



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS CLERK OF COMMITTEES

April 2, 2018

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
William A. White Jr.	Chair	Present	
Jefferson Thomas ("J.T.") Scott	Vice Chair	Present	
Lance L. Davis	Ward Six Alderman	Absent	

Others present: Steve McEachern - DPW, Stan Koty - DPW, Rich Raiche - Engineering, John Deluca - Water/Sewer, Jason Grossfield - Law, Jackie Rossetti - Communications, Annie Connor - Legislative Liaison, Charles Sillari - Clerk of Committees.

The meeting took place at the Argenziano School and was called to order at 6:3 PM by Chairman White and adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Approval of the January 23, 2018 Minutes

RESULT:

ACCEPTED

200773: That the Commissioner of Public Works describe to this Board, the rationale for treating multi-unit residences the same as single family residences for purposes of volume-based escalation of water rates.

The committee discussed the metering options that a property owner has along with the average use of water for a 4 member household. Mr. Deluca stated that based on his review of those averages, it did not appear that there was a disparity in average water bills between single family and multi-unit buildings on a per unit basis. The Chair asked Mr. Deluca to speak directly with Ald. Davis on this item and that the item would be discussed at a future meeting.

RESULT:

KEPT IN COMMITTEE

202332: That the City Engineer repair the curb cut and sidewalk ramp at the intersection of Murdock and Clyde Streets.

Mr. Koty discussed the city's role in repairing handicapped ramps and the need to comply with ADA requirements when they are repaired. As a result, these repairs are not done in house but are done by an outside contractor. Mr. Reich explained why this particular location is challenging and a design will be initiated. Ald. Niedergang will receive an update.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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203711: That the City Solicitor consult with the Commissioner of Public Works to draft an ordinance requiring contractors and utilities to secure metal plates during street construction.

Mr. Raiche and Mr. Koty discussed how the plates are secured under the current DPW policies. The DPW will work with engineering to make a change to the existing policy to better insure that the plates do not move.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204263: That the Commissioner of Public Works request that the appropriate utility company address the low hanging wires on Mt. Vernon and Washington Streets.

Mr. Koty explained that these wires are low-voltage cable wires over which the City has no direct jurisdiction. Basically, they are under the control of Eversource. A letter was sent to Eversource and the Commissioner stated another one would be sent.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204486: Proposing an Ordinance for the management and elimination of natural gas leaks.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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204731: That the Commissioner of Public Works make the following repairs on Carver Street: fill the pothole behind the sewer cover; straighten the two curbstones on the south side of the street; and remove the pile of cement at the end of the street.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204856: That the Director of Engineering and the Commissioner of Public Works work with this Board to consider possible strategies to address the persistent issue of snow being plowed onto sidewalks during large snow storms.

The committee discussed a problem with snow removal at 10 Wyatt Street. Steve McEachern explained that the problem was communicated with the private contractor responsible and the problem will not persist. The snow removal ticket process was also discussed and how residents wrongly receiving tickets as a result of plows moving snow onto sidewalks can remedy the situation by directly contacting DPW with photos of the situation.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204877: That the Commissioner of Public Works report to this Board why snow plows cannot go at a slower speed to avoid throwing snow over curbs and onto sidewalks.

The committee along with Stan Koty and Steve McEachern discussed the snow plowing process and how certain storms require the trucks to travel at increased speeds. The city's snow

emergency policy was discussed. The policy for enforcing the sidewalk shoveling requirements for property owners can be found at <https://www.somervillema.gov/snowparking> - under tab labeled "Shoveling Rules for Property Owners". The "Plowing Procedures" policy can also be found at <https://www.somervillema.gov/snowparking> - under tab labeled "General Snow Emergency Information".

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204878: That the Commissioner of Public Works deploy a shoveling crew after major snowstorms to shovel out the sidewalks of elderly and disabled residents that get buried by city snowplows, and that the Director of Health and Human Services and the Director of Communications work together to register such residents so they can contact 311 to get their sidewalks re-shoveled after they have been buried by snowplows.

The Commissioner stated that there are no funds in the DPW budget to have sidewalks shoveled by hand by a crew or by hiring contractors.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204879: That the Director of Communications coordinate the messaging about when to shovel with the Commissioner of Public Works so that residents are not told to shovel their sidewalks when snow plows are still plowing snow over curbs and burying sidewalks.

The committee discussed the snow removal process and how the city works with residents to ensure the streets are safe for travel while at the same time trying not to inconvenience the residents. The Commissioner stated that he would contact the Communications Office about the possibility of including this information with the standard messaging.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204949: That the Commissioner of Public Works advise this Board on the priority policy for clearing snow from sidewalk curb cuts at intersections.

The committee discussed the process of clearing snow from curb cuts and bus stops. Areas near bus stops and those along the bus routes are priority items for clearance.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204950: That the Administration advise this Board on the city's ability to clear sidewalks that have not been cleared and charge the property owner for the cost.

Under the current City procedure, after 3 tickets are issued for failure to clean a sidewalk, the DPW will have the sidewalk cleared and the owner charges with the removal costs. The Committee expressed concern over the length of time that passes between the issuance of the 3 tickets and then the sidewalk being cleared.

RESULT:	WORK COMPLETED
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204944: 23 residents submitting a petition re: the trees removed on Beacon Street.

Mr. Rawson discussed the challenges of the Beacon Street construction project and the turnover in personnel.

And. Scott asked about the history of the Beacon Street project and how the removal of certain trees may not have complied with the city's tree ordinance. The committee discussed how in the future the city will work towards strict compliance with the tree removal process, especially with regard to state funded projects..

The committee discussed the notice and hearing process for an additional 7 trees that are slated for removal on Beacon Street.

Contractor selection and potential claims that the city may have for unlawful removal of trees was discussed by the city and Attorney Grossfield. Attorney Grossfield will follow up with a legal memorandum that will be submitted to the Committee.

Ald. Scott sponsored residents to speak and express their concerns about the Beacon Street project. Information was requested by said residents.

Motion by And. Scott for an opinion from the City Solicitor on the ability of the city to bar a contractor from future city work. Approved

Motion by Ald. Scott that the administration provide a written response to the request for an accounting requested in the Petition that the residents had submitted. Approved

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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205010: That the City Solicitor advise this Board about whether the way in which the Beacon Street trees were taken down was compliant with state law and the city's Tree Ordinance.

RESULT:	KEPT IN COMMITTEE
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Handout:

- Photo (with 204856)