



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Rodent Issues Special Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 30, 2023

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom, called to order by Chair Kelly at 6:02 pm and adjourned at 6:44 pm with a roll call vote of all in favor (Councilor McLaughlin, Councilor Wilson, and Chair Kelly), none opposed, and none absent.

Others present: Colin Zeigler - ISD, Nicholas Antanavica - ISD, Alicia Privett - ISD, Stephanie Widzowski - Clerk of Committees.

Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Charlotte Kelly, Vice Chair Jake Wilson and Matthew McLaughlin

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [23-0841](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Rodent Issues Special Committee Meeting of May 23, 2023.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

AYE: Chairperson Kelly, Vice Chair Wilson and Ward One City Councilor McLaughlin

2. Order (ID # [23-1761](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Inspectional Services address the rodent holes around the East Branch Library.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

3. Order (ID # [23-1724](#))

By Councilor Kelly, Councilor Wilson, Councilor McLaughlin and Councilor Clingan
That the Director of Inspectional Services update this Council on the progress of rodent mitigation.

Environmental Health Manager Colin Zeigler and Environmental Health Coordinator Alicia Privett shared a presentation. Some highlights were the results of Phase II of the SMART pilot - which saw drastic reduction in rat captures around Davis Square - an overview of violations issued in 2023, and the residential rodent assistance program. Residential violations were issued much more frequently in 2023 than commercial, and the residential program was extended from 3 weeks to 7 weeks. Signups are moving to the CitizenServe portal.

Councilor McLaughlin asked whether there are still fines for chewed trash barrels, to which the answer was no. Dir. Antanavica said that if the damage is due to rodent issues, the barrels can be transferred through DPW. Councilor McLaughlin also asked about what kinds of overgrowth are violations. Dir. Antanavica said that growth that hinders access or could harbor rodents or other activities are grounds for violation, and it usually comes from more than a couple months of neglect. Councilor McLaughlin asked about the dry ice program, for which the contract starts December 1. Dir. Antanavica said that eligible properties still need to be identified and that the criteria for those will be added to an information packet. Dir. Antanavica also described the process for responding to constituent calls.

Councilor Wilson asked about other ideas for outreach and whether the city will monitor how New York City's rodent birth control pilot unfolds. Dir. Antanavica said that rodent birth control may be considered again in the future.

Chair Kelly asked whether the carbon monoxide program applies to commercial properties. Mr. Zeigler said that this program is just residential, but commercial may be added in the future. Chair Kelly also asked where SMART boxes will be reallocated, and Mr. Zeigler said that data on new hotspots is not finalized yet. Dir. Antanavica said that they are looking at a smaller extension than initially planned for FY24, and they want to make sure extra investment is the correct choice.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Order
(ID # [23-0890](#))

By Councilor McLaughlin
That the Director of Inspectional Services inspect the narrow alleyway near the Edgerly School for rodent activity and take appropriate measures.

Dir. Antanavica said that ISD is coordinating with DPW to come up with a plan for rodent activity around schools.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Referenced Documents:

- Rodent - 2023-11-30 Winter Rodent Committee Update (with 23-1724)