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May 30, 2006

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Committee on Housing and Community Development held a meeting on May 30, 2006 with Chairman Rebekah Gewirtz presiding and Committee members Aldermen Walter Pero and Thomas Taylor also present and voting. Also present were Aldermen Denise Provost and William White, James Kostaras and Chris DaVita from SPCD, Solicitor John Gannon, Mike Lambert from the Mayor's Office, John Correia and LuAnn David.

Mr. Kostaras and Mr. DaVita addressed the committee regarding the issue of air rights over MBTA tracks and informed the committee that the MBTA has been negotiating with Lesley University for the rights, and to date, no formal agreement or plans have been reached, apparently because Lesley University has purchased a building on Mass Ave. and is moving ahead with developing that parcel. Mr. DaVita believes that Lesley still wants the air rights, but is preoccupied with this latest development project. Alderman Provost informed the members that Lesley merged with the Art Institute of Boston and wants to merge it onto the Lesley campus, so they are going to master plan air rights and their recently purchases parcel. Mr. Kostaras noted that, according to the initial proposal by Lesley, the portion of the air rights in that is in Somerville would not be built on.

Alderman White spoke about the MBTA's plans to erect billboards on some of its property located in Somerville, noting that the MBTA has tabled the matter in light of the city's complaint to the outdoor advertising board, stating that the city is entitled to notification prior to placing any billboards in the city. Mr. Gannon reviewed the city's position indicated that there would be implications for other cities and towns, as well, and stated that the MBTA should have had a public hearing on the matter. Mr. Gannon told the members that the city remains firm in its stance and is prepared to take legal action, if necessary. Mayor Curtatone will be meeting with MBTA General Manager Dan Grabauskas in the near future and will discuss this matter with him.

No papers were acted on.

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

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committee on Housing and
Community Development, May 30, 2006

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk