

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2019

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

Attendees:

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Liz Galloway – Nominated Commissioner

Stephen Moore – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

Larry Yu – Nominated Commissioner

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

Haleemah Qureshi – Engineering Department

Mary Mangan

Pete Hagan

Review and adopt the minutes from the July 10, 2019 meeting

- Previous meeting minutes reviewed and approved.

Presentation on MVP project

- MVP Action Grant: climate change, flooding, and green stormwater infrastructure
 - Presented by Haleemah Qureshi and Oliver Sellers-Garcia
 - \$350k grant from Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program
 - Stormwater modeling for improved communications and development of green infrastructure
 - Four main tasks: stormwater system model update, analysis of precipitation and sea-level rise, potential for green infrastructure to mitigate flooding, communication materials.
 - Discussion on addressing opportunities for education on stormwater issues
 - Educate public about the connection between impervious cover and flooding
 - MassSave like program for stormwater? Identify changes that could be made on your property to reduce runoff
 - City is trying to address both grey and green infrastructure at the same time
 - e.g. separating storm and sanitary sewers (~60% of Somerville's stormwater runs through Union Sq)
 - Study areas for green infrastructure were conservative but realistic based on space constraints in public right of way
 - Pilot project? Spring Hill project study to finish Jan 2021 and go to construction shortly after
 - Report is not currently available online, but all reports will be on a new flooding website that the City is developing.

Combined sewer overflow legislation

- Julie provided an update:

- CSOs in to Alewife Brook and Mystic River
- Usually trip with very short, intense rainfall or a large stormwater event
- Currently no public notification of CSOs (except for Alewife site)
- Now monitors are in place, MWRA is now doing monitoring (for the past few years) but not in real time (except Alewife Brook)
- House Bill 3976 would require operator to issue a public advisory within 2 hours of the discharge.
- Action item: sign on letter for local officials coordinated by Mass Rivers Alliances
- Supported by Ben Ewen Campen and Will from Somerville

Update on Climate Forward Ambassadors

- Had 45 applicants, selected 20
- 6 monthly meetings (3 have already happened)
- Celebration/presentation in December 2020
- Meeting topics
 - Intro to the program
 - Global climate simulation
 - Info on climate mitigation
 - Adaptation and Preparedness
 - Equity and climate justice
 - Climate communications
- Ages 15-60+
- Homework from meetings
 - e.g. Carbon footprint modeling tool
- Ambassador projects vary widely, and preliminary ideas include:
 - Personal climate household plan
 - Family workshop
 - Book club
- Consensus Building Institute (CBI) helping to facilitate process
- Next year: larger group? Longer, more frequent sessions? How to keep Ambassadors from this year involved? Legislative trainings?
- Experience of people engaging with others?
- Invite Commissioners to December meeting?

Somerville Community Choice Electricity 2020 program launch planning

- Good Energy (consultant/broker) and Mother's Out Front (advocating with City Council) supporting aggregation efforts
- The City will send an informational mailer on aggregation program update.
- DPU does not have authority over communications on updated community aggregation as it did over the initial launch - will allow for more freedom in creating effective communications (no particular requirements/limits on what it can say)
- Postcards would likely go out around Thanksgiving/early December

- People in 100% will stay, people who proactively opted out will be excluded from mailer.
- Working with Mother's Out Front to do a press announcement
- Oliver working on a renewable energy procurement for City operations that would match aggregation offering.
- Will be promoting 100% opt up option more heavily
- Use aggregation to engage small businesses to encourage them to opt up (badge of honor? Need to promote decals as well)
- Important message: this program supports development of new renewables in New England
- Focus group with the Ambassadors?

Building industry advocacy efforts for net-zero stretch code legislation

- The design and architecture industry in Massachusetts is mobilizing to support a net-zero stretch code. It is currently accepting sign-ons of support for a lobbying effort to the BBRs.

Update on sustainability and zoning

- Zoning is currently before City Council
- New things (since the spring):
 - Overlay district – Master Plan Development (transformational zones from SomerVision)
 - Requirement for LEED Platinum or net zero (no on-site combustion/all-electric) based on certification from ILFI or Passive House
 - Nothing about requiring electric vehicles in base code because of potential for building code preemption
 - Planning department is going to add electric parking requirements in overlay districts
 - Residential zones – allowing for a bonus for buildings that are net zero (unit number increase, not height)
 - No changes to sustainable development section

October meeting scheduling

- Tentatively scheduled for October 16, 2019 (instead of 10/9 which is Yom Kippur)
- Next meeting at City Hall Annex (pending availability of the conference room)

Any and all business before the Commission

- Split meeting chair and notetaking tasks to facilitate
- Commission chair?
- Climate Coalition Social 9/22 at the Growing Center 4-7pm