



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

July 9, 2020

REPORT OF THE CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND PERSONNEL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mary Jo Rossetti	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Wilfred N. Mbah	City Councilor at Large	Present	
Jesse Clingan	Ward Four City Councilor	Present	
Kristen Strezo	City Councilor at Large	Present	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Chair Rossetti at 5:46pm and adjourned at 7:06pm.

Others present: Khushbu Webber - Mayor's Office; Ellen Collins - Personnel; Chief Charles Breen - Fire; Chris Major - Fire; Robert McCarthy - Fire; John Long - City Clerk; Cathy Piantigini - Library

Approval of the April 15, 2020 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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210071: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Christine Lindgren to the Licensing Commission.

Mr. Long introduced Ms. Lindgren, noting that the Licensing Commission has one vacancy out of only three members, and the pandemic has elevated the need for prompt work as it processes licenses for outdoor seating. This appointee has a wealth of marketing experience and a technology background, as well as residing in Somerville for 25 years. Chair Rossetti added that the Appointments Advisory Committee recommended Ms. Lindgren for this Commission, and highlighted that the appointee seeks to deepen her commitment and connection to the community.

Ms. Lindgren shared that her experience working at MassBio includes PPE supply and business re-opening projects, and this experience is highly relevant as the City and State work to recover from the pandemic. She has also familiarized herself with the process for marijuana licensing.

Councilor Mbah asked about the appointee's volunteer work, and she has volunteered in the life science industry, and was part of the Somerville garden committee. Councilor Clingan commented that he is supportive of the appointee's goals and willingness to participate in serving the City. Councilor Scott noted that the Commission is taking an outsize role until November, in terms of approving outdoor seating, and asked how the appointee views the role of the Commission in addressing public feedback.

Ms. Lindgren responded that it has always been critical for the Commission to accept public feedback, and would hope that the residents are supportive of the role of the Commission in helping the City return to a sense of normalcy. Councilor Scott elaborated on the question, asking about the appointee's view of the role of public comment in the process when considering the granting of requests. Ms. Lindgren noted that public sentiment is important because any decisions impact the public, so their feedback and input is valuable and should be highly considered. Councilor Scott also asked, with relation to interaction between the State Cannabis Commission, where the appointee views the responsibility for the local Licensing Commission in making determinations. Ms. Lindgren noted that according to her understanding of the process, which may be adjusted over time, the local process comes first and then the state application can take place. The local level should focus on many of the details. The Commission is responsible for controlling the level, amount, types, and location of these businesses to optimize their impact on the City. Councilor Scott asked what would determine whether a location was correct, and Ms. Lindgren responded that the traffic impact is an important consideration, as well as the impact to people and the environment.

Councilor Strezo asked what improvements the appointee would like to see the Licensing Commission make, and one thing Ms. Lindgren noted is that processes can be improved for efficiency, including the interactions with the Economic Development Committee. Increasing collaboration is also a good goal to have. Chair Rossetti asked how the appointee would balance decision making after listening to a hearing, and Ms. Lindgren would confer with fellow Commissioners and would delay decision making if further research or work with the administration or other departments was needed.

Chair Rossetti asked Mr. Long how the process was taking place with the new restaurant approvals under the Commission's purview. Mr. Long noted that the Commission met three times in one week, with several more special meetings, to review and approve applications. Provisional approvals have been granted, noting that the license will be issued when the City Engineer, HHS and others are satisfied with the plans submitted. Chair Rossetti highlighted the appointee's mention of a data-driven approach to decision making, noting that this mindset is important and a strength for this active Commission.

Councilor Scott asked if the appointee had been active in any other City processes, neighborhood organizations, or prior engagements with the City. Ms. Lindgren shared that she was involved with the Powderhouse Boulevard neighborhood meetings and voiced her opinions there.

Councilor Scott shared a concern with the responses related to a sense of delay and strongly control the locations of businesses that are already facing unfathomable difficulties.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [4 TO 1]
AYES:	Rossetti, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo
NAYS:	Scott

210279: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Carla Lillvik as a Trustee for the Board of Library Trustees.

Ms. Piantigini introduced Ms. Lillvik, a longtime Somerville resident and Library patron. Ms. Lillvik works as a research librarian at Harvard and has a degree in Library Science.

Chair Rossetti noted that the appointee's current role fits very well with this position. Ms. Lillvik noted that she is a long lover and supporter of public libraries, and their role in addressing wide swaths of the community, including the most vulnerable. She looks forward to the opportunity to support the people of Somerville and the vulnerable in the community.

Councilor Scott asked the appointee's thoughts on the American Library Association's initiatives around racial justice and anti-racism work in Somerville. Ms. Lillvik shared that this relates to special collections and archives, and one thing that can be done is ensuring that all contributions are represented. She is working toward this in her current role, and would love to also see outreach to fill additional Trustee positions as well as outreach to the users the Library can serve. Chair Rossetti spoke highly of the recommendation of Ms. Piantigini and the appointee's resume.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

210374: Requesting confirmation of the appointment of Robert McCarthy to the position of Deputy Fire Chief.

Chief Breen introduced District Chief McCarthy, who has been a member of the Fire Department since 1996, and noted that he has been serving in the role of Acting Deputy since January, overseeing the Fire Prevention Bureau. Mr. McCarthy is also a member of the MA Bar Association, and has done a great deal of outreach work in the community.

Chair Rossetti noted that this particular role includes an exam, which is scheduled for July 21, and this is why this candidate is appearing now, when the other Fire Department promotions and candidates will be heard by the Committee at the end of the summer. Councilor Scott asked about timing and noted that a legal precedent has been set by the Civil Service Commission, and Ms. Collins noted that the Law Department should prepare the response to that concern. Councilor Clingan also clarified that the administration intends to continue to move forward with confirmations of appointments regardless of the status of meetings, whether virtual or in person.

Chair Rossetti asked why Mr. McCarthy chose the Fire Department as a lawyer, and Mr. McCarthy clarified that the Fire Department came first, and he knew it was the job for him. He decided to return to law school after working on fire investigations. Councilor Mbah asked what Mr. McCarthy views as areas for improvement and Mr. McCarthy shared that training is always important, health and safety for the firefighters to mitigate cancer risk, and striving to continue to expand diversity in public safety to reflect the community that the departments serves.

Councilor Scott moved to enter into Executive Session to review protected personnel information or to discuss matters related to individual candidates pursuant to MGL c30A s21(a)(1). The motion was approved on a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Clingan, Mbah, Strezo, Scott, Rossetti) to 0 against. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Councilor Scott cited *Gorman v City of Somerville* to note that he has concerns with the administration's process. Chair Rossetti noted that it will be addressed for future candidates.

RESULT:	APPROVED. [UNANIMOUS]
AYES:	Rossetti, Scott, Mbah, Clingan, Strezo

Handouts:

- Summary Handout_Robert McCarthy_07092020-1