



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

City Council Legislative Matters Committee

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

6:00 PM

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and was called to order at 6:03 pm by Chair Scott and adjourned at 7:48 pm with a roll call vote of 5 in favor (Councilors Davis, Mbah, Ewen-Campen, Strezo and Scott), none opposed, and none absent.

Also present: Anne Gill - Director of People Operations, James Donovan - Deputy Police Chief, Colin Zeigler - Director of Public Health, Amanda Nagim-Williams - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Delaney Fisher-Cassiol - Clerk of Committees

Roll Call

Present: Ward Six City Councilor Lance L. Davis, City Councilor At Large Wilfred N. Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Kristen Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Jefferson Thomas (J.T.) Scott

1. Committee Minutes (ID # [26-1385](#)) Approval of the Minutes of the Legislative Matters Committee Meeting of September 8, 2026.

RESULT: **ACCEPTED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Davis Square Neighborhood Recognition

2. Public Communication (ID # [26-1165](#)) Davis Square Neighborhood Council submitting comments re: formal recognition by this Council as a neighborhood council under Chapter 7, Article IX of the Code of Ordinances.

Chair Scott introduced the items and highlighted the previous public hearing as well as additional community outreach. He noted that the Union Square Neighborhood Council had raised a concern regarding the language governing the formation and structure of the Davis Square Neighborhood Council's bylaws. Councilor Davis reviewed the attachment *2026-09-15 Legislative Matters - Memo from Law Dept (with 26-1165)* from the City Attorney and noted that the ordinance allows for membership by individuals outside the neighborhood's geographic boundaries, with membership criteria determined by the neighborhood council within the requirements of the ordinance. Councilor Davis also reviewed the Union Square Neighborhood Council's comments in the attachment, *2026-09-15 Legislative Matters - USNC Comment (with 26-1165)* which noted that the Davis Square

Neighborhood Council's catchment area may be too large and includes areas that would not generally be considered part of Davis Square. Councilor Davis also discussed the ordinance's provisions regarding neighborhood councils negotiating community benefits agreements (CBA's) with developers and noted that any resulting community benefits must directly benefit Somerville residents. Councilor Ewen-Campen explained that neighborhood councils are independent organizations and are not part of the City government. He noted that the purpose of the recognition ordinance is to ensure that organizations seeking City Council recognition have bylaws, elections, transparent meetings and geographic boundaries that they take seriously. Councilor Ewen-Campen also raised the broader question of whether the Council should review and amend the ordinance. Councilor Davis noted that the ordinance allows recognized neighborhood councils to negotiate community benefits agreements with developers when a project significantly impacts their neighborhood. Councilor Davis also highlighted the support the Union Square Neighborhood Council has provided to the Davis Square Neighborhood Council.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

3. Public
Communication
(ID # [26-1218](#))

Davis Square Neighborhood Council submitting information re: item #26-1165, a request for formal recognition as a neighborhood council.

This item was discussed with item #26-1165.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

4. Public
Communication
(ID # [26-1262](#))

6 residents submitting comments re: item #26-1165, Davis Square Neighborhood Council recognition.

This item was discussed with item #26-1165.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED TO BE MARKED WORK COMPLETED

Other Ordinances

5. Ordinance
(ID # [26-1111](#))

By Councilor Link, Councilor Hardt, Councilor Clingan, Councilor Strezo, Councilor Mbah and Councilor Sait
That Chapter 3, Article VIII, Division 1 of the Code of Ordinances be amended as detailed within.

Chair Scott introduced the item and noted that the only retail animal store in Somerville recently closed, so this is looking ahead. Deputy Chief James

Donovan noted that the ordinance gives the police an enforcement mechanism and said he had no concerns with it. Chair Scott reviewed the attachment *Retail Animal Sales Ordinance-v4*. Amanda Nagim-Williams, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, noted that Inspectional Services (ISD) should not be listed as an enforcing department. Councilor Davis and Chair Scott spoke in support of keeping the language as written, noting that it does not mandate ISD to enforce the ordinance but instead allows for the possibility.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

6. Mayor's Request
(ID # [26-1257](#))

Requesting approval of a Home Rule Petition to regulate anticoagulant rodenticides.

Director of Public Health Colin Zeigler discussed the home rule petition and ordinance regarding rodent control. Councilor Mbah introduced the item and noted that the data is clear that rodenticides have negative consequences, emphasizing the need for pest control methods that protect public health and the environment. Director Zeigler explained that the state regulates pesticides and pest control and licenses pest control technicians to use these chemicals as part of their work. Because the City cannot ban the use of these chemicals under current state regulations, the home rule petition would allow the City to regulate their use. The ordinance would codify a ban on anticoagulant rodenticides on City-owned properties and as part of City programs. Councilor Ewen-Campen spoke in support of the items and asked for clarification on how anticoagulants are used, their efficacy, and alternatives. Director Zeigler noted that these products contain a high amount of poison in a small amount of bait and said pest control can be addressed through education and enforcement efforts. He said the City is developing community-based responses to rodent control and also uses a vitamin D-based concentrate as an alternative, which has resulted in reductions in rodent activity. Councilor Ewen-Campen noted that the ordinance includes a waiver provision allowing anticoagulants to be used if other methods are not working. Director Zeigler clarified that the bait boxes will remain the same, but the bait used in them will change.

RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**

AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

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7. Ordinance (ID # [26-1310](#)) By Councilor Hardt, Councilor Link, Councilor Clingan and Councilor Mbah
That Chapter 6 of the Code of Ordinances be amended as detailed within.
This item was discussed with item #26-1257.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott
8. Mayor's Request (ID # [26-0956](#)) Requesting ordainment of an amendment to Section 2-323 of the Code of Ordinances to update categories and associated salaries for non-union positions.
Chair Scott noted that this item was submitted after the annual budget process to update salaries in alignment with the approved budget. Director of People Operations Anne Gill reviewed the attachment *FY27 SCO Section 2-323* and noted that there were no major changes, with most changes relating to titles and departments. Councilor Ewen-Campen asked about the change to the Director of Water and Sewer Operations position. Director Gill explained that the position oversees operations and does not require the engineering expertise or credentials needed to perform the actual engineering work. Councilor Mbah asked how the salary categories were determined, and Director Gill explained that the City conducted a consultant-led market study to compare compensation for similar positions, which informed the grades and salaries.
RESULT: **RECOMMENDED TO BE APPROVED**
AYE: Ward Six City Councilor Davis, City Councilor At Large Mbah, Ward Three City Councilor Ewen-Campen, City Councilor At Large Strezo and Ward Two City Councilor Scott

Referenced Documents:

- 2026-09-15 Legislative Matters - USNC Comment (with 26-1165)
- 2026-09-15 Legislative Matters - Memo from Law Dept (with 26-1165)