




**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE, MAYOR**

**Office of the Executive Director**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

**FROM:** Monica R. Lamboy, Executive Director 

**DATE:** October 14, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances to amend or add provisions related to vegetative overgrowth, hazardous trees, outdoor wood storage and associated fines

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Pursuant to the direction of the Legislative Matters Committee, attached please find a draft ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances to amend or add provisions related to vegetative overgrowth, hazardous trees, outdoor wood storage, and associated fines. At their meeting on Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, the Committee met to review a draft ordinance addressing several potential nuisances on private property and they specifically requested that staff revise the initial draft to create three separate ordinances that could be considered independently. The attached document represents one of the three draft ordinances.

In addition to separating the ordinances, staff has also modified the prior language relating to outdoor wood storage to remove the requirement that wood stored outdoors be elevated one foot off the ground. Instead, the language will read that wood cannot be stored in a manner that is conducive to harboring rodents or other animals. We believe that this will provide staff with an important tool to reduce the harboring of rodents in Somerville.

At the request of the Committee, staff researched whether there were wood storage racks that were conventionally available and cost effective that would meet the proposed one foot elevation requirement. In response, while staff did find wood storage racks that were quite affordable and could hold one cord of wood within an 8 foot span, those racks were only elevated six inches above the ground. Staff could not find any models that were elevated one foot. As a result, we are recommending that the height requirement be removed. That said, in our informational materials, we will recommend that wood storage be elevated one foot above the ground as this is recognized as reducing the potential for rodent harboring.

Staff looks forward to continued discussion with the Committee on this draft ordinance.