

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

Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2019

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

### **Attendees:**

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Michelle Melton – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

Joshua Hodge – Commissioner

Stephen Moore – Commissioner

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

Adam Polinski - Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD),  
Transportation Analyst

Lanier Smythe

Mary Mangan

Alexandra Vecchio

### Review and adopt the minutes from the January 24, 2019 meeting

- Approved

### The Somerville Climate Forward Presentation to the City Council:

- Overall sentiment was positive. The concern moving forward will be how the OSEE Committee will take it from there. President Katjana Ballantyne serves on this Committee and has expressed great enthusiasm for defining and implementing action plans.
  - Eliza Johnston, Commissioner, suggested a “1-on-1” approach may be best for the “educational” component for the Councilors to deploy.
  - Stephen Moore, Commissioner, piggy-backed that with a suggestion that the “educational” components could be tailored for each Ward as needed.
- There will be a multi-pronged approach (including above) that will include an online push via the SustainaVille webpage as well as the variety of social media outlets (i.e. Facebook, Twitter).
  - Avenues to a utility analysis for determining EV capacity was something to delve deeper into.

### Presentation from Adam Polinski - Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), Transportation Analyst.

- Cited that there were many SCF-type items and projects in the pipeline including: EV Charging stations (new locations installed and planned), “multi-modal city” planning such as the Winter Hill/Broadway street painting/lane designations (i.e. bus-only, bicycle-only) and intersection light timing being re-tuned.

- Eliza Johnston, Commissioner, asked if there are any plans for “cross grain” (North-South) bussing solutions—such as Mystics to Somerville High School. Adam indicated that in discussion with the MBA there is an appetite for projects of that type but that none are very far along currently.
- Adam did indicate that some far-reaching ideas such as Somerville creating a “micro transit” system (such as is currently ready for deployment during the Ball Square T-Stop Project/ Bridge Closing) to address localized transit needs has begun. Nothing too advanced, in part, due to the significant cost.
- Ramon Bueno, Commissioner, wondered if the MBTA had a projection for all-electric busses. Adam didn’t know definitively but had seen it discussed. MassDOT/MBTA has applied for federal funding for electric buses.
- Adam indicated that there are 2% service routes versus 25% service “need” for MBTA busses along Broadway.
- Michelle Melton, Commissioner, asked Adam how the City’s lane projects (on Broadway specifically) are going to collect pertinent use data for this. Adam said this was still in the works.
- Oliver Sellers-Garcia, Director-OSE, added that busses touch many components of the SCF including Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Equity, and Resilience.
- Adam confirmed that Stephen’s inquiry regarding the use of flexposts in crosswalk situations (median and neckdowns) was in consideration.

CECUU sub-committees:

- Carbon Pricing: RFP is pending. (Procurement—end of February)
- Renter Initiatives:
  - Landlord and Tenant Surveys are due in the next week.
  - Mattress recycling appears to be gearing a state-level mandate for disposal (recycling) but market research by the City indicates that contracting costs today would be high.
  - Bicycle pods are a lower priority for transportation improvements relative to other needs (separated lanes) and are therefore not an immediate action. CEUCC members discussed engagement of other Bicycle advocacy groups.
- Somerville Climate Forward:
  - Julie Wood, Commissioner, and Ramon reviewed a meeting with Consensus Building Institute (CBI) and the progress with forming a Somerville Climate Leadership (SCL) group. The hope was to forge a 25-person group of different contexts to commit to serve a “point persons” for outreach within the city (i.e. church groups, neighborhood associations, committees etc.) to identify actions and build community in those.
  - Hannah Payne, OSE, felt the end result was a lack of clarity on the “purpose”
  - Others noted that perhaps it overlapped with other on-going groups
    - This was seen as perhaps worth determining what groups and how the Commission might be able to coordinate efforts and provide information as needed.
    - Stephen added that “SomerSupper”’s for SomerVision2040 Steering Committee could serve as a model for the program.

- Juliette Rooney-Varga, Commissioner, wanted to update the Commission regarding an upcoming April 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation that works through the complexity and untenable inclusion of wood bioenergy as a means for providing “clean” energy REC’s for city (and state) carbon offsetting programs. Juliette emphasized that some projection showed it having a worse carbon outcome than coal. Additionally, she clarified that wood was in no way “carbon neutral” as some pending MA Legislature bills have espoused.
- Lastly, it should not be included in any SCF strategy for carbon neutral goal-setting.

March 13<sup>th</sup> Agenda items:

- CEUCC outreach possibilities to other City Council members and committees.
- Juliette had suggested a Social Justice Growth – Equity and Inclusion issues could incorporate a conversation with a colleague, Beth Sawin, to discuss the concept of multi-solving – systemic solutions that protect the climate while also improving health, equity, and well-being. It was felt this was too expansive to cram into the March meeting and may best to be worked into either April or May.
  - Eliza suggested Housing Security issues can be in this as well.

Any and all Business before the Commission:

- Nothing added or discussed.