

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

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2018

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

### **Attendees:**

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Michelle Melton – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

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

Larry Yu

Mary Mangan

Tyler Heath

Josh Aviv

Jessiaha Adamopoulos

### Review and adopt the minutes from the November 14, 2017 meeting

- Approved

### *Somerville Climate forward*

### Recap of November release event

- At leadership table, people were quite interested in hearing about the content and asking specific questions and general questions. A lot of people had not previously been involved. At the community table there were fewer people but more in-depth conversations.
- OSE had been hoping for 200, and there were approximately 250 attendees. Also noticed going by the registration that there were a lot of unfamiliar new names. Fewer than half of the working group members came. Don't have final numbers on new sign-ups for 100% energy, but Oliver hasn't checked in yet. He will probably have an update by the next meeting. Clear Result representative talked to a lot of renters and talked about how Massave works for renters. Don't have a number of sign-ups for blue bikes but will get that.
- It was a big mix of people floating around the room and talking to each other. It does seem like in the end people talked about whatever they wanted to, which is how the event was designed. What the City is doing now on building momentum is re-introducing it to the Board of Aldermen and thinking through how different departments will implement different initiatives. The plan is not one big thing that needs to be done; only 4 of the 22 sub-items do not have assigned people yet. Looking to do annual updates on how everything is going. It is really going to depend on what each initiative is—whether it is something that will be reported qualitatively or quantitatively.
- There is a lot that can be done with Board of Alderman, in terms of what commission can do. We are still thinking about what more can be done in terms of general PR and buzz about the plan, but thinking in terms of outreach is to be more topic-focused. That is the direction we are going in.

- Somervision 2040: not clear what this will do, and how SCF will move forward, but don't have details yet. Can talk more about it next time.
- In terms of press, got WBUR and the Globe the day of the release. Scout wrote a substantive story about the content. The video and the website are the main thing to point people to right now.
- Larry was at the buildings table, which had a ton of people there. The questions were very specific about how does a heat pump work, where can I put it, etc. There were also questions about renters. But most of the questions were about 'what can I do tomorrow about my property' as opposed to 'what does the zoning look like.'
- The feedback at Greentown was a lot of excitement among the companies that work there; people enjoyed the event and thought it was great. The gist of it was, "when are they coming back again?"
- Winter Hill neighborhood association would like to host an event and is open to suggestions about what that would look like.
- It would be interesting to think about whether we should do presentations/meetings in different wards; possibly the Aldermen would be interested in hosting ward-specific meetings, which could either be geographically specific or an overview of the plan.
- Hannah is now working on talking to other cities, trying to get ideas on how to do post-plan engagement. The city also needs to get things done—outreach is not sufficient, the city wants to also use its resources to do things, not just tell people they are doing them.

#### Presenting to Board of Aldermen in January 2019

- Potential January 24th meeting. Oliver talked to Alderman Ballantyne about this, and she wants to make space for this item to happen. Talked about how there are advantages and disadvantages to the committee versus full board. She said that she could put an item on the full board meeting on January 24th. The advantage is that you have all the board members there, and by now they all know about it. And the Aldermen who came are the ones who are not on the environment committee. The thing that is nice about a committee meeting is that it is like a conversation, there is less time pressure. But the benefit of a full board meeting is that we know it is actually going to happen, we have all the champions there, and it is more formal.
- Some members think the full board is the right place to do it because the full board has people who are interested. But it does make sense to ask them about what the framework would be, and to perhaps have them submit questions ahead of time. A 20 minute presentation from us is as productive as a dialogue but it would be helpful to know what questions to respond to. Consensus: full board meeting would be better. Due to time constraints, we will plan on a compact presentation.
- It would be helpful to, by the January meeting, give the commission some starting talking points and we can use the January meeting to see if that's off base and can play with it.
- Might consider to be specific about the first 2-3 easy wins that the board can address (e.g., an ordinance for the renter's license, etc). but very specific and within their purview, so they can focus on those things and they will be visible and hopefully noncontroversial when and if they do pass. Praising them for all the wonderful things they have already done is also a good idea.

#### *CEUCC subcommittees*

#### Carbon pricing

- The subcommittee has not met. Ramon has been to events on carbon pricing in the last few months and they were helpful.
- The city did get grant from DOER to get a consultant to procure renewable energy for city operations. That was the project that had been identified as the good project to do the shadow price on. The grant is moving slowly so the RFP is not out yet but that is coming down the pike. The grant is a small piece that puts in place the sequence that makes this possible. The consultant will help procure renewable energy for city operations. SomerStat will work with Oliver and the consultant to evaluate the options using that project for a way to look at what happens if we apply shadow carbon pricing to a decision like this.
- When SomerStat gets started there will be a role for the subcommittee.
- Burlington carbon pricing initiative. Right now is a Vermont-led initiative but they are trying to pull in other states. One of the tenants is that it is revenue neutral and we should talk more about this.
- Oliver will re-send the article about it and the Commission can advise on it.

### Renter initiatives

- Feedback on draft survey: Somerstat said this is interesting and good and let's talk more when it's more final. They will be helpful when it is more ready to go.
- Housing had more comments. Christine and Russell are excited about this and are looking forward to have the information (landlord survey). Most shared the sentiment that we should hold off on the tenant survey for now because there are a lot of other things happening in this space, especially with the new director of housing stability. We want to let the many facets of what needs to be done for renters to come from that office and other people first. Or at least we need to talk about it more. Green light with more comments now on the landlord survey. Let's hold off on the tenant survey and we can talk about that. Oliver will send line edits.
- Big picture: we need to do a lot more on the wording to make it more accessible to a bigger range of landlords. There are specific comments in the line edits. Not sure what the perfect wording is but we will play with it. Interested in getting at learning what upgrades/factors would lead landlords to raise rents (not our objective). We could consider introducing the rental licensing concept but that could be distracting. Composting isn't really a landlord issue. And the Housing Division will take another pass after we take a pass.
- In terms of getting it out, we could get it out soon enough so Russell could come to the February/March meeting and that could be a rental-focused meeting, and they can talk about all the housing-related initiatives. So that is the timeframe we are shooting for.
- Having a sense of where the landlord and tenants are on the same page and where they diverge is interesting. We wouldn't have the same parity in the sense of what are people willing to do and willing to pay more for; there is a parallelism there. The seasonality matters as well.
- Having the parallel tenant survey would help potentially create tools to convince landlords that this is what landlords want, while that first survey is still on their minds. e.g., 50% of landlords don't think weatherization is important but 90% of renters do. And one of the questions was, what would you be willing to pay a little more for, and the idea would be that we would be able to say, this is what landlords prioritized and this is what tenants prioritized.
- Mattress recycling: the Environmental Coordinator has been talking to DPW about this.

### Somerville Climate Forward implementation

- City has been thinking how to use the willingness to have a subcommittee on this. Thoughts: big picture, the City could see this being very helpful if it was picking something to specifically work on or a bucket of other cross initiative things. One option is for this group to become the point people for commission representation for thing that does happen. There will be lots of projects that come out of this but that is one thing that could be valuable. The other is thinking about this being the committee that formally does more of the Aldermen engagement. That again would be across everything but as things come up. It doesn't have to be decided tonight, but to be realistic, need to think about how often to meet as a subcommittee and how much working with Hannah and Oliver and the like. The climate leaders program would be a good place for engagement. Topic-specific items might make sense to open to the full committee.
- In terms of things being implemented from the plan, one of them is related to the MVP grant (municipal vulnerability preparedness grant) for storm water modeling. Metering rain is ongoing and that will be done at the end of the month.

### Any and all business before the Commission

- February agenda item: next steps for the Commission and any new projects. Can talk about new projects.
- Sparkcharge: EV charging on demand. No infrastructure necessary. And renters can also then take advantage of EV charging. Want to do a pilot in Somerville.