



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

6:00 PM

Others present: Susan Yerkes – Director of Parks and Recreation, Karin Carroll – Director of Health and Human Services, Nicholas Salerno – Election Commissioner, Hannah Carrillo – Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Gomez Mouakad and adjourned at 7:04 PM on a roll call vote of 3 in favor (Councilors Strezo, Pineda Neufeld and Gomez Mouakad), none against and none absent.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Beatriz Gomez Mouakad , Vice Chair Judy Pineda Neufeld and Kristen Strezo

1. Committee Minutes
(ID # [22-1625](#)) Approval of the Equity Committee Minutes of September 19, 2022.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

AYE: Chairperson Gomez Mouakad, Vice Chair Pineda Neufeld and City Councilor At Large Strezo

Equity

2. Order
(ID # [22-1884](#)) By Councilor Strezo, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Clingan, Councilor Davis, Councilor Ewen-Campen, Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Kelly, Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Scott and Councilor Wilson

That the Director of Parks and Recreation eliminate equity barriers for residents signing up for recreation programs.

Councilor Strezo explained that she brought this item forward after hearing reports that some constituents could not sign up online for programs, even free ones, if there was an outstanding balance due for participation in any program. Subsequently, she was informed that teens could sign up in person at the Rec center. Director Yerkes stated that her staff has contacted the vendor about the online issues and staff has been instructed to permit teens to sign up in person. A note about the glitch has been posted on the Parks and Recreation website. Councilor Strezo would like this item to remain in committee until it is finally resolved. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked that information regarding programs and activities be provided in different languages.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Order
(ID # [22-1571](#))

By Councilor Strezo

That this Council's Committee on Equity, Gender, Seniors, Families and Vulnerable Populations hold a public hearing to discuss the feasibility of conducting CORI and SORI checks for Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

Chair Gomez Mouakad noted that a public hearing will be advertised for a later date.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

4. Order
(ID # [22-1598](#))

By Councilor Wilson

That the Election Commissioner update this Council on the September 6, 2022 primary, including the number of voters moved to the List of Inactive Voters prior to this election and the number of affirmations signed by voters on the List of Inactive Voters, with comparisons to prior years.

Commissioner Salerno said that the Election Department expected there to be a large number of inactive voters for the recent elections. Last January, a mailing went out to collect census data, and normally, a follow up would be made in March to attempt to contact those who did not return the census information, however, that process was delayed by the redistricting of the city's precincts (which was approved in December of 2021). As a result, the voting roster ended up with an inordinate number of inactive voters. To alleviate the concerns of those who found themselves on the inactive voting list, the Election Department put in place a process to correct this for the November election. Commissioner Salerno made it clear, that at no time was anyone denied voting in the September election because of being listed as inactive.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

5. Order
(ID # [22-1717](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad

That the Director of the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs provide an update on the proposed 5-year language plan and how this plan will be implemented in the next five years.

No staff was available to discuss this item.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

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6. Order
(ID # [22-0671](#))
- By Councilor Gomez Mouakad and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Parks and Recreation report on enrollment processes, communications, matriculation data, staffing and programs offered in the past five years.
- Chair Gomez Mouakad commented that the data indicated that there are inequities in programming activities and she would like to determine where the outreach problems lie. Director Yerkes will look into this and noted that it might take some time to collect and analyze 5 years' worth of data.
- RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**
7. Order
(ID # [22-0471](#))
- By Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Chief of Police provide this Council, in writing, data from FY 2021 for all traffic citations, outcomes of those citations, and any collected demographic data.
- Liaison Carrillo explained that this item had already been discussed by the committee.
- RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED**
8. Order
(ID # [22-1298](#))
- By Councilor Strezo and Councilor Pineda Neufeld
That the Director of Health and Human services discuss the potential effects of the recent Supreme Court ruling on Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health on Somerville women, pregnant women, pregnant people and reproductive health.
- Councilor Strezo introduced this item and commented that there's much that can be done on the local level to address reproductive health issues. Director Carroll stated that there are a lot of ongoing concerns about this topic and said that MA legislation codifies protection for people accessing reproductive services. She went on to say that HHS staff meets weekly with Tufts and that Tufts administration felt that it didn't warrant making any changes to their policies, but they agreed to continue to monitor the situation. Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) was contacted to find out what they're seeing and they are also partnering with Somerville High School to inform students of the programs available to them. HHS has secured a medical (and MPH) intern to help the department look at the demographics of the city. Data will be analyzed and re[productive service locations will be mapped. The report is expected to be completed this December. Director Carroll said Tufts is using a vending machine to dispense emergency contraception products and the city is looking to possibly include those products in its vending machines, as well.
- Councilor Strezo expressed her thanks to Director Carroll for the HHS staff's work on this matter. Chair Gomez Mouakad asked if SOIA has encountered differences from people from out of state whose laws may be
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different from those here in MA and Director Carroll replied that she has not heard that from SOIA but will look into it.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

9. Order
(ID # [22-1272](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan

That the ADA Coordinator deliver a list of ADA complaints received from members of the public in FY 2021 and FY 2022.

Discussed with 22-1277

The Office of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) is working toward implementation of a new system, FileVine, to track ADA complaints. This system will allow reports to be pulled when specific requests for information are made. Once the FileVine system is fully functional, the ADA coordinator will begin working with city staff who previously received ADA complaints to input them into the new system. RSJ will provide the information requested in this item as soon as it is able, understanding this process will take time to complete. Since the last meeting of this committee, there have not been any additional complaints filed via the online ADA Complaint form.

Chair Gomez Mouakad would like to have a timeline for when this will be up and running so that the committee may close out the item.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

10. Order
(ID # [22-1277](#))

By Councilor Scott and Councilor Clingan

That the ADA Coordinator provide a status on requests for Braille transcription of materials.

Discussed with 22-1272

Perkins School for the Blind Library has been transcribing materials for meetings of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities for a constituent since August of 2022. The ADA Coordinator has not received any additional requests for city meetings or events. In addition, the Office of Racial and Social Justice (RSJ) is working with Library staff to thoroughly research the procurement process associated with purchasing and operating a Braille machine for public purposes. RSJ and Libraries are committed to establishing the best path forward in order to ensure the city can deliver the best and most accurate Braille printing for constituents in need. RSJ will keep this committee apprised of new developments as they are made available.

Chair Gomez Mouakad would like to have a timeline for when this will be up and running so that the committee may close out the item.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

11. Order
(ID # [22-0277](#))

By Councilor Gomez Mouakad, Councilor Pineda Neufeld, Councilor Kelly, Councilor Burnley Jr., Councilor Strezo and Councilor Wilson
That the Director of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with SomerViva, provide a plan for preventive medicine clinics for immigrant communities.

Chair Gomez Mouakad submitted this item because many immigrants come here without having proper medical care and she would like that community to understand the importance of having preventive and primary care. Director Carroll explained that HHS looks for opportunities to provide a medical home for immigrants when they run flu clinics, for example. She would like to determine how to have an ongoing plan to connect immigrants with regular medical care. HHS is partnering with the Somerville Homeless Coalition and CHA. Staff is also tracking information about who has/has not been boosted for COVID so that targeted outreach may be done, especially for seniors. The state will be releasing this data in the near future. HHS has met with multiple agencies to secure their help with the process of finding those most at risk and to provide translation services. Chair Gomez Mouakad suggested having information sessions in different languages to explain why it's important to obtain proper medical care.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED