



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

September 4, 2019

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Rich Raiche - IAM, Hannah Pappenheim - Law, Dan Amelin - IAM, Councilor-at-large Rossetti, Councilor-at-large Mbah, as well as representatives from National Grid and Eversource.

The meeting took place in the City Council Chamber and was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chair White and adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Approval of the May 13, 2019 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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208794: That the City Clerk invite an Eversource Electric representative to appear before the Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works at its meeting on September 4 at 6PM.

This item was referred to the Committee to address the lack of action by Eversource to coordinate its activities in Union Square with the construction schedule of the City's contractor and resulting delays. Annemarie Walsh, Community Relations with Eversource appeared before the committee. Ms. Walsh is relatively new to this area was not totally familiar with some of the requests for Somerville. Mr. Raiche stated there are now open lines of communication with Eversource and they are working double shifts including nights with a viable work plan to complete the Union Square work by September 11th, ahead of schedule. There were discussions about manhole near John's Autobody that requires RCN's attention and that there will be follow up. Ms. Walsh will share her contact information with the chair in case there are issues in the future involving Eversource.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208780: That the Director of Engineering ensure that gas leaks along Pearl Street and Washington Street are addressed before reconstruction of said streets is completed.

Mr. Raiche stated that National Grid had been ready to start the work on Pearl Street but could not due to Washington Street Bridge closure. Two representatives from National Grid, Matt Carmody and David Gendall appeared before the committee to discuss in detail the procedure that National Grid follows with regard to reviewing the status of its piping before major City road work is undertaken. Sometimes lines are replaced and other times repairs to existing piping is undertaken based on the severity of the leaks. With regard to the two pipes involved in this project, Chair White asked that new piping be installed. The representatives also discussed the manner in which National Grid responded to gas leak complaints and designated their severity. They informed the Committee that National Grid does not notify the city on the different types of gas leaks. Mr. Raiche stated he can track the types of gas leaks by the permits requested by National Grid. Under the Gas Leak Ordinance, National Grid is now required to provide information to the City with regard to these gas leaks. Ms. Massoli, a resident and member of “Mothers Outfront” was invited to speak by the Chair. Ms. Massoli described the gas leaks in her area on Pearl Street. At the request of the Chair, Mr. Raiche agreed to coordinate with representatives of National Grid to conduct a walk in the area with residents to follow up on the gas leaks, especially ones near the schools.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208687: That the Director of Public Works inform this Council of any recent challenges relative to yard waste pickup.

There was no one available to discuss this item and the chair requested that a response be sent in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208667: That a representative from Eversource appear before this Council’s Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works to discuss problems with Eversource’s work being performed in a timely manner.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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208431: Arts Council Director responding to #208276 re: Arts Council activities to bring pedestrians to Union Square and Ball Square during construction detours.

There was no one available to discuss this item and the chair requested that a response be sent in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208276: That the Director of SPCD provide a written response to #207193, for the Arts Council to host events to bring pedestrians to Union Square and Ball Square during construction detours.

There was no one available to discuss this item and the chair requested that a response be sent in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208240: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the sidewalk at 50 Dartmouth Street as it poses a significant safety hazard. (2nd request)

There was no one available to discuss this item and the chair requested that a response be sent in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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208233: That the Director of Traffic and Parking require Eversource to re-paint the bike markings once they finish their work which may have required them to dig up city roads.

Mr. Raiche stated he will talk to the staff to make sure this is a requirement that is met. Mr. Raiche stated he keeps an active list of work to be completed based on permit applications but that emergency work is a little harder to track.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207192: That the City Engineer advise this Board as to what use the city can make of the information received under the proposed gas leak ordinance, and what additional capacity would be needed to maximize that use.

Mr. Raiche stated he does not have sufficient staff to perform the work this year and is using asset management staff to prioritize road repairs. He anticipates making a request for the additional staff that he will need to utilize the data in the next fiscal year budget.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207193: That the Administration, SPCD, and Arts Council host events to bring pedestrians to the affected Union Square and Ball Square areas during construction detours.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206960: That the Commissioner of Public Works provide the Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works with the number of outstanding requests to replace defective or dangerous utility poles.

There was no one available to discuss this item and the chair requested that a response be sent in writing.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207904: That the City Solicitor update this Council as it relates to the communication received from Newport Construction Corp. on March 25, 2019.

Ms. Pappenheim stated a letter was sent on May 10, 2019 regarding this issue. She placed a call to Northern Trees and that Newport Construction denied responsibility of this matter. The

committee asked Ms. Pappenheim to file appropriate legal action. The status of legal actions against the companies will be heard at the next committee meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206959: That the Administration deem Newport Construction and Northern Tree to be “not considered responsible bidders or offerors” for 5 years, reflecting their performance on the Beacon St Reconstruction.

Ms. Pappenheim was not prepared to answer questions from the committee as she had just joined the Solicitor’s office and Attorney Grossfield who had handled the matter left the office. She did refer to a letter from Mr. Grossfield, , to the Council dated May 4, 2018 on this matter. There were discussions about the vendor’s evidence of poor performance and whether the vendor could be deemed a non-responsive bidder. Councilor Scott referred to a number of cases that he had found that would support the ability of the City of deem contractors as not responsible based on prior performance Councilor Scott stated that will send the cases to Ms. Pappenheim so that she can address them the next time the Committee discusses the item.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

Handout:

- Referenced Memo (with 206959)