



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

July 11, 2022

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Charlotte Kelly	Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Vice Chair	Absent	
Judy PinedaNeufeld	Ward Seven City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Jill Lathan - DPW, Karin Carroll - HHS, Aneesh Sahni - Mayor's Office, Peter Forcellese - Legislative Clerk.

The meeting took place virtually via GoToWebinar and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Kelly and adjourned at 6:42 PM on a roll call vote of 2 in favor (Councilors Pineda Neufeld and Kelly), none against and 1 absent (Councilor Davis).

**Approval of the May 23, 2022 Minutes**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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**213811: That the ADA Coordinator discuss with this Council how the Administration is accommodating the needs of visually impaired residents through the use of braille in commissions and elsewhere.**

Chair Kelly commented on the administration's response (attached) and asked how residents would be able to find the processes noted in the response. Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Aneesh Sahni replied by saying that the city's ADA Coordinator intends to share how this will be accomplished with the Council. Chair Kelly asked for a timeline for procuring a braille machine and Director Sahni had no update. Chair Kelly requested that a report be presented to the Council when the machine is procured.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED</b>
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**213812: That the ADA Coordinator discuss with this Council how the Administration is providing access and services for residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.**

The administration has submitted a written response (attached).

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**213945: That the Director of Health and Human Services share with this Council, a report summarizing the themes shared at the recent COVID-19 listening sessions with residents.**

Director Sahni said five sessions have been completed, with five to go. A team from Somerville's Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) has been running point on the sessions and a report will be presented when all sessions have been completed. The sessions are being held to hear from residents who have been impacted by COVID about their needs and concerns. Additional information on the listening sessions is available online at: [www.somervillema.gov/listeningsessions](http://www.somervillema.gov/listeningsessions) <<http://www.somervillema.gov/listeningsessions>>. Director Sahni will provide the committee with the outreach particulars for different demographics in the city. He anticipates that action items and/or recommendations will come out of the sessions, but he doesn't know what that would look like at this time. A synopsis will be provided to the Council at the program's completion.

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**213990: That the Commissioner of Public Works replace the port-a-potties in and around Davis Square, including Seven Hills Park, regularly maintain them, and leave them in place regardless of complaints from neighbors.**

Commissioner Lathan reported that the DPW put a port-a-potty in Davis Square on June 27<sup>th</sup> and that the responsibility for it will be transferred to Health and Human Services. Commissioner Lathan pointed out that the DPW does not oversee the port-a-potty in Davis Square and said that it was removed because it was only there for a special event, not because of a resident's complaint, as was reported. HHS will have to renew its contract to have another unit in Davis Square and Director Karin Carroll said everything is all set with getting the new contract in place. Director Carroll wants to explore who uses the facility and what other needs exist. That unit would have to be removed in December.

**RESULT:****WORK COMPLETED**

**213993: That the Director of Health and Human Services immediately secure space and open a warming/cooling center for people to seek shelter from the summer heat and winter cold.**

Director Carroll has had meetings with pertinent personnel, including Emergency Management and SOIA, to review the city's current protocol and put it into a standard operating procedure. Best practices are being reviewed to establish a threshold and criteria are being proposed to guide the city as to when to open facilities. Higher risk populations will be targeted, e.g., elderly, student athletes, homeless, etc.. Director Carroll stated that she is pleased with the city's messaging machinery. Director Sahni reported that an ARPA request for a grant was approved earlier this year and given to the Homeless Coalition to implement a similar program.

Councilor Pineda Neufeld inquired about a program to accept and distribute donated air conditioners and Director Carroll noted that a very small number of air conditioners were donated in the past, however, HHS will re-visit the details of the program. Director Carroll

wants HHS to check on the city's elderly buildings for proper cooling and outreach and to consider the needs of those who won't take advantage of cooling/heating centers. Director Sahni reported that the city is working to identify suitable space(s) for the centers.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**213994: That the Director of Health and Human Services move forward with an overdose prevention facility, using a mobile facility as an initial, immediate option until permanent brick and mortar locations can be opened.**

Director Sahni reported that the advisory group has convened and is starting to hone in on what the program might look like. During the recent budget meetings, \$500,000 was set aside for the next steps in this initiative. Director Sahni reported that a virtual community meeting was held on the issue and that there will be additional updates provided on the progress with a report presentation during the summer. A suitable space has not yet been procured.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**Reference Material:**

- PHPS 7.11.22 ADA Written Response (with 213811, 213812)