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October 2, 2008

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The Committee on Housing and Community Development convened as a Committee of the Whole on October 2, 2008 with Chairman Rebekah Gewirtz presiding and Committee members Aldermen William White, Thomas Taylor, Maryann Heuston, Sean O'Donovan, William Roche, Walter Pero, Dennis Sullivan and Robert Trane also present and voting. Also present were City Solicitor John Gannon, Chief of Staff Michael Lambert, Monica Lamboy and Sergio Lucan from SPCD, Stephen Mackey from the Chamber of Commerce and interested members of the public.

**Linkage Fees:**

Mr. Gannon addressed the committee regarding linkage fees for affordable housing and informed the members that the fees are determined by ordinance. With respect to Assembly Square, a covenant was made between the city and the developer for payment of \$250,000 for affordable housing linkage fees, paid in installments. Mr. Gannon noted that the new ordinance provides a mechanism for linkage fees. A copy of the old ordinance will be sent to the Board of Aldermen for its information. (Amended at BOA meeting on 10-7-08, by Ald. White to have the City Solicitor appear before the committee for a follow up on the applicability of the Linkage Ordinance.)

**Greenberg Study:**

Ms. Lamboy informed the members that the study isn't completed yet, due in part to the amount of time expended dealing with the proposed Green Line maintenance facility. The development of the Union Square area will be more complex than that of Assembly Square due to the existence of roadways, structures, etc. Although Somerville is centrally located, the Brickbottom area is essentially isolated. The city wants to encourage economic development in the area and believes that another Green Line stop is needed between Lechmere and the Innerbelt. The city will attempt to bring in sustainable development by persuading life science businesses to develop in the area. Somerville also needs to distinguish itself from other areas by offering something special to attract developers, e.g., a sports facility. Open space is also a priority in development, as this factor is used by employers to attract employees. Connectivity for the innerbelt might require the construction of tunnels, which would be long, expensive and difficult due to existing barriers in the way. The timeline for development is 30 years and Alderman White stated that he wants the city to encourage office building and research development within the next few years.

The Executive Office of Transportation's (EOT) proposal for a Green Line maintenance facility brings no benefit to the city. SPCD brought in a railroad consultant to assist with designing another shape for the maintenance facility and settled on a "pizza box" shape, with egress from 2 sides. The automobile parking area would be shared between the MBTA and the city and would allow for additional commercial development. Other scenarios were also proposed and are included with this report. Alderman Heuston stated her objection to 3 of the plans that do not service the Brickbottom area. Mr. Lucan told the members that the MBTA discarded the North Point area as a possible site for the facility.

Alderman White requested that the City Solicitor provide the committee with a draft opinion regarding the city's rights to air rights over the maintenance facility.

No papers were acted on.

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Alderman Rebekah L. Gewirtz, Chairman  
Committee on Housing and Community Development

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report of the Committee on Housing and  
Community Development meeting as a  
Committee of the Whole, October 2, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

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Clerk