

## **Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change**

Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2018

Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue., Somerville, MA

### **Attendees:**

Ramón Bueno – Commissioner

Joshua Hodge – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Michelle Melton – Commissioner

Stephen Moore – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

Oliver Sellers-Garcia – (member ex-officio) Director of Office of Sustainability and Environment

Jocelyn Newhouse

Larry Yu

Mary Mangan

Alex Friedman

Isabel Kaubisch

### Review and adopt the minutes from the September 12, 2017 meeting

- Approved

### Shadow carbon pricing

- No news yet on DOER grant award; Oliver to check on schedule. In a month or so talks will start with brokers on renewables procurement for city operations. It may be worth checking the new IPCC report for possible suggestions on carbon pricing options, alternatives.
- Note the coming Environmental Business Council (EBC) forum on carbon pricing. (Friday October 26, 2018)

### Renter initiatives

- Oliver spoke with Mike Tremblay (Sr transportation planner) about bike pods; his comments: worth exploring, it has come up before, the issue is limited right of way space, how many bikes can be accommodated vs. alternatives; they had looked at business and larger buildings as perhaps being better options; he is open to re-exploring it in a residential setting. Michelle: what about approaching private owners to agree in return for some tax benefit? Eliza: there are main roadways with underutilized parking (e.g., Broadway), can we research also how new buildings with bike parking are faring, how well used are they? Michelle: what do we need to look into: neighborhoods willing, companies, etc. Oliver: things move quicker when a recommendation fits into something already moving forward, e.g., a streetscape redevelopment project; will check with Transportation and Infrastructure Department. Suggest that subcommittee members talk to others (towns, bike groups) who have done this to learn about their experiences.

- Mary M: Winter Hill neighborhood and Gilman neighborhood have projects or initiatives underway.
- Oliver: It's useful to look at other CEUCC initiatives that went well: started with a good idea, followed by some research on how it works, or has worked, etc. Were there other ideas from the Renter Initiative group? Perhaps with a bundle of ideas it is easier to move forward and gain interest. Michelle: yes, e.g., landlord certification program, mattress recycling, promoting 100% renewables for new residents, etc. Eliza: that falls in the implementation and rollout of Somerville Climate Forward (SCF). Oliver: great ideas on the list, most helpful to summarize, prioritize some and take them a bit to the next level; possible scenario: arrange a meeting with Housing folks on those CEUCC priority items, or something that jumps out from a landlord survey.
- Eliza: some parking is underutilized; this could replace income lost from displaced parking meters. Jocelyn: how do Hubway spots get authorized?
- Oliver: what was the motivation originally? Eliza: steps that benefit renters, something they want. Oliver: might want to define smaller geographies or limited duration pilots. Michelle: visibility in the community and city messaging is key. Joshua: is there a way to incentivize businesses to contribute/pay for it, and get "visual credits" (e.g., Uber or other locals)?
- Oliver: next steps: looking at it in more detail and present a summary is the way to go; also views from landlords that could be beneficial.
- Stephen: Winter Hill Neighborhood Assoc has been talking more about renter concerns (also Gilman neighborhood).
- Eliza: some kind of Google outreach
- Mary M: neighborhood electric vehicle (EV) charging (not in commercial spaces); Steven: City has RFP to study issue of EV infrastructure implementation.
- Larry Yu: looking for larger scale projects
- Alex Friedman? (Tufts): concerned that the time is now, so education for landlords and realtors ASAP is important; best to not have to select too little to focus on.
- Oliver: hearing from CEUCC on landlords is valuable (e.g., their heating is the primary GHG contribution), plus we're a city with many small landlords (vs. a few dominant ones). What is the top 15-20% of what they support... not a conversation the city often has across the table with them (the Solarize survey got >400 responses).
- Isabel: could there be some prize incentive?

### Somerville Climate Forward implementation

- Oliver: confirmed **Wed. Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>** as the release date, and Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> for a prep meeting for those working group members interested in participating in the event. This will not be the traditional format, stations around the room with working group (WG) members, "today we start acting on this" message, stations to sign up (e.g., 100% RE); talking with Greentown as possible site. Want a good mix of folks to talk to/with the crowd, including the Mayor, officials but also others who've participated in WG and others. To include a short video with the Mayor (what would be cool/fun to include?, someone looking at a heat pump?)
- Julie & Hannah are talking about CEUCC participation.
- Michelle: what about the distribution of the official SCF "document" and its launch. Oliver: it is being discussed but will be posted and available before Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>. M: how to ensure it gets out to

other outlets not specifically focused on climate, i.e., other city staff and organizations? Oliver: city staff is aware, but the communications mtg. has not occurred yet.

- Oliver: ResiStat meetings in the next couple of weeks will do outreach on it. Mike Powers' brochure is ready (and looks great) for distribution
- Eliza: will the Board of Alders. (BOA) get info ahead of time? Should we meet with our specific Alderm., provide them with boilerplate text they can include in their newsletters, etc. Oliver: getting it on the agenda of the Open Space, Environment, and Energy Committee.
- Julie: how to have "culture of climate" not become a turf issue for those already "in it", and avoid silos of the committed, but include it in all other outreach, to have the plan be a tool to expand that discussion. Eliza: the focus on the vulnerabilities is key to communication to the communities and public.
- Larry: which City departments have shown interest or enthusiasm? Oliver: Housing, Planning & Zoning, Transportation, etc. are showing interest; Julie: the Parks dept showed interest in that WG; Mary: ditto with the Health Dept. Oliver: Some issues resonate across depts (e.g., having info on rental landlords is great across the board).
- Invite Ayanna Pressley, new Congressional Rep (to-be) to the Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> launch.

#### Central Hill Campus plan

- Next Mtg on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, all interested urged to attend. The September meeting focused on 3 different landscape schemes (monuments, trees, driveways) and transportation; now starting to think on the energy aspect; looking at energy demand and space; not likely a traditional net-neutral site with all site-generated energy but aiming to get as close as possible and offset the gap.
- Roofs on the entire campus maximally used for solar PV were said to be enough to make City Hall net zero (does that include heating and cooling, beyond electricity, i.e., energy net neutral). Oliver explained that this statement was only to illustrate the scale of what it would be, and not a model of its specific contributions, i.e., which systems, heating of type X, equipment Y, etc.
- Michelle: what is the thinking on offsets? Oliver: would probably be likely.
- Larry: is the net-zero campus a commitment or aspiration? Oliver: a publicly stated *goal* (not a "signed contract").

#### State Legislation and recent state-level developments

- Michelle: do we now wait 2 years? Julie: no, it'll come back next legislative session; also, tomorrow: a Museum of Science "debate" on climate, energy, environment by the gubernatorial candidates Baker and Gonzalez.
- Joshua: the challenge is the committees' preference for low-hanging fruit (nice to do things), vs. the big questions.
- Ramón and others: next time around there will be new issues, the release of latest IPPC report, the recent high-level international climate summit, the latest CA legislation and governor initiatives on energy neutrality goals, the Lawrence/Andover gas crisis (heat pumps now appealing), etc. that could change the debate a bit.

#### Any and all business before the Commission

- Stephen: do other towns and municipalities have equivalents to CEUCC? Oliver and Eliza: yes, with differences in name and or scope; all Green Communities must have some community engagement/participation
- Importance of engaging the new congressional rep. A. Pressley on climate/energy issues

Next meeting: **Wednesday November 14.**

Eliza: focus on content of SCF and its rollout, in light of the next day's (Nov 15) prep meeting on its launch). Have Hannah attend and give update?