

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2018

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

Attendees:

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Joshua Hodge – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

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

Michael Walsh

Larry Rich

Larry Yu

Mike Powers

Review and adopt the minutes from the June 13, 2018 meeting

- Approved

Shadow carbon pricing

- Oliver: met with SomerStat staff and they expressed interest in supporting a pilot carbon pricing project. He discussed different options with them and they thought that the decarbonization of the electricity supply would be a good pilot project for this initiative.
 - EVs procurement is already underway
 - Electricity purchasing decisions involve high level decision-makers, so implementing shadow carbon pricing in this area may have higher impact than other options
 - Also viewed favorably because it offers a metric for City decisions
- Joshua raised question about whether this would differ from a renewable energy mandate. i.e., there is concern that if this is the only carbon pricing initiative in the City and it doesn't add meaningful leverage, then it may be better to apply carbon pricing to a different project.
 - Discussion ensued that it is important for electricity procurement shadow carbon price to be viewed as a first step towards broader application of pricing across City decision-making.
 - Calculate the carbon price needed to achieve this outcome?
 - ~\$40/ton appears to be too low. Project will involve setting price.
- City will apply for the DOER's owner's rep grant to hire someone to help structure an RFP to purchase renewable electricity supply. The City is evaluating potential PPA with other cities. The procurement pathways are what the carbon pricing pilot project will build on top of.
- Will likely be at least September before Oliver has more information
- Ramon: is SomerStat likely to be the core group pushing this forward or are there other groups also interested?
 - Sustainability Office, Purchasing, and SomerStat are likely to be involved

- Electricity procurement includes Public Works, Purchasing, SomerStat, Office of Sustainability

Renter initiatives

- Decision to be on hold until Commission members on this sub-committee return
- Oliver: most likely, 2/3 housing units are rental units (not 2/3 population)

State Legislation and recent state-level developments

- Juliette: Future of Transportation Listening Series: state is planning the future of transportation to 2040; mostly in the phase of collecting information, engaging in dialogue with public and experts
- Joshua: Omnibus on energy doesn't have votes to pass in House; creating the institute for energy storage; EV rebate and requiring distribution utilities to have the same fee for fast-charging stations for EVs passed
- Oliver: Lowell has or will be petitioning DOER to become their own program administrator for MassSave because they don't think current MassSave implementer is doing enough to serve non-native English speakers and multi-family homes

Climate change planning communication

- Mike Powers – Sustainability summer fellow
 - Has been working to translate Somerville Climate Forward's climate background info into something that's easy to communicate
 - Interested in feedback – please email, meet with him etc.
- Oliver: City is looking for a concise way (in 3 minutes or under) to communicate why we're doing a climate action plan
 - Communicate motivation for climate action plan
 - Use visuals and as little text as possible
- Ramon: likes what he sees!
- Julie: pare down content in general
 - Looks really nice
- Graphics should convey clear information that can stand alone
- Climate change communication tips:
 - Lead with opportunities, rather than impacts – e.g., if you have solar, you get free electricity
 - Impacts: keep it local and specific
 - As many languages as possible
 - Print as many as possible to give to as many community members
- Joshua: impacts on public health are important to convey
 - E.g., impacts of living near route 93
 - Public health impacts of fossil fuel emissions resonated even in places where electricity access is an issue (developing countries)
 - Decarbonizing our transport would lead to quantifiable public health outcomes in Somerville

- To give Mike feedback, email him at: mrpowers@somerville.ma.gov
- Add images from Somerville

Any and all business before the Commission

- Summary of Somerville Climate Forward
 - Oliver: Wrapped up thorough review of recommendations, with edits
 - Consultants will incorporate edits and write first part of plan – i.e., defining motivation and process
 - Oliver will be looking for feedback from Commission once shorter report is generated
 - Completed plan should be ready in September
 - Actual timing for release will be later
- Larry: Any information about a potential micro-grid for Union Square? No new information
- Ordinance in Cambridge on building for carbon neutrality?
 - Net zero plan for buildings overall, targeting different types of buildings in sequence
 - E.g., target city, then labs, then homes, etc.
 - However, state building code pre-empts anything that municipalities do