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March 25, 2008

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

The Committee on Legislative Matters convened on March 25, 2008 with Chairman Thomas Taylor presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Walter Pero, Rebekah Gewirtz and Dennis Sullivan also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Bruce Desmond, City Solicitor John Gannon, Assistant Solicitor David Shapiro, Chief of Staff Michael Lambert, Monica Lamboy from SPCD, Health Director Noreen Burke, Tammy Freitas da Rocha from Somerville Cares About Prevention, Stephen Mackey from the Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Wilson from Historic Preservation and Dick Bauer from the Historic Commission.

**184935 – regulating billboards and other forms of outdoor alcohol advertising**

Ms. da Rocha distributed the proposed ordinance and discussed substance abuse prevention and the manner in which billboards have an impact on young people. Ms. da Rocha reviewed data compiled from Somerville's Middle Schools and noted that, with respect to drinking and drugs, Somerville's Middle School students substance use is much higher than the national level, with almost one in five students in grades 6-8 reporting drinking alcohol in the 30 days prior to the survey being conducted. Mr. Shapiro discussed the fines associated with the proposal and said that the ordinance would be narrowly tailored and limited to certain areas. He also noted that signs associated with the MBTA might not be able to be regulated. Alderman Gewirtz's motion **that language be added to the proposed ordinance compelling violators to pay the attorneys' fees for enforcement**, was approved.

**185121 - adoption of a plastic bag recycling program**

Alderman Gewirtz requested that the Solicitor submit a draft ordinance to the Board of Aldermen within the next two weeks.

**184538 – tree preservation**

Mr. Lambert informed the members that he would be meeting with DPW Commissioner Koty and Assistant Solicitor Shapiro on this matter later in the week.

**183731 - map amendments to the Historic District Ordinance**

Ms. Lamboy gave a status report on this item and Chairman Taylor scheduled action on the matter for April 29<sup>th</sup>.

**182645 – demolition by neglect**

Ms. Lamboy discussed the differences in the roles of the Building Department and the Historic Preservation Commission and also reviewed the appeals process and the city's ability to step in and repair a property and then place a lien on it. Ms. Wilson and Mr. Shapiro discussed the fines that might be assessed, including obtaining an injunction and Mr. Bauer explained the legal authority of the ordinance.

The committee discussed matters before it and took action on the following 2 items:

**182645:** Order - By Ald. Taylor, That the City Solicitor prepare an ordinance prohibiting the demolition of structures by neglect of necessary maintenance

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 In favor

**184935:** Ordinance - By Ald. Desmond, Sullivan, White and Connolly, Regulating billboards and other forms of outdoor alcohol advertising.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be approved

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 4 - 0 In favor

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Alderman Thomas F. Taylor, Chairman  
Committee on Legislative Matters

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Report of the Committee on Legislative Matters,  
March 25, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

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Clerk