



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 15, 2015

REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Mark Niedergang	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Alderman At Large	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Robert J. McWatters	Ward Three Alderman	Absent	
Tony Lafuente	Ward Four Alderman	Present	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Ward Six Alderman	Absent	
Dennis M. Sullivan	Alderman At Large	Present	
John M. Connolly	Alderman At Large	Absent	

Others present: Rob King - Capital Projects, George Proakis - OSPCD, David Shapiro - Law, Oliver Sellers-Garcia - OSE, Steve Mackey - Chamber of Commerce, Ben Weiner - SavMor Liquors, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Alderman Rossetti and adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Document List:

- Draft Ordinance (198251)

198251: Assistant City Solicitor submitting a proposed Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance.

198251

Mr. Sellers-Garcia discussed the use of petroleum and natural gas in the production of plastic bags. He also discussed how different bags are produced and how reusable bags are classified, adding that some plastic bags could be reusable. Mr. Weiner stated his concern regarding using paper bags in the rain.

Alderman Lafuente spoke about shopping habits and is in full support of a total ban on plastic bags. He does not anticipate any hardships for the business community. Alderman Heuston suggested that seniors be provided with reusable bags. Alderman Ballantyne spoke about Stop and Shop bags and how one knows what a bag is “predominately” made of. She would like to

see samples of various bags along with pricing information. Alderman Sullivan is interested in exemptions for small businesses and said that the ban could be a disadvantage to the immigrant community. Mr. Mackey explained how small businesses are exempted in other municipalities and suggested giving 12 months notice before any implementation. Alderman White suggested that OSE provide language for the ordinance along with a list of allowable bags. He asked that further regulations be promulgated to define what is considered a reusable bag. Alderman Niedergang would like the proposed ordinance to be passed soon and to take effect of the 1st day of the month, 6 months after passage. Alderman McLaughlin does not believe that a thicker bag is the answer and would like to provide alternatives. He does not believe that the proposed ordinance will be enforced, adding that if a ban is implemented, he would like a total ban with hardship exemptions. Members of the public would like to assist with educating businesses about the proposed changes.

Alderman Niedergang's motion to delete "February 1, 2016" from the first sentence in Section 4 and to leave the effective date blank, for now, was approved.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198398: That this Board's Committee on Legislative Matters review the current pervious surfaces ordinances for their effectiveness and sufficiency.

Mr. Proakis discussed pervious surfaces calculations, urban lot development, landscaped areas in parking lots, environmental benefits of landscaping, the green score system and green roofs. Alderman Lafuente inquired why water from roofs can't be channeled into the ground and Mr. King spoke about the various ways to control storm water on roofs. Alderman Ballantyne asked about storm water runoff on specific lots and whether 100% pervious surfaces could be required. Alderman Heuston expressed her concerns relative to requirements being codified and doubts that guidelines could be enforced. She asked if the new ordinance would cover municipal buildings and spoke about how zoning districts would be treated differently. Alderman Niedergang would like the city to take on a de-paving initiative and asked why green roofs aren't required. Mr. Proakis assured members that many of the concerns would be addressed in the zoning overhaul.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

198630: Clint Richmond submitting comments re: the plastic bag ban.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE