



## City Council

### Health & Human Services Committee

36 Court Street  
Springfield, MA 01103

<http://www.springfieldcityhall.com>

Brian Santaniello (Chair)

~Final~

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March 25, 2026

2:00 PM

City Hall - Room 200

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### Roll Call

#### In Person

- Councilor Brian Santaniello
- Tim Allen
- Verne McArthur
- Stephen Howard
- Sarah Heinonen (The Reminder)

#### Zoom

- Councilor Zaida Govan (IO neighborhood Council)
- Councilor Victor Davila
- Atty Ken Shea
- Kathy Brown ( E. Spfld Neighborhood Council)
- David Russo
- Marie Koski (E. Spfld Neighborhood Council)
- Sarita Hudson (Public Health Asthma Coalition)

| Attendee Name     | Title                   | Status  | Arrived |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Brian Santaniello | City Councilor At Large | Present |         |
| Gerry Martin      | City Councilor — Ward 7 | Excused |         |
| Maria Perez       | City Councilor — Ward 1 | Excused |         |
| Malo Brown        | City Councilor — Ward 4 | Excused |         |
| Zaida Govan       | City Councilor — Ward 8 | Virtual |         |
| Kateri Walsh      | City Councilor At Large | Excused |         |
| Justin Hurst      | City Councilor At Large | Excused |         |
| Victor Davila     | City Councilor — Ward 6 | Virtual |         |

|                   |                         |         |  |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------|--|
| Michael Fenton    | City Councilor — Ward 2 | Excused |  |
| Jose Delgado      | City Councilor At Large | Excused |  |
| Lavar Click-Bruce | City Councilor — Ward 5 | Excused |  |
| Melvin Edwards    | City Councilor — Ward 3 | Absent  |  |
| Tracye Whitfield  | City Councilor At Large | Excused |  |

### **Call To Order**

2:00 PM Meeting called to order on March 25, 2026, in Hybrid Room 200, 36 Court Street, Springfield, MA 01103.

### **Public Portion**

1. Updates on Biomass

### **Minutes:**

#### **March 25, 2026, Health and Human Services Committee Meeting Summary on Biomass Plant Permitting and Community Impact**

Chaired by Brian Santaniello, the committee met with Former Councilor Tim Allen, Councilor Zaida Govan, Attorney Ken Shea, Sarita Hudson, Michael Ambusey, Councilor Victor Davila, and other stakeholders to review the proposed East Springfield biomass plant's legal, permitting, legislative, and public health status.

Councilor Brian Santaniello provided an overview, noting ongoing legal, administrative, and health-related uncertainties. Attorney Ken Shea reported that the original 2008 permit issued to Palmer Paving may not have transferred to the current entity, and the building department's confirmation is pending. He noted the permit's five-year validity may be near expiration due to prolonged legal appeals. Following a Supreme Judicial Court ruling, the Springfield Zoning Board of Appeals issued a building permit in early 2024, but additional approvals, including a MassDEP clean air permit, are still required.

Sarita Hudson highlighted Springfield's continued high asthma rates, citing that 52.8 percent of adults and 39.4 percent of children have poorly controlled asthma, with 47.8 percent of children missing school due to asthma. She stated that biomass emissions could worsen respiratory conditions and affect regional air quality. She and other public health representatives

recommended a Health Impact Assessment before development.

The legislative context was noted, referencing state legislation supported by Representatives Orlando Ramos and Gomez to remove biomass subsidies, which could affect the project's financial feasibility.

Former Councilor Tim Allen and Councilor Zaida Govan referenced Jesse Letterman's historical role in over 15 years of community opposition, as well as prior contributions by Councilors Edwards and Fenton in delaying the project. Michael Ambusey emphasized continued organizing to maintain a focus on environmental and public health concerns. Councilor Victor Davila noted that potential impacts extend beyond Springfield and encouraged regional engagement.

The committee agreed that permitting remains uncertain, particularly regarding transfer status, remaining validity, and outstanding environmental approvals. Outstanding questions include whether the new entity has applied for a permit transfer, the remaining duration of the permit, the developer's plans, legislative outcomes, and whether a Health Impact Assessment will be conducted.

Councilor Brian Santaniello concluded that continued monitoring, regional coordination, and attention to public health data are necessary.

[MIN\_SIGNATURES]