



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

March 5, 2018

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jesse Clingan	Chair	Present	
Stephanie Hirsch	Vice Chair	Present	
Matthew McLaughlin	Ward One Alderman	Absent	

Others present: Chief David Fallon - SPD, Jason Grossfield - Law, Doug Kress - HHS, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 7:05 PM by Chairman Clingan and adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Approval of the November 29, 2017 Minutes

RESULT:	ACCEPTED
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203802: That the City Solicitor and the Superintendent of Inspectional Services provide this Board with a plan to address the use of AirBnB for whole house rentals, including communications to residents who report such uses.

The committee discussed using a recent ordinance passed in Cambridge as a reference for drafting the Somerville proposed ordinance. Boston and Manchester by the Sea are reviewing similar ordinances, however, Cambridge is the only one that has passed an ordinance in the state. Airbnb rentals may change the classification of residential properties due to the short term rental aspect of how the units are used. This could trigger mandatory upgrades according to the state building code. An example would be the need to install sprinklers. Cambridge liberally enforces these code violations.

The committee discussed the fact that some Somerville residents may need the rental income from Airbnb to afford to stay in the city. Therefore, the city does not want to ban Airbnb use. The city wants to have more oversight over the process and have enhanced safety initiatives. There will be a requirement that people registering to utilize Airbnb must be residents of the city. There will be a draft ordinance ready for review on March 22, 2018.

The committee discussed the lack of resources for ISD to enforce the current code with respect to Airbnb use, but there may be an option to outsource it to a private company called Host Compliance. The committee discussed potential revenue from Airbnb registration.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

203594: That the City Solicitor draft an Ordinance prohibiting the public consumption of marijuana.

Atty. Grossfield distributed a copy of a proposed ordinance to the committee. The current language would prohibit the sale and consumption in businesses, such as café and stores. The city would need to tailor an ordinance accordingly if it would like to allow such uses.

The committee discussed the differences between smoking and ingesting edibles and how each could impact the public. The Police Chief discussed training that officers can take to recognize marijuana use.

The ability to use marijuana for medical use was discussed and how the ordinance could be changed to accommodate for it.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204751: That the Chief of Police appear before the Committee on Public Health and Public Safety by January 2018, with supporting documentation, to report on the shortage of detail officers.

Chief Fallon discussed various reasons for the shortage of details. He also discussed how union negotiations impact details. The committee discussed how details are paid for and how much police officers get paid for details. The increase in construction in the area has contributed to the shortage of detail officers. There is also a trend of younger officers not wanting to work details.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

204852: That the Chief of Police report to this Board, the current approach for enforcing laws relating to cell phone use while driving, and any relevant studies regarding the prevalence of such use in the city.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

205073: That the Chief of Police provide this Board with an update on surveillance cameras in the city.

The Chief said there is a map of all cameras in the city. Somerville has a surveillance policy in place. The committee discussed private cameras and how they can be helpful to the police.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

205072: That the Chief of Police provide this Board with the number of incidents of the circulation of racist, anti-Semitic or hate-speech literature in 2016 and 2017.

There have been 2 incidents since 1/1/16. Both were incidents involving literature being handed out. The committee discussed ways in which the police and residents work with one another to stay informed about these types of incidents.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED