



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 24, 2018

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Present	

Others present: Deputy Chief Stephen Carrabino - SPD, Sgt. John Gobiell - SPD, Joseph Teves - SPD, Meredith Willis - SPD, Doug Kress - HHS, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Wig Zamore, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 7:15 PM by Chairman Clingan and adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Approval of the May 14, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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204128: That the Administration convene a meeting to discuss airplane noise, similar to a meeting being held in Cambridge, and include congressional representatives, the state delegation, elected city officials and city staff.

Mr. Zamore reported that a meeting was held last week and that MassPort hired a staff person to act as the full-time liaison to municipalities. Chairman Clingan inquired about MassPort's window replacement program and Mr. Zamore stated that the noise in Somerville doesn't reach the decibel threshold for program. Alderman McLaughlin commented that he only recently received complaints about the airplane noise.

Mr. Zamore also reported that the World Health Organization published a paper last year regarding systematic noise that stated that people are more bothered by noise from planes than noise from rail. The report will be forwarded to the committee.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204852: That the Chief of Police report to this Board, the current approach for enforcing laws relating to cell phone use while driving, and any relevant studies regarding the

prevalence of such use in the city.

Sgt. Gobieli spoke about the grants received by the Police Department and the purposes for which those funds are used, e.g., conducting mobilization drives for distracted drivers. In 2017, there were 832 documented traffic stops, of which 64 were for distracted driving. In 2018, federal funding was cut and there were 700 documented stops, of which only 1 was for distracted driving. Outside of the grant enforcement, there were 10 citations issued as a result of regular patrols. As it stands now, it's expected that funding will be restored in 2019.

Sgt. Gobieli is attempting to have officers issue citations under the distracted driving law rather than for texting. He stated that although most people think the law refers to texting while driving, it actually prohibits all phone use, including GPS, when operating a motor vehicle - even when stopped at a red light.

Chairman Clingan asked Sgt. Gobieli to provide a written response to this item.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204948: That the Administration explore additional pedestrian safety strategies for crosswalks when the crossing signs have to be removed during winter.

Ms. Connor told the committee that Mr. Rawson, from OSPCD, is preparing a written response.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205193: That the Director of Traffic and Parking explain whether it is possible to program alternative LED patterns for blinking STOP signs and other traffic signs.

A response was received for this item. (See item #205534)

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205366: That the Administration refrain from appointing any further candidates to the position of Reserve Firefighter and seek to discontinue use of the Fire Reserve List at the earliest possible opportunity.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205465: That the Chief of Police work with the Administration to report to this Board on the Police Department's participation in the regional COPLINK program, with regard to the city's status as a Sanctuary City.

Deputy Chief Carrabino and Ms. Willis explained that COPLINK is a database of information collected from regional police departments. The value of the program is in the sharing of information among law enforcement agencies and the programs ability to search the data by a number of variables.

Somerville Police reports may be accessed by other law enforcement agencies, including ICE, raising the concern that illegal immigrants who are law abiding could be picked up even without demonstrating any criminal behavior. Conversely, it provides ICE with the information needed to apprehend criminals. Members were told that the names of law-abiding illegal immigrants

could have been entered into the COPLINK system for a variety of reasons, e.g., having been a witness to something. The Somerville Police Department does not enter any immigration status information into COPLINK. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) agents cannot access COPLINK without the approval from the Fusion Center (run by the State Police).

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205668: That the Chief of Police report to this Board on the prioritization of crossing guard locations and on the training that crossing guards receive.

Mr. Teves spoke about crossing guards and said that one of the most important requirements is that the guard be reliable. He explained the application process, which includes a written application, personal interview, background check and drug test. Successful applicants view a short best practices video relating to the position and are made aware of the city's policies. They are then assigned to work with some of the city's best crossing guards until they are able to handle the spot on their own. Mr. Teves make daily checks of various locations. Since crossing guards are now in a union, any discipline must go through the city's Personnel process.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205697: That the Administration update this Board on a municipal ID program for all residents, including any input from local immigrant advocacy groups, residents and non-profit organizations.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205699: That the Administration share information on efforts with WAZE and other routing systems to determine how their algorithms direct traffic through Somerville.

Ms. Connor has a written response for this item.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205825: That the Administration provide an update on the range of projected revenue from recreational marijuana facilities how these funds may be used.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205826: That the Administration consider, as part of its facilities planning process and its ongoing development of programs like 311, libraries, recreation and neighborhood policing, ways to establish multi-purpose neighborhood-based service centers.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205828: That the Administration update this Board on maintaining bus shelters or installing new shelters, such as the #90 bus stop at Assembly Square.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205830: That the Chief of Police share how decisions are made to notify the public about public safety events, using 311, CTY, ConnectEd calls and emails, or other means.

Alderman Hirsh stated that some parents of school aged children are receiving calls from the School Department regarding public safety events, yet their neighbors are not. She asked if there is some coordination in place for notification and recommended that if a notice goes out to the schools, it should also go on the city's website. Ms. Connor has a written response for this item.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

205909: That the Administration, MA DEP, and Eversource explain to this Board the cause of the recent oil spill in the Mystic River near Assembly Square, the plan to clean it up, and any information residents should be aware of for safety.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205900: That the City Clerk request the MA Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative to inform this Board of any regional programs or strategies that involve Somerville.

Mr. Kress stated that Somerville is one of the cities involved in this program. He informed members that additional NARCAN has been ordered and training will be provided through other funding sources.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206292: That the Administration review all City applications and other filings on which a gender designation is required and, if not already provided, make revisions to allow a person to designate a gender other than "Male" or "Female" and to report to the Ward 6 Alderman the results of such review.

Mr. Connor reported that all city forms were examined and none of the City Clerk's forms ask for gender information. State records, however, do ask for gender information.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206429: That the Chief of Police and the Director of Health and Human Services share ways that the City or School Department can help teens or children who have witnessed a crime, trauma, or an arrest, to process the information after the event.

Mr. Kress responded to this item and said that HHS has formed a partnership with the schools and/or police. Parents may request that HHS gets involved to assist their child. Presently, there are 20 police officers in the city's schools. Alderman Hirsch asked how the determination is made to identify a child who many want to talk about something.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206426: That the Chief of Police report on the placement of crossing guards and how the location assignments get prioritized.

Most crossing guards have been at the same spot for years and unless there is a reason to make a change, they are left where they are. The posts adjacent to a school get priority and those further away become less critical. Mr. Teves will evaluate any position requested to determine the number of unaccompanied elementary school-aged children, taking into account traffic accident data, signals, signs, visibility, etc. The current staff has 54 crossing guards to cover all shifts at 45 locations.

Members were informed that DCR will not assign a crossing guard on McGrath Highway due to the bridge at Otis Street and because it's not a crossing guard situation as much as it's a traffic problem. The State Police said they would enforce traffic there, but nothing has been done. Chairman Clingan asked what the BOA could do to help the situation and also asked if a pedestrian map could be developed.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206582: That the Chief of Police report to this Board the number of times the Chief has sent a notice to landlords whose tenants have violated the provisions of Ordinance 9-97, and whether such a notice was sent to the owner of 38 Chetwynd Road for the incident on September 1, 2018.

Ms. Willis reported that the owner of the Chetwynd Road property has not been notified since the first incident. Two property owners were contacted about noise problems and criminal complaint were issued when the matter was not resolved. Tufts pay the SPD to respond to calls at these properties and the SPD has issued citations to students. Chairman Clingan asked for some data on the matter.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206585: That the Administration share a more comprehensive set of goals related to air quality based on CAFEH study results, when or if available.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206680: That a representative of the Board of Health and the Administration work with the Committee on Public Health and Public Safety to revamp the City's current ordinances and regulations for the use of tobacco and cannabis products in public places, and recommend signage and posting locations to inform the public where the consumption of those products is prohibited, with the fines for violation.

Mr. Kress stated that the city already has an ordinance on books that address this. HHS has put together new signage for buildings and public spaces and is attempting to get them produced. The School Department has asked HHS to work with them on e-cigarettes and menthol. Mr. Kress commented that 60% of children are using e-cigarettes and/or marijuana.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204451: Conveying the School Department's Security Camera Policy to this Board's Committee on Public Health and Public Safety.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204924: Legislative Liaison submitting a communication regarding the implementation of the Ordinance to Safeguard Vulnerable Road Users (aka the Sideguard Ordinance).

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205534: Traffic and Parking Director responding to various Board Orders from the 2/22/18 meeting.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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Handouts:

- Response to 205699
- Response to 205830
- Response to 206429
- Tufts Noise Data (with 206582)
- 38 Chetwynd Rd (with 206582)