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March 19, 2008

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Committee on Public Health and Public Safety convened on March 19, 2008, with Chairman William White presiding and Committee Member Alderman Walter Pero also present and voting. Also present were Alderman Sean O'Donovan, City Solicitor John Gannon, George Landers from ISD and interested members of the public.

492 Medford Street:

The owner of the property has recently passed away and it is expected that the property will be tied up in probate. Mr. Landers told the members that he has been working with the owner's daughter who will work with the city and follow the ZBA requirements. Additionally, Mr. Landers said that she would pay to have the property boarded up.

31 Wilton Street:

Mr. Landers informed the members that he had a meeting, at the property, with Attorney Bruce MacDonald who represents the property owners. Mr. Landers explained that, according to Attorney McDonald, the residents are given urine tests regularly and are checked to make sure they are not sex offenders. The house is a very clean, legal 2 family consisting of 2 kitchens, 2 baths and 6 bedrooms. There are no building code violations. Mr. Gannon discussed the issues surrounding the property and told the members that the residents of the property are considered disabled and the owners attorney has claimed are protected by the Zoning Enabling Act. He further stated that he is currently researching the city's rights with respect to the disabled status and noted that the City of Medford is currently involved in litigation regarding a similar situation. Chairman White inquired as to whether congregate housing is listed in the Somerville Zoning Ordinances table of uses, whether it required a Special Permit and what type of state licenses and programs the owners are required to obtain in order to operate a sober house. Alderman White also asked the City Solicitor to consult with the Medford City Solicitor with regard to Medford's lawsuit.

Resident Joseph Lynch discussed his concerns regarding the matter and Alderman O'Donovan asked Mr. Lynch to submit them to the committee, in writing. Resident Robert Langil expressed concern with the property owner making excessive profits from the property and with the ability of the residents to manipulate urine tests.

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

184593: Communication - From Public Health Director responding to #184372 re:
School Health Services.

RECOMMENDATION: Should be placed on file
VOTE: Unanimous, 2 - 0 in favor

Alderman William A. White, Jr., Chairman
Committee on Public Health and Public Safety

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Public Health and
Public Safety, March 19, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk