

City of Somerville, Massachusetts
Matters of Business of the Board of Aldermen

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2016, 7:00 PM
Aldermanic Chambers

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the Board of Aldermen's minutes. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure the accuracy of the data provided, do not rely on this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Alderman At Large William A. White Jr.

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

1. Roll Call Call of the Roll.
202418
(ID:15106)

RESULT: PLACED ON FILE

CITATIONS

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. Mayor's Submitting for approval the Green Line Extension Project Participation
Request Agreement, and conveying 3 side letters.
202364
(ID:15065)

Mayor Curtatone described the GLX Project Participation Agreement. The GLX will provide fiscal sustainability, social equity, public health and safety sustainability. The State has made it clear that the GLX cannot move forward without municipal contributions. The future of the GLX is now in our hands. The Mayor said the Project Participation Agreement sets forth the scenarios where the City will be reimbursed for its contributions. A force account will be created to hold the City's contribution and ensure that it only goes to the GLX and nothing else. It also sets forth the payment schedule, which is generally five equal installments of \$10 million starting in 2018, depending on the start of construction and other factors. The proposed Home

Rule Petition enables the City to borrow to contribute to the GLX Project, and affords more favorable borrowing terms.

Transportation Director Brad Rawson described MA DOT's pre-bid workshop with a couple of hundred in attendance. MA DOT's goal is to protect FTA funds and obtain qualified bids with cost control mechanisms in place. He said the Scope side letter memorializes the provision of easements to construct and operate Green Line stations and facilities across Union Square and Gilman Square. It also delivers meaningful public safety and environmental relief for the City.

Mayor Curtatone said that development associated with the GLX will generate \$140 million in cumulative property tax revenue over ten years, with new growth of \$83 million, much of it commercial. Without the GLX this number drops to \$59 million. By 2027, the GLX will have shifted almost 2% of the tax burden from the residential to the commercial sector. The goal is to capture at least \$25 million from development partners over the life of the borrowing. The City will take on more debt with these and other projects but in the end it will pay off. The \$50 million bond will account for a very small amount of the average tax bill, starting at \$5 annually and increasing over time to an estimated \$141. Alderman Ballantyne asked how residential value increases were forecast. City Assessor Marc Levy said that an average 3% increase per year was used, except for a 4% increase in areas less than a half-mile from a GLX station. President White stated his concern about what the average taxpayer would be paying ten years from now. Alderman Lafuente wanted to know what the estimated 3% increase was based on, and Mr. Levy said it was based on the average over the last twenty fiscal years. Alderman Connolly asked how Union Square zoning ties in with the GLX. The Mayor stated it's all connected; the City needs development, zoning, infrastructure and GLX investments to all come together. Alderman Connolly questioned the timeline. The Mayor said December 8 is the deadline for the vote. Alderman Connolly also wanted to know the format for collecting developer contributions. The Mayor stated they are currently looking into a per square foot formula. Mr. Rawson said the City intends to reach all developers who are building in GLX areas: not only Union Square, but also Brickbottom, Boynton Yards, and other areas near stations. President White asked how many DIFs are being contemplated and in what amounts for the Union Square area. Mr. Rawson said information was previously presented talking about the potential of a two phase borrowing. President White again asked for the actual amounts of each DIF that would be proposed. Mr. Rawson responded that in the Union Square area the numbers range up to \$70 million, which includes underground utility construction (to alleviate flooding) and surface improvements. At this time, there are no other specific DIFs planned. The Mayor confirmed that there are no hard answers on how many, how much. Alderman Heuston commented that Boynton Yards is due for an overlay and the Mayor responded that there is absolutely developer interest there. Alderman Niedergang requested to see what we need to borrow for Somerville High School, to see a big picture of the City's debt and debt service obligations.

Other speakers then spoke. Joseph Bolduc said he is 74 years old and is always promised that taxes will go down with development, but his taxes have gone up 25% - that's \$60,000 - in one year. What will the average person in Union Square pay once their property doubles and triples in value?

This will eliminate all older people on fixed incomes. Jim McGinnis said he was a long-time advocate for the GLX, and spoke about the benefits it would bring to Union Square. Max Morrow advocated for the Community Path. Katie Gradowski spoke about a Community Benefits Agreement and the need for a clear and established frame work for how the benefits will be negotiated. Barbara Steiner supported the GLX but feels the cost will price out a lot of people with property tax increases. Karen Narefsky supported public transportation as an investment in infrastructure, but wants a clear plan for paying for these improvements and a plan for preventing displacement. Rand Wilson spoke of the Assembly Square development and the promises of local jobs that never happened. He urged that local employees be hired for Union Square development. Lynn Weissman argued for the Community Path. Ulysses Lateiner said that originally the City was supposed to pay nothing and now we are expected to pay \$50 million, and since construction costs are never what they are budgeted for, will the price escalate again? Wig Zamore agreed that the \$50 million was very unfair, but feels the GLX is needed to increase employment. Tori Antonino encouraged the Board to prioritize the Community Path, and said it was appalling that US2 didn't contribute to the sewer system upgrade in Union Square. Dave Ahouse supported the GLX and the Bond but was concerned by the amount demanded of the City. David Ahlbacht wanted less residential and more upper story commercial development. Stephen Mackey reminded the Board that public transportation is not coming to Somerville, but is actually coming back to Somerville, and he supports the GLX. Tom Bent noted that the GLX is important for both Somerville and Boston. He said the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has unanimously endorsed the project. Claudia Murrow said she doesn't live in a transit oriented district but will still have to pay for the GLX. She said the largest beneficiary is US2. Gerard Roy said a large group of people won't be able to stay in Somerville, and he's concerned about the high rise buildings that will transform the area. Ellen Reiser supported the project but was enraged that the MBTA cut parts of the Community Path. With no other speakers, President White closed the Public Hearing. This Public Hearing was held open for written testimony through Monday, November 28.

RESULT: LAID ON THE TABLE

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| 3. Mayor's Request
202365
(ID:15086) | Requesting an appropriation and authorization to borrow \$50,000,000 in a bond to pay costs related to the extension of the MBTA Green Line to Somerville. | RESULT: LAID ON THE TABLE |
| 4. Officer's Communication
202381
(ID:15063) | Assistant City Solicitor submitting a Home Rule Petition authorizing the city to borrow funds to pay for the Green Line Extension. | RESULT: LAID ON THE TABLE |

ORDERS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS OF MEMBERS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATIONS OF THE MAYOR

COMMUNICATIONS OF CITY OFFICERS

NEW BUSINESS

SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

LATE ITEMS

5. Public Linda Bohan submitting comments re: #202364, the Mayor's proposed Green
Communication Line Extension Project Participation Agreement.
202419
(ID:15115)
- | | |
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| RESULT: | PLACED ON FILE |
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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:05 PM.