



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

November 24, 2014

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Absent	

Others present: Goren Smiljic, Frank Wright, Michael Glavin, Ed O'Donnell, Amanda Mayer, Omar Boukili, Evelyn Persoff, Ed Halloran (SMEA), George Proakis, Meredith Levy

196437 - That the Director of SPCD (Economic Development) report on the development of and funding for the local hiring and workforce development First Source program, and report on the outcome of FRIT's recent job fairs for Assembly Square, including Somervillians getting jobs.:

The committee heard from Mr. O'Donnell and Ms. Mayer. The city is above the national goal of local employment. Federal Realty has hosted seven career fairs and tenants at Assembly Row are committed to hiring locally. Forty percent of the ninety six management positions at Assembly Row were filled with local hires. Job training and a possible summer youth jobs program at Assembly Row were also discussed. Ms. Levy spoke about the success of the First Source program.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

197887 - That the Administration update this Board on the status of the Jobs Linkage Fee Home Rule Petition at the statehouse, and the implementation of a Job Creation and Retention Trust Fund, and share their strategy for moving it forward.:

Mr. Boukili informed the members that this item will be re-introduced in late December.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

196287 - That the Director of SPCD, the Planning Director, and the Housing Director appear before this Board for an update on raising the inclusionary housing ordinance to promote development of more affordable housing.:

Mr. Proakis discussed the challenges of inclusionary zoning and stated that a draft ordinance is a couple of weeks away.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

196366 - That the Director of SPCD submit a plan to create “Middle Class” housing.:

Mr. Glavin spoke about a working committee and the upcoming release of proposed zoning changes.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

197742 - That the Director of SPCD inform this Board about the requirements to enter the application pool for an affordable housing rental or homeownership unit, and explain the regulations that allow non-residents to apply.:

Ms. Persoff explained that, due to state and federal laws, individuals from other communities are allowed to participate in the process, noting that Somerville residents receive priority.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

196285 - That the Director of SPCD (ISD) provide this Board with an update on improvements and developments in the Inspectional Services Division, including data on new hires over the past six months.:

Mr. Smiljic discussed some of the changes that have been implemented, including online permit applications, food permitting programs, prosecution of absentee landlords and the hiring of additional support staff. Alderman Lafuente requested that a chart be provided to illustrate the improvements that were made in ISD, that a flowchart of positions/duties also be provided and that a schematic detailing the permitting process be provided. Alderman Lafuente stated that there are still problems in ISD and that morale in the department is low.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

196875 - That the City Solicitor report in September, 2014, to this Board's Committee on Housing and Community Development on whether the Somerville District Court has responded to the city's concerns with respect to enforcing code violations by absentee landlords.:

Assistant Solicitor David Shapiro will be appointed as a Special District Attorney, enabling him to prosecute cases on his own.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

197695 - That the Director of SPCD (ISD) explain the process for building permit approvals that require both ISD and Planning Department sign offs, and create a process that expedites simple applications and provides improved customer service.:

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

197155 - That the Director of SPCD and the Superintendent of ISD report to this Board with a plan to ensure prompt and coordinated responses to Board Orders, 311 call entries, emails and phone calls from Aldermen about constituent issues.:

The committee discussed salaries of health inspectors vs. building inspectors, department morale and collective bargaining.

RESULT:**WORK COMPLETED**

196188 - That the Administration work with this Board to revise the Somervision Plan to provide more detailed goals with regard to affordable housing and the creation of a mix of housing units, especially those with more than 2 bedrooms, for long-term residents of all ages.:

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

196221 - That the Director of SPCD provide SomerVision updates twice a year, broken down by ward, showing progress made in residential, affordable units, jobs, public space, trips via transit, bike and walking, and development in transformative areas.:

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

196369 - That the Director of SPCD submit a SomerVision implementation and accountability plan as described within.:

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

196368 - That the Director of SPCD submit a plan on the use of city owned properties as it relates to projected growth identified in the SomerVision Plan.:

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

197475 - That the Administration discuss with DCR, an agreement by which the City takes joint control of the DCR park area from Shore Drive to the riverbank so the City can maintain that area for the benefit and protection of its residents.:

RESULT:**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

197983 - That the Director of SPCD determine if Central Hill Playground is on a renovation list for the coming fiscal year and inform the Ward 3 Alderman of future plans for the park.:

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE