

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

Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2018

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

### **Attendees:**

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

Larry Yu

Mary Mangan

Michael Walsh

Marta Marello

### Review and adopt the minutes from the April 11, 2017 meeting

- Approved

### Shadow carbon pricing

- The subcommittee shared a document that outlines the outcomes to date of their conversations. The subcommittee tried to create a list of potential candidate projects for carbon pricing; the main point of contention was about whether there were ideal project types versus specific projects that the group wanted to use as a pilot. There wasn't agreement about what to recommend and the document reflects that. But subcommittee did coalesce around the notion that the Central Hill campus would be a good pilot due to the scope and visibility of project. But there were members in the group who wanted to prioritize general new buildings and retrofit building as standalone pilot projects and others thought that there needed to be more specificity. The subcommittee struggled with merits of identifying specific project versus a concept. This document reflects that.
- Oliver: Central Hill campus plan will not be focused on financial analysis because it is a long-range plan. The planning concepts are what's behind it, making it difficult to do thorough financial/carbon analysis. Oliver will obtain and share a scope of the campus plan project with the subcommittee, and then the subcommittee will be able to see how detailed the plan will be.
- There was a feeling among the subcommittee that, irrespective of what we could do with civic campus, we would want to do either a new/existing building or vehicle purchasing (which is straightforward, easy to relate to, and would be worth considering).

- The subcommittee should remember that we are telling a story here. For buildings, the data is not necessarily available ex ante (the ‘savings’ story). And there are so many decisions that go into a building to make the bottom line number work. That is the precise thing that makes it hard to model in the hypothetical. That may be one reason to prefer a more concrete example, such as vehicle procurement
- Also, the point about carbon pricing is much better made if the number at the end is realistic, not if it is a sky high price. Oliver suggests looking at what the cost would be of the city’s electrification, meaning moving to 100% renewables for city buildings (and potentially moving to all electric heating, etc)? The subcommittee did not discuss that but perhaps it should be considered. In the next 5 years, the City will renew its energy supply contracts, and there will be a climate plan that says we should have 100% electricity. Over the same period there will only be a couple of building projects. You could add heating to that. We could make that an interesting scenario 1, scenario 2, adding on additional ambition (heating, etc). That could get more or less complicated.
- Oliver will revisit this with the City, before coming back to the CEUCC.
- Big picture question is also whether this is a pilot or a one-off.

#### Renter initiatives

- First question is about data—what does the city have on housing stock in Somerville. 85% of housing is multifamily, and most ubiquitous type is 2-family, not 3-family, but just by a little bit. But the question is what percentage of renters are in 2 v 3 v 4+ unit buildings? What is the breakdown of rental population by unit type? The subcommittee also wanted to know what if anything building owners have to do to rent, or efficiency has to do. Oliver will check to see if anyone has any data, but he doubts it. He notes that this is why Somerville Climate Forward is prioritizing a rental licensing program. The subcommittee agrees this is a very good idea.
- The subcommittee had many ideas for renter initiatives, ranging from small things to big things the city could do. These include:
  - Survey of landlords who offer green leases to tenants. We want to see what landlords are already doing, and what they are interested in doing. We want to know how the city can help, and get more ideas on what is actually going on.
  - One year lease for bike pods—in residential neighborhoods.
  - When people sign up for 100% renewable energy, they get a tote bag (like NPR tote).
  - Give people a box that will help them save energy: helmets, Instant Pot, led lights, under the door draft stopper, etc.
  - Collect points for being green—like the health challenge but for green energy

- Some program to address the split incentive program (very detailed outline discussed of how the program would work, various logistics)
- A very concrete next step is a wish list of data, and the other next step is working to get feedback from landlords. If the city provided assistance for a green lease it could be fairly popular.
- Oliver will look into how we can solicit landlords who are already doing this or are interested. The subcommittee can then reach out to do some informal surveying to gather ideas and report on next steps.
- Bike cyclist union or bike committee might have data on bike pods and bike usage. Oliver will talk to bike/ped people and see if they have explored bike pods in neighborhoods idea. And see if it makes sense to add call out on Sustainville for landlords to see who is interested.
- Boston just got a study on this; will send to Oliver. Maybe another mechanism is offsets within the city. Something to financially incentivize this.
- Investigate possible role of Somerville Housing Authority.

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

- No updates, although discussion of carbon adder in NYISO.

#### Funding opportunities from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

- EEA is offering action and planning grants through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program. Somerville is applying for an action grant to do some stormwater modeling, and the other one is addressing vulnerability in our assessment in urban tree canopy and heat island (Somerville wants to potentially put trees in bump outs in the street). Commissioners signed support letter.
- Julie was at a conference on being diverse, equitable, and inclusive in the planning process. That has come up a lot in Somerville Climate Forward and in CEUCC meetings, so wasn't sure if there was any room in the action grant to do something around that. Maybe doing some collaborative training. Oliver spent a lot of time thinking about whether the action grant could fund a project on vulnerable populations, and they will prioritize this topic for applications in future rounds of the grant. Also, OSE has been participating in another equity program through the Urban Sustainability Directors Network that provides coaching on how to build more equity into program implementation.

#### Any and all business before the Commission

- Notes