

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Liz Galloway – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

Larry Yu – Commissioner

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

Review and adopt the minutes from the September 9, 2020 meeting

- Approved

Presentation by Cate Mingoya, Groundwork USA's Director of Capacity Building, on racial segregation and climate impacts

- History of redlining in communities and long-term impacts on tree cover, amount of impervious surfaces, and local temperatures
- Less affluent areas generally have less tree cover and increased quantities of pavement, resulting in higher summer temperatures and flooding
- These geographic patterns follow the historical patterns of redlining (20th century racially discriminatory mortgage lending practices).
- Short term mitigation efforts
 - A/C swaps
 - Sprinklers loan
 - Cooling credits
 - White roof painting
 - De-paving/greening parties
- Medium term mitigation efforts
 - Fund, build, maintain green infrastructure
 - Rethink relief packages
 - Keep jobs in community (helps to combat gentrification when you make improvements – e.g. greening spaces)

- Who makes decisions?
- Long term mitigation efforts
 - Invest in communities
- Discussion following presentation
 - Visualizations to help engage people (transparencies with historical red line maps that can be overlaid on street maps – people like to find where they live on the map)
 - Create a neutral platform for discussing equity issues
 - Use a combination of adding affordable housing to projects that green areas to help combat gentrification
 - “The past is not past.”
 - Somerville is a unique community with approximately ~2/3 of homes being renter occupied (most communities are ~2/3 owner occupied)
 - Low hanging fruit – improve conditions at bus stops by providing shade
 - Would like to empower those communities most impacted by climate change to engage in public processes

Discuss 2020 CEUCC annual report and make assignments for topics:

“Hibernate mode”: how no/low occupancy in buildings can reduce carbon emissions

- To be addressed by a working group of Eliza and Liz

Shovel ready infrastructure projects for pandemic/economic recovery

- To be addressed by Julie

Equity-focused carbon pricing

- To be addressed by Ramon

- Larry will reach out to Juliette and coordinate which working groups they will participate in

- Guidance on developing content for report
 - What the topic is and why it matters
 - Present questions that should be answered
 - What information might the City have that could start to provide direction?

Update on coordination with Somerville Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee

- Commission members agreed to include bicycle and pedestrian transit in report
 - Connect with other committees on this to make sure we are coordinating efforts
 - Ramon spoke with Pedestrian and Transit Committee regarding their efforts on this topic (<https://www.somervilleptac.org/>)