

Somerville Climate Forward

Buildings Working Group Meeting #2

November 30, 2017

- Liz Galloway
 - Katrina Hall
 - Michelle Apigian
 - Stephen Moore, Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change
 - Melissa Woods, City of Somerville
 - Dana Clawson
 - Craig Foley
 - Emily Chessin
 - Oliver Sellers-Garcia, City of Somerville
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- Liz: How do buildings get off natural gas? Boulder example—analysis of doing heat pumps and PV. High cost but payback in about 4 years. Adding cars, the financial payback is faster and comes out to about equal costs as now. Boulder did not look at building enclosure. Look at programs that promote contractors who bundle all the different things that need to be done together. Our EUI is higher than Boulder—not sure that we could meet all our needs with solar. Could we do an analysis that shows the package of measures that would get us in the right energy ballpark for different Somerville building typologies? Need to think about refrigerant management as heat pumps become more common and we use more a/c. Trigger through the permitting process to do education. Promote through a solarize like program.
 - Katrina: benchmarking is important so that people are on a level playing field. This will help with the split incentive. Need more data access and better data quality. If we do benchmarking, we really need to have accurate data. It would be better if the benchmarking data didn't have to go through the building owner at all.
 - Michelle: net-zero performance regulation. But probably we shouldn't think of it as being net zero on site because that's not going to be possible for most sites in Somerville. Passivhaus + ready for renewable should be the new baseline. We need to just use as little energy as possible. This is actually possible to do with new construction.
 - Stephen: Resilient design needs be a big part of this. There are non-building level things that the City can do to reduce the amount of resilience that would be needed at the building level.
 - Melissa: ISD needs to have a project liaison role for sustainability, like Planning does with zoning/planning questions. If we were to have a retrofit toolkit, we would need someone to help them figure it out. Can someone within the city answer questions before design/construction decisions are made? An inspector will have to approve permits anyway, so there is value in being

able to answer questions ahead of time. There are a lot of single and two family homes in Somerville—those owners can pull permits themselves.

- Dana: White roofs—this is such a simple, cost effective solution. Can be done with outreach programs. Can be combined with community programming.
- Emily: Point of sale/lease energy disclosure. This might be the quickest way to educate people. From a legal perspective, how can you mandate that people address the energy performance? What standard would you be required to get to? Make sure to tie the score to actions that can be taken. Energy disclosure needs to be tied to behavior choices.
- Craig: He had worked with Sen. Downing on a bill that would require this. Strongly opposed by association of realtors. Vermont Energy Efficiency Corporation—look at this example. [Katrina: there is a very big difference between modeled and actual energy usage.] Features of the home would give a good sense of overall efficiency. Portland OR has passed a bill that uses a score developed by Earth Advantage. Sec Beaton is bringing back the point of sale requirement; Charlie Baker will sign it if it comes to his desk. Borrower gets benefit for buying a home that has a higher score. Scores shouldn't rely on a totally automated analysis based on publicly accessible data; it would be better if the scores were based off of a MassSave audit.
- Net zero performance regulation: look at 40R smart growth overlay districts. Would allow more specific guidance on green attributes on homes. You can go beyond stretch code.
- Need to capture this moment when there are so many renovations happening.
- Contractor education is critical. Need to target contractors, but do the benefits get passed on to the occupant and the environment? We need to think of contractors as our partners.
- Cambridge: raise permitting fee, but then provide a performance-based rebate.
- Can City do residential PACE all on its own? Financing for energy efficiency sticks with the property. This has worked in California. [Craig: the energy contractor gets the first priority for repayment.]
- Somerville has the highest fees of area municipalities.
- Rebates can actually be a deterrent—just lower fees.
- Outreach programs (like solarize) should bundle actions that need to be taking.
- Who can step in and lower interest rates and rents if building performance is met? Can the City set up a fund that green investors go into? Or find a banking partner? Or work with regional partners?
- What can we work out with our Assessing office to keep assessments the same if you take certain actions (like what happens with solar)?
- Show people how property values are positively affected by energy efficiency.
- Can we co-sign to get a HEAT loans?
- Liz: district energy really makes sense in a few places like Central Hill, but not that many sites in Somerville. For heating, CHP is still combustion-based; sourcing of the biofuel becomes extremely important. (MassArt: they are actually going in the direction of being modular and taking some of their buildings off of a central steam system.) Developer/occupant situation isn't always conducive to district energy. Need to do study and planning. Disclosure ordinance would let us do this planning better.
- Battery storage—put batteries where cars are parked now.