Ballantyne stated that in terms of gender, that 70% of parks and recreation are geared to boys which is a violation of Title IV. There are more girls in Somerville High School than boys. It was stated that young women in Somerville seem to be underfunded with majority of funding going to the male gender. Councilor Ballantyne stated that the people most affected do not seem to be at the table or have been involved. Ms. Woods stated that the comment period is still feedback.

Councilor Ballantyne stated that girls do not seem to be asked what they want, with middle school girls being ignored. It was also stated that two sophomore girls asked that the newsletter not be dedicated to football and basketball and show other student interests.

It was stated that East Somerville Community School has the largest K-8 and that 70% of students experience trauma. It was also stated that social emotional should be identified as task as a part of the missing gaps.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

209615: That the Director of SPCD and the Director of Health and Human Services consider developing, and hiring a third party for, an Equity Justice Review for the Somerville Climate Forward Plan and the SomerVision 2040 Plan.

Ms. Connor will speak with Ms. Woods about this request. Councilor Ballantyne will provide Ms. Connor with names of possible third party for Equity Justice Review. It was suggested that someone should go through every chapter to: understand make up of schools and how to advance diversity. There is no agenda for this in the current SomerVision 2040 Plan.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

209754: That the Director of Health and Human Services, along with Shape Up Somerville, and the Somerville Food Security Coalition, recommend ways to improve food access.

Ms. Robinson, Mr. Wyner and Ms. Brukilaccho distributed a document listing food access landscape in Somerville dated March 2, 2020, as reported by Shape Up Somerville and Somerville Food Security Coalition. There were discussions about the backpack program that came out of one of their meetings. They identify basic needs, focusing on food and families in Somerville. Ms. Robinson stated she knows that people are experiencing food insecurities working with emergency providers, people at risk for housing insecurities. It was stated that a grant from Tufts was used to do a focus group on how people get food. Councilor Ballantyne asked them to identify the geographic area with higher rates for food insecurities. It was stated that East Somerville had the higher rate. It was stated that youth are facing hunger, not knowing where their next meal is coming from.

Mr. Wyner stated residents are asked for proof of residence for community meals and project soup. Councilor Ballantyne stated that transportation needs to connect people with housing and shopping centers. In Ward 7, seniors' citizens are not included.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

209473: That the Administration update this Council on the teen snow shoveling program,

including shoveler recruitment efforts and new income eligibility restrictions for enrollees.

The committee chair was not pleased that no one from the Administration was present to address this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207913: That the Administration have Port-a-Potties available at the public parks for the 2019 summer months.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208163: That the Administration report to the Youth Services Committee the feasibility of adding a budget line to make school facilities more affordable for use by community groups by helping to cover custodial fees.

The committee chair was not pleased that no one from the Administration was present to address this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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209365: That the Chief of Police review options relative to the School District's lock-down drills, and provide a description of times when the protocol was used in response to a threat.

The committee chair was not pleased that no one from the Administration was present to address this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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202116: That the Administration update this Board on the future of Veterans Memorial Park.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207119: That the Director of Veterans Services appear before the Committee on Veterans and Public Services to discuss the recent decision to move certain veterans memorials.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205290: That the Commissioner of Public Works share the process of handling different types of cafeteria waste, including recyclables and food waste.

The committee chair was not pleased that no one from the Administration was present to address this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206854: That the Director of Health and Human Services work with the Public Schools to allow whole fruits to be saved for use as snacks, given that many children often go without snacks.

Councilor-at-Large Hirsch stated that the Board of Health has approved this and the schools need to work on the protocol. Questions were asked how to keep food safe at each school and throw out when food is past due. Someone from West Somerville had suggested pre-made snacks for kids for after school like nuts, raisins, cheese and crackers, that can be stored safely. Councilor-at-Large Hirsch will contact the school committee to discuss this matter and maybe select one school as a pilot program.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207724: That the Director of SomerPromise discuss with this Council, the anticipated closure of Freedom School this summer.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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