



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 20, 2014

### REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Katjana Ballantyne	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Vice Chair	Present	

Others present: Omar Boukili, George Proakis, Matt Buckley, Oliver Sellers-Garcia

#### **Public Hearing re: Plastic Bag Reduction Techniques**

Several members of the public spoke in favor of reducing the use of plastic bags and suggested that the city look at how California is dealing with this issue. A representative of Sav-Mor liquors explained the reasons why customers prefer using plastic bags. Chairman Ballantyne read 2 emails into the record from residents who could not attend the public hearing. The Public Hearing was closed at 6:20 PM.

Chairman Ballantyne and Alderman Niedergang support a complete ban on plastic bags.

**196628 - That the City Solicitor provide this Board with information regarding plastic bag reduction techniques utilized in other MA municipalities, as well as whether the city can place a deposit fee on such bags or regulate their use to contain free advertisers.:**

Mr. Buckley stated that it was suggested he follow Brookline's model when developing the ordinance. Chairman Ballantyne's motion to ban plastic bags was approved.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**197490 - That the Director of Sustainability and Environment appear before this Board's Committee on Environment and Energy on his plans for the coming year.:**

Mr. Sellers-Garcia spoke about the initiatives launched in Somerville, noting partnerships with companies on new technologies relating to energy efficiencies. Initiatives include being carbon neutral, (NetZero), by 2050, performing a greenhouse gas inventory to better understand what the City needs to do to eliminate the gas, using energy efficient LED street lights, utilizing temperature control systems in the high school, replacing indoor school lights with LED lighting,

piloting electric stations in public lots and pursuing more robust energy efficient programs for the community such as roof top solar panels.

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**197848 - That the Director of SPCD, the City Engineer, the Director of Finance, the Chief Assessor and the Director of Sustainability research incentives to encourage property owners to install permeable surfaces instead of blacktop, to reduce storm water run-off and the urban heat island effect.:**

Mr. Boukili, Mr. Proakis and Mr. Sellers-Garcia spoke on a proposal that added a requirement that no division could increase run offs to the street or a neighbor's lot. The committee discussed landscaped areas, pervious areas and water separation in the sewer system. Members also discussed possible financial incentives for not having tarred driveways and payments for de-paving. Michael Ripple, resident and member of the Mystic River Watershed Association, (MyRWA), spoke about alleviating flooding by reducing the percentage of area covered by asphalt/concrete surfaces to provide a healthier environment.

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**197849 - That the Director of SPCD (Planning and ISD) report to this Board on enforcement of the pervious surfaces ordinances, and consider providing incentives to property owners to reduce the amount of concrete and asphalt and replace it with pervious surfaces.:**

Mr. Proakis will work with ISD to send a reminder letter to residents regarding the process for paving their property.

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**197851 - That the Administration develop a comprehensive de-paving plan for city properties, especially school playgrounds, to alleviate flooding by reducing the 73% of Somerville that is covered by concrete, asphalt or other impervious surfaces.:**

Alderman Niedergang feels that the playgrounds at the Healey and Winter Hill Schools would be a great place to start the potential of de-paving school yards and believes this initiative would be a good public relations issue. Mr. Boukili will contact the Superintendent of Schools to explore ideas for re-designing the school yards.

**RESULT:****KEPT IN COMMITTEE**