



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

6:00 PM

This meeting was held via Zoom and was called to order by Chair Davis at 6:03pm and adjourned at 6:28 pm with a roll call vote of 4 in favor (Councilors Scott, Ewen-Campen, Mbah, Davis), none opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor Burnley).

Others present: Neha Singh – Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Nicholas Antanavica - Director of Inspectional Services, Brendan Salisbury - Legislative and Policy Analyst, Natasha Frazier – Assistant Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

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

Absent: City Councilor At Large Willie Burnley Jr.

Committee Minutes
(ID # [24-0984](#))

Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of June 24, 2024.

RESULT: ACCEPTED

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

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

Mayor's Request
(ID # [24-0716](#))

Requesting ordainment of an amendment to the Code of Ordinances to add Sections 8-375 through 8-381 to promote and enforce safer construction practices.

Director Antanavica stated that the goal of this item is to ensure that prospective contractors are aware of these requirements and know what they are supposed to be doing to fulfill them. Councilor Ewen-Campen stated that his questions and concerns with this item were addressed at the previous meeting. Councilor Mbah asked whether there was prior policy regarding these matters within the City. Director Antanavica stated that these policies are relatively recent within ISD's across the state and that this is a response to an increase in accidents that have been occurring. Director Antanavica further stated that he believes these regulations were not in place before because projects used to move at a slower pace, but new technology is enabling a faster pace for projects which poses more safety issues. This item would help ensure contractors prioritize safety for their projects amidst

increased safety concerns.

Councilor Scott asked questions about homeowner licensure requirements under the building code and how the policies in the ordinance impact homeowners wanting to work on their properties in Somerville, which often are not single-family homes. Director Antanavica provided an overview of the circumstances in which stamped safety plans are required for home construction. He also discussed requirements regarding designated safety officers for both smaller scale and commercial projects.

Councilor Scott sought clarity about how this item is not duplicative and whether there are enforcement capabilities. Director Antanavica stated that ISD discussed this item with the legal department and that it is intended to be educational and encourage safety rather than be punitive. If a compliant plan is not submitted, the City can issue stop-work orders and not issue building permits. However, because OSHA is a federal regulation, the City will not be able to cite a specific OSHA regulation as a citable offense. Therefore, this is intended to be an encouraging measure.

Chair Davis summarized this item by stating that nothing in this ordinance creates additional obligations beyond the federal and state regulations that already exist. Rather, these requirements are already in place and contractors are already required to fulfill them. He said that this ordinance helps ISD ensure that unsafe work does not continue. Director Antanavica agreed with this summary.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

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

ABSENT: City Councilor At Large Burnley Jr.

Mayor's
Communication
(ID # [24-0693](#))

Conveying the Surveillance Technology Impact Report for exterior cameras at fire stations.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE PLACED ON FILE**