



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
CLERK OF COMMITTEES

June 14, 2010

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Rebekah L. Gewirtz	Vice Chair	Absent	
John M Connolly	Alderman At Large	Present	
Thomas F. Taylor	Ward Three Alderman	Present	
Sean T. O'Donovan	Ward Five Alderman	Present	
Maryann M. Heuston	Ward Two Alderman	Present	
Monica Lamboy	Exec. Director - OSPCD	Present	
Eddie Nuzzo	Superintendent of Inspectional Services	Present	
Denise Provost	State Representative	Present	
Patricia Jehlen	State Senator	Present	
Timothy Toomey	State Representative	Present	
Sal DiDomenico	State Senator	Present	
Bruce Bird	President & CEO	Present	
Peter Lenrow	Chairman	Present	
Michael Dwyer	Attorney	Present	
Cliff Robinson	Department of Mental Health	Present	
Paulette Renault-Caragianes	Director of Health	Present	
Angela Allen	Senior Analyst - SomerStat	Present	

Alderman Heuston was appointed as a member of the committee for this meeting only.

**188794 - That the Director of Public Health Bait Pleasant Ave., Grandview Ave., Walnut St., Vinal Ave. and Summit Ave. for Rodents, and Report Back to the Committee on Public Health & Safety for Further Action.:**

This issue will be discussed at the July meeting on the OSPCD action plan to deal with rodents.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**189120 - That the Director of SomerStat and the Director of Health Provide This Board with Statistics, Broken Down by Ward and Area, from 311 Calls or Calls Directly to the Department for the Last 18 Month Period Related to Complaints of Rats.:**

The problem with rodents in Ward Two has gotten worse since the Argenziano School was built. Mr. Rod, from Best Pest, said that he found burrow holes on Beacon, Sacramento and Kent

Streets and told the members that rats are in pockets throughout the city. He said that a concerted plan is needed to eliminate the rodent population and he noted that he is unable to access private property without the owners' permission. Alderman Heuston requested that 311 consider asking for an owner's permission to go on property when a rodent complaint is made as part of the intake process.

OSPCD is developing a comprehensive action plan to deal with the city's rodent problem. Data regarding complaints to 311 of rodents over the last 18 months was analyzed and an analysis of the problem during the last 3 years was presented by SomerStat. Several methods to alleviate the problem are being considered, including holistic approaches. Additional efforts are needed to raise public awareness to the problem and to motivate the public to assist in the efforts to eliminate food sources and implement other preventive measures. Inspectors will need additional training to deal with the problem and the Health Department will provide 311 operators with a script for collecting information that might prove helpful to the inspectors when responding to the call. Data will also be collected on the use of dumpsters and will be used as part of the regulation of dumpsters, which is in committee. SomerStat will collect data to determine if the trash ordinance is being enforced and will use that information to educate inspectors further on the rodent issues.

The city wants to examine the transfer station to determine if there is an issue with rodents at the facility and Alderman Heuston said that she hasn't received any complaints about that facility. The city will also be aggressive in its dealing with food establishments regarding any procedures that may be contributing to the problem. Additionally, the city will contact property owners who have fruit trees or compost piles on their property to make them aware of the problem and to inform them of pest control methods. Construction sites, demolition sites and rail lines will all be addressed to ensure that control measures are being taken.

The streets in the area of the MaxPack site have been baited and no evidence of borrows were found. Alderman O'Donovan requested that a property on Hinckley Street be inspected.

Chairman White will schedule a follow-up meeting on this matter in July.

<b>RESULT:</b> <b>KEPT IN COMMITTEE</b>
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**189246 - That This Board's Subcommittee on Public Health and Public Safety Convene a Meeting Inviting the Somerville Mental Health Association to Learn of Imminent State Cutbacks that Will Greatly Affect Our Constituency.:**

Representatives from the Somerville Mental Health Association (SMHA) discussed the funding cutbacks and alleged that their organization was being set up to fail by Vinfen. Vinfen has not renewed the contract for mobile community based rehab services teams. This means that 208 clients will not be able to obtain services from the SMHA and would have to obtain these services from Vinfen. Mr. Bird stated that Vinfen was disappointed with the SMHA's performance under the terms of their contract and had issues pertaining to meeting the standard of care. Vinfen offered assistance, including a reorganization of the SMHA, but talks broke off on June 11<sup>th</sup> of this year. Financial differences remain an obstacle in reaching some sort of compromise.

Mr. Dwyer contended that clients will suffer due to the decrease in offered programs. Social workers will not be able to go into the community to visit more than 600 clients to check how they're doing with their medications. Mr. Dwyer said that if the contract were extended for

another year, the SMHA would be able to re-engineer outpatient services for their 388 clients. If the SMHA were to close, 1,500 clients would be left without treatment and a place to go for services. Mr. Robinson said that the DMH budget has been cut by \$60 million in the past 2 years and that the DMH contract is adequate to provide services. He said that as resources became scarce, efforts were made to provide outpatient care through mobile community based teams. If a new agreement isn't reached between the SMHA and Vinfen, the DMH would have to explore its options and identify every client to make a determination of what services could be provided and where.

Alderman O'Donovan asked Senator Jehlen to apprise the state that nearly 400 individuals may be without services. Chairman White will keep the record open to allow the state delegation to submit comments and resolutions. Chairman White suggested that the state provide mediation in this matter.

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

**189417 - That the Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (ISD) Inspect the Miller and Sacramento Street Area for a Severe Rodent Problem and Inspect All Food Establishments and Businesses in that Area, Requiring Them to Demonstrate the Proper Disposal of Trash, Waste, Cooking Oil, Etc. and Cite Any Establishment Found to be in Violation of Any City Code or Ordinance.:**

See discussion of item # 189120

**RESULT: KEPT IN COMMITTEE**

- Any and All Business  
#189573:

Representative Provost told the members that the Speed Limit bill has been reported out of Ways and Means and is waiting to be released from the Committee on third Readings.