



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

February 5, 2019

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 City Councilor	Present	

Others present: Doug Kress - HSS, Chief David Fallon - SPD, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Rositha Durham - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place in the Committee Room and was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Clingan and adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Approval of the November 15, 2018 Minutes

RESULT: ACCEPTED

203004: That the Mayor work with the State Delegation on an agreement with the State to permit City crossing guards at the crosswalks at Highland Avenue and McGrath Highway, and to permit the Police Department to enforce traffic laws there.

Ms. Connor updated the committee stating this item needs state approval since McGrath Highway is a state road. The City of Somerville is willing to fund the crossing guards. It was stated this request has been going on for over two years. The committee requested a written update by its next meeting.

RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE

204724: That the Director of Health and Human Services present the Assessment and Plan in follow-up to the recently released City Wellness Report.

Mr. Kress had previously addressed the committee on this matter.

RESULT: WORK COMPLETED

204860: That the Director of SPCD arrange a meeting with the MBTA and this Board to discuss the elimination of the Route 95 bus stop on Mystic Avenue across from Fremont

Street, and how that stop can be restored with proper lighting, markings, etc.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205496: That the City Clerk invite the Clerk Magistrate of the Somerville District Court to meet with the Committee on Public Health and Public Safety to discuss drug courts.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205684: That the Director of Health and Human Services appear before this Board to discuss efforts to support individuals on the autism spectrum and educate first responders about autism.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205697: That the Administration update this Board on a municipal ID program for all residents, including any input from local immigrant advocacy groups, residents and non-profit organizations.

Ms. Connor is working with the staff to get this request up and running and told the committee that it is an enormous undertaking. She has reached out to other cities to look into bringing on a consultant to assist with this item. There was state-wide legislation filed fairly recently on this same item. It was stated that having a State ID would be very powerful and could be combined with MBTA pass or library cards. Members also discussed possibly offering incentives for those who get a card. Ms. Connor has been working on this matter by herself and asked if the city council could help with the public process. Councilor McLaughlin suggested not waiting for the state's legislation and wants to help undocumented residents. There were also discussions about a slow rollout and potentially using local businesses.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205785: That the City Solicitor update this Board on the current status of the draft ordinance regulating Airbnb.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205825: That the Administration provide an update on the range of projected revenue from recreational marijuana facilities how these funds may be used.

Mr. Kress stated there will be a meeting on February 11, 2019 with the Licensing Commission which weill include an overview of the licensing process. There will also be a community meeting on Thursday. Councilor Hirsch asked how the funds would be used and Mr. Kress replied that it would depend upon the various stores, competition and the community, adding that he was not sure of the revenue from sales. Medical marijuana would be taxed 3% per facility which could be \$40,000-\$50,000, two times a year. There are two separate accounts for tax revenue with one going into the city's general fund and the other to a stabilization fund.

Councilor Hirsch suggested using the funds for education prevention programs and treatment prevention.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205826: That the Administration consider, as part of its facilities planning process and its ongoing development of programs like 311, libraries, recreation and neighborhood policing, ways to establish multi-purpose neighborhood-based service centers.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205828: That the Administration update this Board on maintaining bus shelters or installing new shelters, such as the #90 bus stop at Assembly Square.

Ms. Connor will follow up on this request and noted that the Mayor's mid-term address mentioned the need to increase bus services.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205829: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services and other enforcing departments report to this Board on enforcing business signage laws, especially for alcohol, tobacco or marijuana advertisements.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205909: That the Administration, MA DEP, and Eversource explain to this Board the cause of the recent oil spill in the Mystic River near Assembly Square, the plan to clean it up, and any information residents should be aware of for safety.

Ms. Connor spoke about the underground oil leak cable pipeline and told the committee that the DEP, Coast Guard, MWRA and Clean Harbors worked to clean up the area on October 13, 2018. Fourty four of the sixty eight gallons of spilled oil was recovered.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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205933: That the Director of SPCD inform this Board of plans to regulate or enable dockless bikes, and share information on the City's contractual relationship with Hubway/BlueBikes.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205934: That the City Solicitor inform this Board of any applicable regulations related to the use of drones.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206291: That this Board commends the MA Senate on passing Senate Bill 2562 "An Act

Relative to Gender Identity on MA Identification" which allows a person to designate "X" for gender on an application for a driver's license and other official identification and further, that this Board encourages the MA House of Representatives to advance similar legislation.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206396: That the Director of SPCD and other City staff report to this Board on the Bird electric dockless scooter program and how the Administration plans to deal with it.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206421: That the Director of Health and Human Services develop a FAQ about the local implementation of medical and recreational marijuana sales.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206427: That the Superintendent of Inspectional Services report on whether or not an increased amount of construction can lead to more lead exposure, and what measures ISD uses to ensure contractors limit the release of lead into the soil or air.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206585: That the Administration share a more comprehensive set of goals related to air quality based on CAFEH study results, when or if available.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206835: That the Director of Health and Human Services and the Commissioner of Public Works install NO SMOKING signs in the public parks in and around Ward 7 and Davis Square.

Mr. Kress displayed a picture of one of the signs the city is installing and said that some signs have already been put up. Mr. Kress will be purchasing 15 more signs.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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206854: That the Director of Health and Human Services work with the Public Schools to allow whole fruits to be saved for use as snacks, given that many children often go without snacks.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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206856: That the Administration consider a public information effort to inform the community about code violations that impact public safety, such as improper lead paint removal.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

206857: That the Director of Health and Human Services discuss conducting a workshop for parents and adult caregivers to help them better understand risks, indicators of use, and strategies of intervention for tween/teen substance use.

Mr. Kress brought a copy of a flyer advertising a meeting this Thursday, February 7th on Marijuana, Vaping and Youth. The meeting will be held at the Somerville High School, Highlander Café from 6:00 - 7:30 PM.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206859: That the Chief of Police share his view of how and when residents should call the Police or 311 for emergency and non-emergency matters, including which number to call, and consider holding a discussion on the topic that includes different stakeholders.

Chief Fallon spoke to Mr. Craig in Constituent Services about the quality of life issues and when to call 311 vs. 911. 311 has a special number to reach the Somerville Police Department. If there is a threat to the public health, then 911 should be called. Also call 911 for Police emergencies and call the Police at 617-625-1212 for quality of life issues. Councilor Hirsch suggested creating a flowchart with common issues and who to call. She also suggested public education might be needed for the public to know who to call. It was stated that 311 does not log calls sent to the police. There were discussions about delayed responses from the police. Chief Fallon explained that, in cases of an emergency, whoever is closest to the address responds to the call, therefore non-emergency calls may take a little longer to respond to. Chief Fallon suggested the committee come down to the dispatch center to get a better understanding of how the process works.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

206949: That the Chief of Police report on the effectiveness of recent block closures for Halloween and discuss whether or not the program may be expanded.

Chief Fallon stated the block closures went well and were not over burdensome, adding that there were not a lot of complaints about the street closures. Councilor Hirsch stated there were some concerns about closing down streets on school nights and she suggested, that if this happens in the future, a neighborhood police officer should be assigned to the area and an explanation or guidelines should be provided to the public.

RESULT:

WORK COMPLETED

207040: That the Chief of Police and the Chief Fire Engineer, and related staff, discuss how each department receives and handles a 911 call, including the dispatch of State Police, E911, Fire Alarm, and Cataldo Ambulance, and including the handling of asthmatic-related emergencies.

Chief Fallon told the committee that the city's dispatch center has been updated in the way it receives 911 calls, (both voice and text), and that over 90% of the calls received are from cell

phones with the calls going directly to the Police Department. The city is working with the state to improve the system. Medical calls needing attention are dispatched to Cataldo Ambulance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207041: That the Director of Health and Human Services, or related staff, discuss education efforts for the general public or child-serving providers on how to determine the severity of an asthma attack.

Mr. Kress talked about applying for a recent grant to work with young families with high-impactful illnesses such as asthma, diabetes and vision impairment.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207042: Expressing the intent to work towards helping improve systems involving emergency response, care and education related to asthma.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207102: City Solicitor responding to #205934 re: drone use regulations.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207162: That the Director of Health and Human Services develop a resident checklist for emergency preparedness, including plans to help needy neighbors, and including the "Are You OK" Program.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207275: That the Director of Health and Human Services discuss key points from the Youth Risk Survey with the Public Health and Public Safety Committee.

Mr. Kress shared a few slides with the committee on reduction in alcohol and current substance abuse. The survey was taken by high school students and recorded by grade in 2018. It was stated that students are getting products from people they know such as family members and friends. There is a big concern on the number of youths who have attempted suicide. Councilor McLaughlin stated his concerns about the data on the survey relating to the number of youths using cocaine and heroin. He asked Mr. Kress about the sample size of 50 students. There was a discussion about how the nurses can help increase awareness with the students. Anxiety and mental health issues continue to be of great concerns with students. Councilor McLaughlin asked Mr. Kress if he knew which cities are doing better Somerville. Mr. Kress will provide this information to the committee.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207276: That the Administration provide any analysis, considerations, or existing practices for reducing ordinance violation fines for lower-income households.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207328: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board of the protocol for notifying the public and families when there is an incident in a public building.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207329: That the Chief of Police, in conjunction with the Administration, advise this Board on school-related safety policies and procedures listed within.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207377: That the Director of Health and Human Services inform this Board of the protocol for communicating with the public about any particular patterns in seasonal flu or colds.

Mr. Kress provided a written response to this board order. The public health nurses and HHS staff started community outreach for flu vaccines and availability in the beginning of September, following the guidance of the Mass Department of Public Health, which maintains a database for monitoring infectious disease state-wide.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207378: That the Director of Health and Human Services inform this Board of how the teen snow shoveling program is going this year.

Mr. Kress provided a written response to this board order and told the committee that the program had 41 senior participants in 2015 and now has 116 enrollees. The city continues to seek creative ways to meet the needs of the community.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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207441: That the Director of Health and Human Services report to this Board on the feasibility of situating a Safe Injection Facility here.

Mr. Kress stated this needs to be explored.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207446: That the Director of Health and Human Services inform this Board's Committee on Public Health and Public Safety about Cambridge Health Alliance's plans to turn Somerville Hospital's Emergency Department into an urgent care center.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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207464: Director of Health and Human Services responding to #207378 re: the teen snow shoveling program.

Handouts:

- Sign (with 206835)
- Smoking Sign (with 206857)
- SHS Health Survey (with 207275)
- HHS Memo (with 207377)
- Snow Shoveling Memo (with 207378)