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June 13, 2007

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC UTILITIES AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works convened on June 13, 2007, with Chairman Walter Pero presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Bruce Desmond and Rebekah Gewirtz also present and voting. Also present were Alderman John Connolly, Mr. Kevin Douglas from F. W. Russell & Son, resident Sean Lynch and Meghann Ackerman from the Somerville Journal.

Mr. Douglas was asked to appear to respond to the Board of Aldermen's concerns regarding the throwing of trash cans, excessive speed on city streets and collecting trash before 7:00 AM.

Alderman Gewirtz asked Mr. Douglas to explain the policies in place at Russell Disposal regarding these issues. Mr. Douglas stated that throwing trash receptacles is not acceptable and that the company's policy is not to throw them at all, but rather to return them to the approximate place from which they were taken. Russell Disposal has 8 trucks servicing city and this makes it difficult to pinpoint the offending crew(s). Mr. Douglas stated that complaints are taken seriously, and appreciated, and requested that all complaints include the truck number, so that the company can determine which employee might be responsible. Mr. Douglas assured the members that offending employees would be spoken to, have a notice placed in their personnel files and be subject to possible dismissal. In cases where an offending employee can't be pinpointed, a specific crew is assigned to that area to better control and monitor the situation. Mr. Douglas told the members that because of the nature of the work, there is a large turnover in the workforce, making it difficult to retain good employees. At certain times of the year, e.g., when students at Tufts and moving in or out, the demand is much higher, therefore, additional trucks are brought in from other cities to assist with the collection.

Regarding collection before 7:00 AM, Mr. Douglas stated that the starting time is stressed with employees. He asked that the members verify that it is, in fact, Russell Disposal and not JRM that is picking up trash prior to 7:00 AM, as both companies' truck look similar.

Chairman Pero asked Mr. Douglass to check the route being used by his company's vehicles when traveling to the DPW and also requested that a list of Russell Disposal's commercial accounts, (in the city), be provided to the committee.

No papers were acted on.

Alderman Walter Pero, Chairman
Committee on Public Utilities and Public Works

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Public Utilities and
Public Works, June 13, 2007

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk