

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2018

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

Attendees:

Ramon 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

Melissa Eusden

Shira Laucharoen

Michael McNeley

Michael Walsh

Leigh Meunier

Mary Mangan

Larry Yu

Review and adopt the minutes from the March 14, 2017 meeting

- Approved

Shadow carbon pricing

- Saritha's doc was presented to SomerStat in late March. Oliver presented an overview and walked them through the 4 case studies and went in depth into the vehicle purchase scenario. There was discussion about what an appropriate carbon price level would be (Consensus was that Social Cost of Carbon is too low; there was a lot of discussion about how to establish an appropriate abatement cost.)
- Oliver said that the CEUCC would make a recommendation on next steps i.e. a "pilot project" over the next few months; feedback from SomerStat staff was that a procurement-related project would make for an appropriate pilot project.
- Oliver: How to create a culture of shadow accounting; we do not yet have any specific candidate projects for the pilot.
 - Suggestions for identifying a pilot project:
 - Eliza: Identify procurement type, find a department that is excited about the concept; would be good to have DPW involved

- Michelle: think about whether we want to pick a recurring versus one-off procurement
 - Ramon: might be worth considering a large one-off project
- Oliver: the case study shows that it only makes sense to apply a shadow carbon price when the activity is carbon-intensive.
- Joshua: should the pilot require hydrocarbon involvement?
- Oliver: we should probably prioritize looking at “government operations” (which include energy and transportation-related procurement)
- Eliza: do we know of any large pending capital decisions involving fossil fuels; e.g. nat gas vs electricity for heat?
 - Michelle: energy efficiency related to heating should also be considered.
- Michelle: idea for transport pilot: “how much street parking does the city choose to have in a new development”
- Eliza: generate a shortlist of 8 projects for Oliver to float by the relevant departments
 - Oliver: I could take such a list to SomerStat staff and also find out what data they have access to; also, approach the purchasing department to see what contracts are up for renewal.
- Next step: the commission will come up with a list of pilot project ideas, eight or so, and Oliver will run them by SomerStat and the purchasing department
- Julie: perhaps we should get involved in the new campus design work? New campus design project plan is expected to be completed within the next 10 months.
 - Oliver: Also, Annex decision is still pending

State legislation and recent state-level developments

- Oliver: updates on 3 pieces of legislation
 - Environmental Bond Bill: a lot of things in it that could benefit Somerville; Oliver asking the state for more information on potential new funding to DCR. DCR is responsible for funding for dams and parks, e.g. raising/improving Amelia Earhart Dam etc. as well as potential construction funding for the new Draw Seven Park in Somerville. Support for the EEA is also included, which funds “MVP” municipal vulnerability assessments.
 - Commissioners should review the bill to identify additional opportunities for Somerville in the bill
 - Julie: MVP action grants are likely to come out soon; Amelia Earhart and Draw Seven Park seem like good candidates for funding
 - Energy Omnibus: Oliver: our legislative director thinks there will be significant movement on climate change related bills in this session. “Carbon tax” is not dead. However, very unlikely that all items in bill move forward.
 - Joshua: Accelerated RPS and carbon tax bills remain on the docket at the Mass State House. It appears that the RPS bills have more support from lawmakers on Beacon Hill than the carbon tax bills (the RPS proposals are viewed as more “sellable” than the carbon tax alternatives even amongst many carbon tax supporters). There will likely be an accelerated RPS mandate passed into law in Massachusetts in 2018; the question is which RPS bill and therefore how aggressive will the mandate will end up being.

- Baker's Energy Scorecard: Baker filed legislation to force a point of sale energy scorecard for real estate in Massachusetts. Oliver: there is push back from the realty lobby. Similar to HERS score. Will be restricted to 1 - 4 unit homes.
 - DOER likely to administrate this; will probably contract a third party to undertake the actual ratings

Follow-up on 2018 CEUCC priorities

- Oliver: Somerville Climate Forward implementation; renter initiatives and carbon pricing; i.e. get the 3 subcommittees going
- All subcommittees still need members
- Michelle: renter initiatives subcommittee still needs members, including commissioners
 - Oliver: meeting with housing division soon to discuss priorities; it would be good to have input from the renter initiatives working group; single family homes is not a priority, multifamily units are.
- Commissioner Subcommittee Assignments: renter initiative (Michelle and Eliza); carbon pricing (Ramon, Joshua and Juliette); Somerville climate forward (Julie and Stephen)
 - Julie: discussed Somerville Climate Forward; maybe there should be quarterly Somerville Climate Forward meetings?

Any and all business before the Commission

- Oliver: Somerville Climate Forward update – working group meetings being set-up for mid-May onwards.
- Oliver: Commissioner reappointments have been submitted; likely to be run through an appointment board; Sustainville Week is coming April 21 – 29; Julie moderating the Mystic River Climate Resilience Panel on April 26th as part of SustainaVille Week.