



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

6:00 PM

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chair Scott and adjourned at 7:16 pm with a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Strezo, Mbah, Ewen-Campen and Scott), none opposed, and none absent.

Councilor Mbah arrived at 6:03 and Councilor Strezo arrived at 6:48.

Others present: Angela Allen - Chief Procurement Officer, Colin Zeigler - Environmental Health Manager, Brendan Salisbury - Legislative and Policy Analyst, Matthew Zaino - Deputy Director of Inspectional Services, Cynthia Amara - City Solicitor, Jacqueline Stagnari - Traffic and Parking Project Manager, Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

Present: Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen and Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis

Absent: City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah and City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [25-1442](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of September 8, 2025.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Strezo

2. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1407](#)) Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to raise the sound business practices and written quote contract thresholds under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B for city contracts with certified disadvantaged businesses.

Chief Procurement Officer Angela Allen reviewed the attachment HRP-Procurement, explaining the proposal, which includes several changes: raising the contract threshold from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for contracts with certified disadvantaged businesses, allowing Somerville to rely on certifications from organizations that mirror the Commonwealth or City of Boston rather than creating its own program, raising the threshold for quoted contracts from \$10,000 up to \$50,000, and increasing the simplified acquisition threshold from \$50,000 to \$250,000.

Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that the proposal would streamline

procurement, allowing contracts under \$20,000 with a known supplier to bypass competitive quotes and limiting certain contracts to certified disadvantaged businesses if at least three vendors are identified. She said this approach helps level the playing field and support smaller businesses. Councilor Mbah agreed and asked how many disadvantaged businesses are currently registered. Director Allen responded that several certified businesses already work with the City and explained that the proposal would simplify procurement by allowing quotes from at least three certified vendors, with awards based on meeting requirements at the lowest cost.

In response to a question from Councilor Davis, Chief Officer Allen said there is no exact plan yet but cited Boston's experience and suggested an audit. Chair Scott added that the proposal would shorten the procurement process and Chief Officer Allen noted that the language mirrors Cambridge's home rule petition and that Boston has shared its vendor list to reduce the burden of creating a local one.

Legislative and Policy Analyst Brendan Salisbury raised concerns that the language could imply a Somerville-specific certification process. He also shared a concern previously expressed by the City Clerk that, under the current language, the certification process could fall to her office. Director Allen clarified that the proposal allows for a future Somerville program while providing flexibility to use other certified vendors. Councilor Davis observed that the proposal mixes two concepts: a formal Somerville certification process and accepting businesses verified elsewhere, with the latter feeling less structured. Chief Officer Allen explained that flexibility is needed because only two certifying entities exist in Massachusetts, and even non-certified businesses would require verification.

Analyst Salisbury suggested editing section one from "or by virtue of Somerville" to "by virtue of certification by another agency with similar standards." Chair Scott emphasized keeping the Home Rule Petition language broad. Solicitor Amara noted that language changes would require time but confirmed that the HRP allows Somerville to establish a structured certification process in the future, clarifying that certification will be a multi-step process.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

3. Mayor's Request (ID # [25-1429](#)) Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to raise the maximum amount of fines for violations allowed by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 21D.

Colin Zeigler, Environmental Manager, noted that Boston passed a similar Home Rule Petition in 2024. He explained that the proposal does not immediately change maximum fines for violations but would allow the City to restructure them over time. Councilor Davis noted that low fines limit the City's ability to respond to constituents' concerns. Councilor Mbah asked

which violation categories are the most significant and about the current fine structure. Manager Zeigler clarified that the proposal is intended to issue larger fines for major violations, not minor infractions, and that no specific fine structure exists yet, but the Home Rule Petition would allow changes in the future. Chair Scott added that any changes to fines would also require City Council approval.

Chair Scott moved to amend the second sentence from “2025” to “2027.” The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Strezo, Mbah, Ewen-Campen and Scott), 0 opposed.

In response to a question from Councilor Strezo, Matthew Zaino, Deputy Director of Inspectional Services, said that upon passage, the City would prioritize certain violations for updated fines, with rodent-related violations being high on the list. Changes to priority fines would be implemented as soon as possible after enactment.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Davis

4. Mayor's Request
(ID # [25-1460](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 7 and Section 1-11(b) of the Code of Ordinances to require notification to tenants of parking permit restrictions in transit areas.

Jacqueline Stagnari, Project Manager in the Parking Department, reviewed the document Parking Permit Restriction Notification Ordinance and noted that when the new zoning ordinance was passed in 2019, there was a restriction on parking permits for certain residences. She explained that prospective residents should be informed of these restrictions before signing a lease, ensuring they are aware they may not be eligible for a parking permit.

Chair Scott stated that this aligns with the original intent of the zoning ordinance and applies to by-right projects, which are largely residential. Councilor Ewen-Campen spoke in support. Councilor Davis clarified that the policy does not grant residents the ability to obtain a permit but ensures they are notified of the restriction before committing to a lease.

Legislative and Policy Analyst Brendan Salisbury suggested editing the document to prevent misinterpretation of the intent of section 1-11(b) and make it clear that it would not replace all of the existing language but would instead add to it.

Chair Scott moved to amend the preamble to the amendment of Section

1-11(b) from “as follows” to “by inserting the following”. The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Strezo, Mbah, Ewen-Campen and Scott), 0 opposed.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED AS AMENDED

AYE: Ward Two City Councilor Scott, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Mbah, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Six City Councilor Davis