



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 3, 2017

REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Mark Niedergang	Chair	Present	
Tony Lafuente	Vice Chair	Present	
Katjana Ballantyne	Ward Seven Alderman	Present	

Others present: Michael Glavin - OSPCD, George Proakis - OSPCD, Tom Galligani - OSPCD, Michael Feloney - OSPCD, Marc Levy - Assessing, Tim Snyder - Mayor's Office, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Alderman Niedergang and adjourned at 7:25 PM.

**Approval of the March 2, 2017 Minutes**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ACCEPTED</b>
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**200135: That the Administration report to this Board about communicating with Federal Realty Investment Trust regarding #199601, a request that FRIT provide the wages, hours and residency of everyone employed at the parcel 6 site, pursuant to the attached letter from Rand Wilson.**

Mr. Galigani said he has tried to obtain the information and requests have been made. He told the members that he also reached out to Callahan Construction. Chairman Niedergang stated that he met with Callahan construction.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**202181: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the development of a strategic plan for the city's role in workforce development and job training, and the city's intention on implementing the recommendations in the 2013 Somerville Jobs Advisory Committee Report.**

Mr. Galigani is working on an RFP and hopes to begin work on the workforce development plan in July. Usually a workforce development plan is for a larger region and not just one city with a population of 75,000. Alderman Ballantyne is interested in the idea of it typically being a

regional effort and asked if Somerville will be the first city to do one individually. Mr. Galligani is unsure, but he believes Somerville would be the first. He spoke about meetings with SCC and other organizations regarding workforce development.

Chairman Niedergang said there should be a placeholder put into the city ordinance and said that the city needs to be doing more to obtain resources. Mr. Galligani spoke about a program at Bunker Hill Community College and Mr. Snyder said this is a priority for the administration, noting that a lot of work has been done so far.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**200700: That the Director of SPCD report to this Board on the plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations in the recent report of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group.**

Mr. Glavin said the city is applying for some grants. Mr. Feloney said he will have a workflow calendar prepared for the committee in the near future. There will be a wrap up every 6 months on the topic and there will be a sequence to the report work. Mr. Feloney said OSPCD is working towards a draft of an impact analysis and he spoke about linkage fees and an examination of the ordinance. He mentioned the 100 homes initiative and said that OSPCD staff has been making great connections and has identified nearly 20 properties. Mr. Snyder said there is a question of legality regarding the city's Condo Review Board. The administration will recommend the strongest language possible, considering the pending suit. Mr. Snyder told the committee that Mr. Feloney has been fantastic and dedicated to this issue.

**RESULT:**

**KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**200852: Housing Director conveying the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group Recommendations Report.**

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**202905: That the Administration delay any final vote by the Redevelopment Authority on the Union Square Land Disposition Agreement until a public hearing is held to obtain public input and respond to public questions, and until the Agreement is discussed with this Board.**

Mr. Glavin said he believes this is the most outward activity the SRA has done so far. He said several dozen members spoke at the meeting. People were concerned about timing. Covenants tied to the zoning and the community benefits agreement were discussed. Mr. Glavin doesn't see the need for any major revisions.

Alderman Ballantyne said she wants to make sure that members of the SRA actually read people's comments. She hopes they aren't just filtered through the Planning Department and asked why communication to the SRA is different than the Planning Board's. She believes communication should be handled the same way, unless there is a statutory reason. Chairman Niedergang feels the members of the SRA should read people's comments and is glad the city is improving the actions of this body.

Mr. Glavin stated that there is a need for the staff to respond and advise, adding that they are trying to make it efficient and will try to make it better if necessary. He said the staff takes comments from a meeting and consolidates them. The BOA will be fully informed on the 27th of April.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED</b>
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**199896: SRA Special Counsel conveying an Amended Master Developer Designation Agreement.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED</b>
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**196221: That the Director of SPCD provide SomerVision updates twice a year, broken down by ward, showing progress made in residential, affordable units, jobs, public space, trips via transit, bike and walking, and development in transformative areas.**

Mr. Proakis explained that SomerVision units will be measured based on the number of Certificates of Occupancy issued. He also discussed how jobs and open space figures are calculated and funding for open space. Mr. Proakis explained how reviews are triggered, noting that time is given to allow families to grow a certain bit before a review is needed. The SomerVision goals are not being met but in some areas, growth is ahead of schedule and development at Union Square will help in reaching the goals. The numbers of housing units is expected to jump in 2017. The 5-year SomerVision approval anniversary is this month and Mr. Proakis said data will guide the city on where to go from here and added that he doesn't want to rush into the SomerVision Committee yet.

Alderman Ballantyne asked about the number of units built in the neighborhoods and affordable units. Chairman Niedergang spoke about inclusionary housing goals and asked about a correction check.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**196188: That the Administration work with this Board to revise the Somervision Plan to provide more detailed goals with regard to affordable housing and the creation of a mix of housing units, especially those with more than 2 bedrooms, for long-term residents of all ages.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>WORK COMPLETED</b>
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**196368: That the Director of SPCD submit a plan on the use of city owned properties as it relates to projected growth identified in the SomerVision Plan.**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**202516: That the Chief Assessor report to this Board about past and planned outreach to make seniors, veterans and other qualified homeowners aware of exemptions and deferrals that could ease their property tax burden, along with numerical goals, for FY17 to FY20.**

Mr. Levy spoke about statutory exemptions and summarized what's been done for outreach. A targeted newsletter went out to people over 65 years old and to veterans. The Assessing Department is considering holding office hours at the Council on Aging offices. The Treasury Department is considering a new position to provide someone who can reach out to taxpayers to tie all loose ends together.

Chairman Niedergang would like comparisons from municipalities like Everett, Malden and those that are similar to Somerville. He commented that older people are not on the internet so outreach is important. Chairman Niedergang also mentioned a possible public/private partnership. Mr. Levy said no one has looked into it yet, but it sounds like a viable idea. Mr. Snyder mentioned reverse mortgages.

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**202908: Chief Assessor responding to #202516 re: statutory tax exemptions and outreach efforts.**

**RESULT:**

**WORK COMPLETED**

**Handouts:**

- Response (with 202516)
- Clause Exemptions (with 202516)
- SomerVision Progress Report (with 196221)