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Patrick signs law creating Somerville's Municipal Hearing Officer job

Thu May 15, 2008, 03:18 PM EDT

SOMERVILLE - The following is a press release from Somerville's legislative delegation at the State House.

The Somerville legislative delegation announced today that Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Establishing the Position of Municipal Hearing Officer for the City of Somerville."

Having a municipal hearing officer will allow the city to better enforce sanitary code, building code, and other city ordinances, and to streamline the appeals process. This officer will be able to conduct hearings on such violations, allowing for speedier and more convenient resolution of ticket appeals as opposed to taking the matter to court.

Rep. Denise Provost said, "This new appeal process will provide a quicker, simpler way for people in Somerville to dispute tickets they think were issued wrongly or in error."

"Creating a municipal hearing officer position has been a priority for the mayor and the Board of Aldermen," Sen. Pat Jehlen said. "I am happy that we could facilitate this request and enable the city to hold more frequent and efficient hearings."

Somerville is one of several cities in the Commonwealth to take advantage of a provision of law that allows a city to establish a Municipal Hearing Officer, a position appointed by the Mayor, with the approval of the Board of Aldermen.

"The Municipal Hearing Officer will serve as an important and effective resource for citizens who want to contest citations for violations of city ordinances without being required to go directly to the district court," said Rep. Tim Toomey. "I'm very pleased that Governor Patrick has signed this important Home Rule Petition into law."

"I expect we'll continue to see our home rule petitions move through towards passage," added Rep. Carl Sciortino.

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