



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

July 6, 2017  
REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE

| Attendee Name        | Title               | Status  | Arrived |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Mary Jo Rossetti     | Chair               | Present |         |
| Mark Niedergang      | Vice Chair          | Present |         |
| Katjana Ballantyne   | Ward Seven Alderman | Present |         |
| John M. Connolly     | Alderman At Large   | Present |         |
| William A. White Jr. | Alderman At Large   | Present |         |
| Matthew McLaughlin   | Ward One Alderman   | Absent  |         |
| Maryann M. Heuston   | Ward Two Alderman   | Present |         |
| Robert J. McWatters  | Ward Three Alderman | Absent  |         |
| Tony Lafuente        | Ward Four Alderman  | Present |         |
| Lance L. Davis       | Ward Six Alderman   | Present |         |
| Dennis M. Sullivan   | Alderman At Large   | Present |         |

Others present: David Shapiro - Law, Shannon Phillips - Law, Eileen McGettigan - Law, Thomas Galligani - OSPCD, Sue Thomas - OSPCD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk

The meeting took place in the Aldermen's Chamber and was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chairman Rossetti and adjourned at 7:40 PM.

**203097: Assistant City Solicitor submitting the US2-City Development Covenant.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203098: Assistant City Solicitor submitting an Ordinance to create a Community Benefits Committee.**

Chairman Rossetti briefly reviewed the committee's previous actions relating to this matter and asked that a document regarding Neighborhood Councils in Tacoma, (distributed by Alderman Niedergang), be entered into the record. Chairman Rossetti also requested that Alderman Niedergang forward a second document to the Committee Clerk for inclusion in the record, as well.

Chairman Rossetti summarized the previously received communications from Alderman Niedergang, P. McCormick, Union United and T. Antonino and said that tonight's meeting is to 'set the table' for the yet to be scheduled public hearing. She wants to direct any questions tonight to the

Administration for them to reference in a cover sheet to be provided for the public prior to the public hearing, since the committee did not ask that the administration provide opinions on the previous issues raised on June 28th. Alderman White thinks that it would be helpful to have some sort of response from the admin prior to the public hearing. Alderman Heuston agreed, especially since the BOA has not been a party to the discussions between the administration and neighborhood representatives, and said that the BOA should be informed of the outcomes of those meetings. She also suggested that hard copies of all communications be provided at committee meetings for reference. Ms. Connor said that all handouts on this subject will be available online and that she would forward the link to all members.

Alderman Ballantyne suggested that the public hearing should be pushed back beyond September, since the first distribution of funds won't occur for nearly a year. Alderman Niedergang said that he still has changes he wants to make to the proposed ordinance and asked if the committee should continue reviewing the draft or wait until they receive a report on the discussions that took place between the administration and neighborhood representatives. Ms. Connor told the committee that those meetings have not really been structured, but rather a chance for groups to ask the administration questions and for the administration to ask them what help they needed. The meetings have not been decision making meetings. Alderman White and Ms. McGettigan spoke about the public vs. private entity complexities, city involvement in council elections and the scope of authority given to the councils. Chairman Rossetti asked Ms. McGettigan to provide a memo from her and the Administration on the aforementioned meetings and she replied that she has not been a part of those meetings. Ms. Connor will facilitate getting a report to the committee.

Alderman White inquired about the function of the Neighborhood Councils in Newton. Alderman Niedergang pointed out that none of the models from other communities that the committee reviewed contained the authority being considered in Somerville. He suggested having a member of the BOA at the administration/community meetings. Alderman Lafuente agreed and said that the BOA makes long range decisions and cautions against giving too much power to the councils, as some of the desires of a particular neighborhood may not fit in with the long range plans of the city. Alderman Heuston envisions the neighborhood councils being in the forefront of community meetings and said that key elements of the councils need to be spelled out. Ms. McGettigan told the committee that she has been in consultation with Mr. Bean regarding any financial impacts of the public/private question and will continue to do so.

Chairman Rossetti said that the committee will meet on this matter again in September.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203192: Union United submitting comments re: the Union Square Development Covenant.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203555: The Chamber of Commerce, Union Square Main Streets, and Somerville Local First submitting comments re: the Union Sq proposed zoning, the US2 Covenant, and the Community Benefits Ordinance.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203556: The Maurice and Jane Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice**

**submitting comments re: #203098, the Community Benefits Ordinance.**

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

6. Communication – M Niedergang (with 203098)
7. Communication – P McCormick (with 203098)
8. Communication – Union United (with 203098)
9. Communication – T Antonino (with 203098)

**202400: Green and Open Somerville submitting comments re: a dark sky ordinance.**

Since the administration had no comments on this item, Chairman Rossetti asked the Law Department to review the information from Green Cambridge (submitted with this item) and report back to the committee with any thoughts.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**202495: Tori Antonino submitting comments re: a dark sky ordinance.**

Alderman Ballantyne reported that Cambridge has not yet ordained anything relative to this topic. She discussed the issue with Ms. Antonino and said that the matter came about from earlier discussions regarding the city's conversion to LED street lights. Alderman Davis noted that there has been a discussion about the temperature of street lights, and Somerville's are 1,000 degrees above the recommended level of 3,000 degrees. He said that the lights effect the migratory habits of birds and essentially effect every living thing. He went on to say that the problem isn't just the heat generated by the lights, but that there are also directional concerns and he thinks that improvements can be made. Chairman Rossetti suggested that a motion be put forth to get the ball rolling on this matter. Alderman Heuston spoke about the importance of getting other people involved in this, noting that the LED conversion was a contracted job.

Alderman Ballantyne's motion *that the Administration work with the appropriate department(s) to draft a Dark Sky ordinance that highlights the applicability, color temperature standards, prescriptive or performance standards, DPW oversight and exemptions*, was approved.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**201753: That the Mayor re-establish the Tree Advisory Committee, to be staffed by the full-time Arborist, expand its membership to 9 or 11 members, and broaden the scope of the Committee's duties.**

Alderman Niedergang spoke about increasing the number of committee members from the public and Alderman Davis spoke about the intent of expanding the scope of the committee. Alderman Niedergang thinks that the existing ordinance should be discarded and that a new ordinance should be written, using OSPCD's recommendations for a Tree Advisory Committee (TAC) as a starting point.

Alderman Ballantyne suggested that the TAC guidelines emphasize planning, tie in with the city's SomerVision and carbon neutral goals and contain bio-diversity language for sustainability. Ms. Phillips will meet with the administration and create a draft for the committee's review.

Alderman Ballantyne prefers that more than 50% of the TAC's members be from the general public and Alderman Lafuente suggested that every ward have a member.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203059: That the City Solicitor submit updated language to expand the Tree Advisory Committee ordinance.**

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**203646: That the City Solicitor draft a Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by requiring owners of larger buildings to disclose annual energy use.**

Alderman Ballantyne explained that since the city has set a carbon neutral goal, this item was submitted in an effort to obtain relevant information. Alderman White suggested that a review of policies used in Cambridge might be helpful and Chairman Rossetti asked Ms. Phillips to perform that review. Ms. Phillips reported that she has reviewed 10 other policies, as well, however only 2 are from MA. Chairman Rossetti asked Ms. Philipps to prepare a comparison chart and Alderman Lafuente asked that the chart's communities be differentiated by color.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b> |
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**Handouts:**

- Tacoma Neighborhood Info (with 203097, 203098)
- Neighborhood Info (with 203097, 203098)
- Tree Advisory Committee Info (with 201753)
- Tree Advisory Committee Ord (with 203059)