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March 22, 2010

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE**  
**ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Committee on Public Health and Public Safety convened on March 22, 2010, with Chairman William White presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Rebekah Gewirtz and John Connolly also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Maryann Heuston and Bruce Desmond, Administrative Assistant Matt Dias, DPW Commissioner Stan Koty, Steve McEachern from the DPW, Superintendent of Inspectional Services Ed Nuzzo, Traffic Engineer Terry Smith, ADA Coordinator Carlene Campbell, Assistant City Solicitor David Shapiro, Tara Acker of SomerStat and Steve Craig of SomerStat,

**188719 - pedestrian crosswalk signs:**

Mr. Koty told the members that these signs were moved during snow storms but not from schools. Going forward, the signs will be left out and moved to the side of the road immediately before a snow storm. Mr. McEachern said that he would contact the manufacturer to refurbish the signs that can be fixed and replace the ones in the worst condition. Alderman Heuston stated that she does not believe there is enough manpower to keep up with moving them and she would like the DPW to revisit the idea of leaving them out. She also requested to know the locations of the signs in Ward 2 so that she might be able to keep track of them. Mr. Smith stated that there are 35 signs throughout the city and that they cost \$300 each and are usually removed in the winter and put back out on April 1<sup>st</sup> so they don't get ruined. Mr. Koty stated that the sign locations are chosen by DPW in conjunction with Traffic and Parking. Chairman White directed Mr. Koty to put the signs back out when he feels it is appropriate to do so and to provide the Board of Aldermen with a list of the sign locations.

**188865 - defective street lights:**

Tara Acker and Steve Craig discussed the protocol when someone calls to report a broken street light. A daily list is sent to NSTAR but the city does not follow-up on it. Mr. Craig stated he is working on a system to track NSTAR's progress in repairing the lights and he hopes that NSTAR will provide a weekly or bi-weekly report. Mr. Craig noted that only 10% of callers call back to report that a light has not been fixed. Chairman White would like an ordinance to establish a fine for public utilities if lights are not fixed within a specific amount of time. There was some discussion about how utility poles are identified when a request gets submitted and whether NSTAR is not responding because they are given addresses and not pole numbers.

Chairman White's motion *that the City Solicitor determine the ability of the City to draft and implement an ordinance requiring public utility companies to make requested repairs within a specific period of time or be fined*, was approved.

**188934 - handicapped van spaces restrictions:**

Ms. Campbell discussed her communications with Alderman Sullivan and said that according to the Mass Office of Disabilities, anyone with a handicapped placard can park in a spot designated for a handicapped van.

**188942 - 12 Warwick Street:**

Mr. Nuzzo stated that ISD has been to the property numerous times and reported that although the house is in disrepair, the snow is always shoveled. The city is owed \$25,957.39 in back taxes, water bills and citations. Chairman White directed Mr. Nuzzo to contact Alderman O'Donovan for the property owner's contact information.

**Other business:**

Mr. Shapiro distributed a proposed ordinance dealing with sober houses in the city and gave a brief discussion as to why he created this document. The Solicitor's Office created an application and protocol process for those seeking a waiver from the zoning code for the creation of a sober house. Chairman White explained why this proposed ordinance would help the city to control the opening of sober houses. Alderman Connolly requested that Mr. Shapiro provide information as to whom is considered disabled and he expressed concern about pre-release prisoners being put up in a halfway house, making reference to Communities for People which houses troubled adolescents and has been a problem in some neighborhoods. Chairman White suggested that this matter be discuss by the Committee on Legislative Matters.

The next meetings of the committee will be on April 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM and April 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

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

**188576:** Order - By Ald. White, That the attached communication from Market Basket, re: #188285, be referred to the Committee on Public Health and Safety.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Should be placed on file

**VOTE:** Unanimous, 3 - 0 in favor

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