

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2018

Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA

Attendees:

Joshua Hodge – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Stephen Moore – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

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

Michael Walsh

Jocelyn Newhouse

Ian Erlichman

Review and adopt the minutes from the May 9, 2017 meeting

- Approved

Shadow carbon pricing

- Joshua reviewed the key points from last month's discussion – The commission prioritized 2 of the concepts:
 1. Electrification /Decarbonization of Electricity Supply – 100% RE for City's own fuel supply.
 2. Vehicle purchasing – focused on all vehicle purchasing, carbon differences across all fuel types. We could rely on but would need to update the assumptions in the memo
- Oliver hasn't had a chance to get the full feedback that he is hoping for, but will do so before the end of July once budget season has wrapped up however there has been a lot of other discussions around Option 1. Somerville and some other MAPC communities are considering an innovative approach to decarbonization and applying for DOER TA grant to do a shorter-term renewable energy procurement. City of Boston is doing a market-signaling procurement about aggregation.
- Once we pick an approach, we should be able to get some support from SomerStat to help flesh out and populate the model with data.

Renter initiatives

- Oliver has not had a chance to get data on renter % of the population but will follow-up by next meeting.
- Oliver suggested that waiting until Michelle and Eliza are back at the end of the summer and then post something on Social Media to solicit responses from landlords who want to participate in a focus group.
- Eliza reported back on her conversations with the landlord seeking a green lease and several renters who expressed strong interest in neighborhood-based EV stations.

- Somerville Climate Forward Transportation Group has also identified the need for more neighborhood based EV charging stations.
- Oliver got interesting information from a Berkeley contact about EV charging station pilot that encouraged on-street charging in residential areas where there is no off-street parking.
- Task force will continue explore case studies on split-incentive – Larry may be able to provide an update at next meeting.

Update on Somerville Climate Forward

- Oliver provided an update – 3rd round of working groups wrapping up next week. Groups are looking at draft implementation plans for top initiatives that are relevant to each group. City will do a round of edits based on feedback and consultant will put together the full report with front matter as well as the detailed implementation plans.
- Commission Input: Oliver would like feedback from the commission on actions in the next two weeks and in the longer term feedback on the front-matter in terms of messaging, tone and goals in the August / September timeframe.

State Legislation and recent state-level developments

- Oliver provided an update on the Action Grant awards. City focused on the storm water modeling project and won 350K for the effort to spend by June 2019. This effort will allow modeling at higher resolution (smaller diameter pipes = more streets), also allow for some model runs under different storm event scenarios. Then can look at the output to understand parcels that are prone to flood risk so that City can do outreach related to flood warning and damage prevention. Also can help assess green infrastructure suitability to have a better sense of what works and where. How much can green infrastructure really help and what should we be pushing.
 1. Stephen asked about Cambridge's analysis of Western Ave.
 2. Julie spoke about the Alewife analysis that Cambridge did around green streets. Findings seem to indicate that street side green infrastructure will reduce or eliminate flooding in prone areas.
- Joshua provided an update on House and Senate discussions. There is some support in the House in favor of expanding gas pipeline infrastructure and it is having an impact on RPS as attention is being redirected to put out that flame. Russian imported LNG has caused concern. Senate is still focused on pushing the RPS, less likely on carbon tax (sense that House is mostly opposed).
- Four bills that are likely to move forward:
 1. H.3742 – Act Relative to EV Expansion – 1) Rebate program for car dealerships to incentivize sales. 2) Requires distribution companies to file pilot commercial electric rates for fast-charging. 3) Competitive grants for UMass system to purchase EVs and charging stations.
 2. H.1747 – RPS Bill – 2030 Goal (34%) is WAY short of the NY REV goal of 50%. Could definitely happen if it gets to the floor soon enough. Limits high cost peak hours.
 3. H.2712 – Act Relative to Net Metering – Raising the cap
 4. H.2600 – Act Relative to improve EE through Storage. Weaker bill that does not set a storage target but attempts to catalyze the battery industry and creates an institute.

Any and all business before the Commission

- Commission talked about Central Hill Campus plan. Oliver is the lead on the NetZero / Sustainability aspect of the work. Have had the initial meeting to start brainstorming about technologies or approaches and high-level analysis of the suggestions. Ideally identify short list of practical solutions. Public meetings in May, September, October. Will follow-up with Commission as the plan takes shape.