



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

October 25, 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	Absent	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

Councilor-at-Large William White was not in attendance due to attending Rules Meeting.

Others present: Hannah Carrillo-Mayor's Office, Eric Weisman-DPW, Brian Postlewaite-Engineering, Nick Antanavica-ISD, Jill Lathan-DPW, Joel Diagostino-Eversource, Elizabeth Toner-Eversource, Jean Hortsman-resident, Randi Soltysiak-Mothers Out Front and Karina Wilkinson-Mothers Out Front.

The meeting was held virtually and was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Chairperson Clingan and adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Approval of the September 27, 2021 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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ISD

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.

Mr. Antanavica stated that under the current ordinance, you need a certificate of compliance. He also stated there are no current licenses that have been issued. They are trying to track down the owners of the newspaper boxes. There are several provisions that talk about abandonment and they will have DPW remove the boxes. Mr. Antanavica will get the process going within the next couple of months and will update the committee in writing once the process has started.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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DPW

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 stated they worked with ISD to get a list of all the dumpster permits in the city to contact in emails. The communication will go out this week as well to large apartment complexes within the next few days.

Councilor Ballantyne asked that large apartment building owners be required to provide recycling options for tenants of buildings or condo owners. Mr. Weisman stated the letter will require owners of buildings to submit a recycling plan to commissioner of DWP with a link to include their plan. He also confirmed that buildings with 6 or fewer apartments can use the city's usual dumpster service.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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211449: That the Administration create clean, safe, and permanent public restrooms in several outdoor locations, similar to the "Portland Loos" that have been installed in Cambridge.

Ms. Lathan provided an overview of the process and stated Portland Loos are custom made. She stated they need to collaborate with Engineering, ISD, DPW and work with purchasing for a contract. Each unit, including installation is about \$200,000. They are looking into locations at Davis Square and Foss Park. The city owned parking lot area in Union Square could be an additional location in the future. Two locations will cost about \$400,000. The next step is working with purchasing to develop the scope and put out to bid.

Chair Clingan asked how many companies make this type of unit. Ms. Lathan stated that the Portland Loos is leading the charge in this area.

Councilor Ballantyne asked if the intent is for public restrooms. She asked about the frequency of use and who are the target audience for this request. Councilor Ballantyne stated that the city should look at the new public library in Davis Square as an option, as well as the Baptist Church building across the street. She asked additional questions about overnight usage and who would be the target audience. Are there certain times of the days for frequency? Does it have to be this particular model and/or other models to consider? Councilor Ballantyne also suggested using the restroom at Foss Park pool area. Ms. Lathan stated the pool is only accessible during the summer. Councilor Ballantyne suggested the city look at the city owned buildings for restrooms. Ms. Lathan will continue to work with purchasing on scope and finance on potential funding source. The chair will talk to Councilor Ewen-Campen on this matter.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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212321: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace all the open garbage cans in city parks and on the Community Path with closed rat-proof garbage cans.

Mr. Weisman stated he received a quote from Big Belly who proposed to break up the parks into small and big parks. The small parks need 14 small containers and will cost \$80,000 and larger parks will cost \$710,000 for a total of \$790,000.

The chair asked if there are barrels that are rat resistant. Mr. Weisman stated that someone had concerns about the handles on the barrels regarding rats climbing into it.

He will come up with a plan where it makes the most sense to have the barrels. Additionally, Mr. Weisman would like to work with the newly hired rat czar on options for barrels.

Councilor Ballantyne asked why Big Belly barrels vs. any other design that may be out there on the market. Are they doing what we want them to do. Mr. Weisman stated Big Belly offers technology to collecting trash and compacting the trash for a smaller footprint.

Councilor Ballantyne asked what is the advantage to compacting the trash. Is there a wash maintenance for barrels? Mr. Weisman stated there is a quote to clean the entire fleet of Big Belly trash compactors which can be carefully power washed and the baskets inside can be swapped out.

The chair sponsored a resident, Ms. Horstman, who talked about the cost and timeliness of figuring this out for the barrels. She also talked about kids and city employees being exposed to rat feces. Chair Clingan asked how many barrels are around the city. Mr. Weisman stated we have about 280 non-big belly and not sure how many Big Belly units. Big Belly quoted 109 barrels would cost \$791,364 and to replace everything city wide legacy barrels would cost \$1.5M.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Mobility/Housekeeping

211595: That the Director of Mobility and the Commissioner of Public Works work with the State Delegation to remove the hostile architecture public benches from the Davis Square MBTA station.

Ms. Carrillo was not able to provide an update on this item. Chair Clingan would like a response from the MBTA.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Eversource

212225: That Eversource representatives be requested to appear before the next meeting of this Council's Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works to respond to the gas leak data along Somerville Avenue.

Mr. Postlewaite stated they had a visit with Eversource helping to better understand the natural conditions. Understanding the specifics of the testing systems work. A couple of elements where the diversity of places were non-pipeline issues. They do know there much older 48-inch sewer pipe that is very deep, under the railroad and looking to see if there is any work needed on the city side. He stated there is different technology to repairing and maintaining gas lines. There is also concerns that may not include perfectly clean materials in the past.

Ms. Toner and Mr. Diagostino from Eversource appeared before the committee to address the city's concerns.

Mr. Diagostino talked about the holes drilled near the car wash that were probed and the tree lawns. There were a lot of non-pipe gas line readings. They drilled some deeper holes and still saw very low gas readings as non-pipe line gas. They are planning to meet to do more

investigative work using the robotic system discussed at the previous meeting. There were some readings of natural gas through their findings.

The chair sponsored members from Mothers Out Front to speak. Ms. Soltysiak stated she was out there during the drilling and appreciates Eversource's effort. Also Ms. Wilkinson agreed with Ms. Soltysiak's comments. Ms. Solysiak talked about a GEOTermal pilot to get the city off using gas.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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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.

See item #212225

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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