



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

May 22, 2017

### REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

| Attendee Name      | Title             | Status  | Arrived |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| John M. Connolly   | Chair             | Present |         |
| Mary Jo Rossetti   | Vice Chair        | Absent  |         |
| Matthew McLaughlin | Ward One Alderman | Present |         |

Others present: Alderman Marc Niedergang, Brad Rawson - OSPCD, Lt. James Polito - SPD, Tom Lamar - Bicycle Committee, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 5:30 PM by Alderman Connolly and adjourned at 6:40 PM.

#### Approval of the April 5, 2017 Minutes

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>ACCEPTED</b> |
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**201794: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on measures to design streets and bike lanes, and educate drivers and bicyclists, to increase safety with respect to the door-opening zone for parked cars.**

Lt. Polito spoke about the "Dutch Reach" and training for motorist. Chairman Connolly and Alderman Niedergang have been very active to make sure information is shared with the community about bike safety. Alderman Niedergang distributed a flyer that is sent to Somerville drivers requesting to renew their parking permits.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202182: That the Chief of Police or the Director of SPCD report to this Board on plans to educate motorists about using the "Dutch Reach" to open the driver's door as a way to avoid "dooring" cyclists.**

The committee discussed ways to educate the community and what other communities are doing to educate their residents. Alderman Niedergang suggested that the Police Department work with the Community Engagement Department to develop a video or production to be used to educate the public about bicycle safety. Chairman Connolly's motion that the Executive

Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (Transportation and Infrastructure) work with the Bicycle Committee and the Police Department to utilize various social media formats to develop a video to enhance bicycle safety measures, was approved.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**202625: That the Director of SPCD develop and report to this Board an outreach campaign to start in the spring of 2017, to educate motorists about using the “Dutch Reach” to open the driver’s side door to avoid “dooring” cyclists.**

Members discussed which groups should be educated first. Mr. Rawson is starting to compile data on crashes relating to bicycles to help the police know where to increase enforcement. Members were told that all 4th graders in Somerville schools receive some sort of bike safety awareness. The Bicycle Committee sends out monthly emails regarding safety and also uses Facebook to get its message out. Mr. Rawson spoke about a \$50,000 grant from MassDot to be used in East Somerville. Further details regarding this grant will be discussed at the Ward 1 ResiStat meeting.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**202991: That Directors of SPCD and Traffic and Parking report to this Board on the current policy, or plans, to include bicycle safety education materials in parking permit renewal mailings, and involve this Board and the Bicycle Committee to develop or expand such a program.**

There were conversations about "rules of the road" announcements coming soon with sign boards and local vendors with monthly giveaways to help encourage bike safety. The usual sign boards will go up this week reminding motorists about bike safety. Chairman Connolly spoke about an article describing Boston’s identification of its most active locations for bike accidents and asked if this type of information is available about Somerville. He suggested a collaboration between the Traffic and Parking and Police Departments to obtain the data. Lt. Polito stated that the average number of accidents involving bicycles in the city is 55-60 per month.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**202776: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services, with the assistance of other departments as necessary, forward to this Board’s Committee on Public Health and Safety a list of AirBnB-type lodging facilities in the city.**

Ms. Connor received updates from ISD on 20 complaints. Twenty properties investigated and 5 properties were discontinued for AirBnB type lodging. Ms. Connor told members that investigating the properties is time intensive and that there is a need for public education, since some property owners are unaware of the permits and other documentation needed to run short-term lodging. The city of Cambridge is sharing information with Ms. Connor on their efforts on this matter.

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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**202782: That the Supervisor of Inspectional Services and the Chief Fire Engineer report to this Board on the cause of the fire at 8-10 Appleton Street, including whether the Airbnb rental there was in compliance with city and state laws, and whether it played any role in the cause of the fire.**

Ms. Connor told the members that she spoke with the Chief Fire Engineer and it was determined that the fire may have been caused by a cigarette was not properly disposed of.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> |
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| <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**202801: That the Administration advise this Board on the proposed state regulation of Airbnb properties, and options the city might have for taxation and regulation.**

This item will be discussed when the Administration completes its proposal on the matter.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> |
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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203259: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services provide a list of all fines issued to the Cobble Hill Plaza since January 2016.**

Ms. Connor reported that ISD had 3 complaints regarding this property and that no tickets were issued. There was one in 2014 for overflowing dumpster and an additional inspection on May 19th. Alderman McLaughlin stated that he has complained three times himself about the broken windows and other issues. Chairman Connolly suggested that the Superintendent of Inspectional Services speak with the City Solicitor's Office about legal actions and the owner's lack of response to the city's requests regarding the property.

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| <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**203260: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services continue to fine the owner(s) of the abandoned Cobble Hill Plaza for neglecting the property.**

See item 203259

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| <b>RESULT:</b> |
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| <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203285: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services issue citations at 32 Webster Avenue for code violations, and direct the owner to clean and repair the property.**

Mr. Mallard, who owns the property with his aunt and uncle, told the committee that he received a notice on May 2nd from the city. He stated that he has been in constant contact with the city regarding this property. He has applied for a demolition permit for this property, (permit #D17-00021), and has submitted forms to the Historical Preservation Commission. He has also been in contact with the Ward 2 Alderman. Mr. Mallard said that he has addressed the overgrown brush and boarded up the 3rd floor windows and is hoping to renovate the property in the fall.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>WORK COMPLETED</b> |
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**Handouts:**

- Bike Safety Material (with 201794, 202991)
- Photo (with 203285)