



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 9, 2021

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
William A. White Jr.	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Khushbu Webber-Mayor's Office, Jessica Fosbrook-Engineering, Luisa Oliveira-OSPCD, Eric Weisman-DPW, and Jill Lathan-Parks & Recreation. There were several members from Eversource: Elizabeth Toner, Richard Dellisola, and Matt Knowles.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairperson Clingan and adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Approval of the December 1, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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209691: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services inform the Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works whether the newspaper boxes throughout the city are permitted.

Chair Clingan heard back from Mr. Antanavica that he did not have a clear path forward yet and waiting to hear back from solicitor's office. Councilor White will send a document to the solicitor office to assist with this item.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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210303: That the Commissioner of Public Works contact Eversource for an explanation of its reasoning for not having to notify homeowners when randomly installing bollards on private property.

Chair Clingan spoke to the Councilor Rossetti who put this order and who has also had discussions with Eversource. It appears that everything was done by the books to protect the equipment. The only thing in question is proper notification of residents. The individual in this circumstance was not properly notified. Question were asked "How to better serve the community when it comes to communication to the residents?" "What is the process now?" "Is there a certified letter that goes to the landlords?"

Mr. Dellisola stated there was a problem initially with notices going to tenants, not to the landlords. The tenants would give the approval. Eversource has since corrected this problem by contacting the person paying the bill. It was stated that certified letters were sent to people without any reply back.

Councilor Ballantyne asked Ms. Toner and Mr. Dellisola about the process in the City of Somerville with 65% of the residents being renters. She also stated that going back on the bills may not get you the property owners. Councilor Ballantyne suggested Eversource contact OSPCD who usually guides any development on the city and will have a list of abutters for property owners.

Mr. Dellisola will talk to whomever is the property owner and ask them if they are owners. If not, their planner will go to the next step of finding the owner.

Chair Clingan asked how many are outstanding in the city and is there a working list. Mr. Dellisola stated they had a list of 300 the beginning of last year and they are now down to 175 with a year and half of work.

Councilor White suggested Eversource contact the assessor's office who can assist with the addresses and owners to help avoid confusion.

Chair Clingan asked for next steps. Councilor Ballantyne stated they should follow the process by contacting the property owner. The due diligence is on the utility company to contact the assessor's office for proper landowner information.

Councilor Ballantyne suggested the utility companies should contact the assessor's office and the landowners.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210587: That the Commissioner of Public Works submit a recycling plan for all buildings that do not receive city solid waste collection services, pursuant to Ordinance 11-40.

Mr. Weisman has been working with ISD on a plan for commercial property that do not receive waste service for recycling. They developed a FAQ to submit their plan. There was a decision to hold off during COVID-19 and they are now ready to proceed. DPW and ISD will be working off of a list and will report back to the committee.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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210739: That the Director of Engineering and the Director of Infrastructure and Asset Management urge Eversource to fix gas leaks at 721 Somerville Avenue and nearby, as identified by HEET, and appear with Eversource staff at the next meeting of the Council's Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works to discuss this matter.

The city met previously on this issue with Mothers Out Front and the city's engineer. Ms. Toner stated they did due diligence to provide that information to the engineering team. They are actively trying to manage to respond to all the leaks in Somerville. There was a leak on White Street that was repaired that was on the cast iron. Mr. Dellisola will have his surveyor go out there tomorrow to 721 Somerville and will get back to the committee with the reading.

Mr. Dellisola asked how many trees were damaged from the supposed gas leak. Ms. Fosbrook stated HEET and Mothers Out Front may have the numbers regarding damaged trees.

Ms. Toner stated that Eversource submitted a list of Q42020 active leaks in Somerville with response time and the severity of leaks. This report was also submitted to DPU. Councilor Ballantyne has not seen the report. Chair Clingan will get the list to Councilor Ballantyne. Councilor Ballantyne asked if the report could be uploaded in MinuteTraq and they will get back to Mothers Out Front. Ms. Toner would like the information from HEET of any data they can share with Eversource.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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210829: That the Commissioner of Public Works address the streetlight outage on the entire length of Fellsway West, resulting from the work being done by DCR at Foss Park.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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210929: That the Commissioner of Public Works install lights at all playgrounds.

Mr. Weisman invited Ms. Oliveira to speak on this matter. He believes that all parks have lights. Ms. Oliveira stated that not all parks have lights. Lights are discussed in the community process. Their goal is to have safety lights. Installing lights in the playground involves cutting. The playgrounds are on a light sensor system. They are lit because of safety concerns or they are not lit because abutter expressed not to have lighting. This has already been addressed for COVID-19 at a basic safety level.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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210996: That the Director of SPCD, the Director of Parks and Recreation, or the Commissioner of Public Works discuss with this Council the installation of electrical outlets in parks, playgrounds and other public places to charge cell phones, computers, and other such equipment.

Ms. Oliveira stated that many newer parks have electrical outlets. There are many products that have cell phone chargers. Some solar panels can charge phones but also grab your geographical data. There should be electrical outlets to charge in the newer parks. Ms. Oliveira stated they are looking at other products that do not grab data and the cost of the product.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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211075: That a Representative from Eversource appear before this Council to address reports about an October 16, 2020 incident at 20 Berkeley St.

Chair Clingan stated he talked to the Ward 3 councilor. There was some work being done by a contractor and asked to gain access to the area. During the course of this work, they cut the main in the resident's home, the contractor said sorry and told the resident to file a claim with Eversource. Chair Clingan wants to discuss how this could be better.

Mr. Knowles stated work was completed on Berkley Street to retire the main in 2020. The gas inspector was Feeney Brothers and no one has any records of anything being done such as cutting electric service. Needs more details to discuss. Mr. Knowles stated the meter protection post with strict guidelines is 5 feet of driveway or street and must put in meter protection. The Feeney Brothers gain access to the basement to find the ideal spot for outside risers. Once the boiler and hot water heaters are found, they send out letters and door hangers to let the resident know they are coming to their property.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED