

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Liz Galloway – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – 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 June 10, 2020 meeting

- Approved

Complete facilitated conversation on intersections of climate change and the pandemic:

- Commissioners talked through the following topics:
 - Community/equity
 - Stormwater and resilience
 - State and federal policy
- Attached slide deck has consolidated notes for May, June, and July discussions
- Oliver will review the slides and identify items that might be good for the CEUCC to discuss/develop further (highlighted in yellow).

Scheduling the next CEUCC meeting

- Keep August meeting. Remote meetings and 90 minute meeting time make attending CEUCC meetings easier.

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change

Brainstorm on Covid-19 and local climate impacts
May 13/June 10/July 8

1. Impacts on the Community

Families

Time at home:

- Teens bored / tensions
- New home experience

Consumer spending down

Food insecurity

Rental insecurity
(landlords)

Job losses

Employment changes

City

Municipal budgets down

Schools (online/project)

Transportation

Air quality improved

Public transit down

Streets empty (traffic)

Cheap oil

Community

Mutual aid groups grow

Awareness:

- inequities (worsening)
- natural/open space
- short-sighted decisions

Politicization of science

Uptick in racism

Connect w/neigh. hard

Business (all orgs)

Closures

New ways of working

Shift to online

Last-mile delivery

Those w/capital:

- New investments

- Wealth capture?

Disposables use rises

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key Questions: Mobility

Demand for walkable/bikeable streets (equity?)
Demand for mobility down
More people in cars
Stress air quality and inequities
Will there be T investment?
Will people trust the T is safe?



3. Potential Responses

Teens as bike delivery couriers
Bike training
Organized shared streets
Bike corridors

Surveillance
T modifications to service
Modifications to T equipment?

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key Questions: Buildings and Power

Energy demand curve flattening
Energy usage down how much?
Demand for bigger houses (WFH features)
Demand for more space/worker
Not as much office space needed
Retrofit demand
Jobs in energy efficiency (labor costs?)
Capital seeking investment opportunities
Stress air quality and inequities
WFH affects workforce/job readiness
Normalizes WFH (?)
Public health risks if unoccupied
Is there historical precedent (e.g., 2008)?

3. Potential Responses

Find volunteers, train in energy efficiency
Take investment in financial vehicles for energy efficiency
Enable "hibernate mode"
Outreach on energy efficiency programs (e.g., All In Energy)

Shovel ready infrastructure projects?
Advocacy on green infrastructure projects?
Real estate disclosures if market cools? (Green mortgages?) (Inequities?)

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key Questions: Waste and Consumption

Trash data?
Consumption down, is waste up?
Single-use plastics up

3. Potential Responses

Teens picking up trash
Communications on recycling
Reinforce positive choices in consumption (including buy local)? (For resilience)
Low-carbon consumption substitutes
Inform public health (re: single use plastic)

Mutual aid to reinforce sharing?

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key

Questions: Community/Equity

Jobs to offer?
Data on economic hardship? (Unemployment
Bos/Cam/Som not as hard hit)
Tax base hit (inc. commercial)
Heating/cooling inequity
Housing instability
How racism impacts ability to achieve climate goals?
COVID disproportionate impacts
Programs aren't accessible to those wo/legal status
or hesitant to access

3. Potential Responses

Connect w/universities and neighboring communities
Youth/college students, manual labor or desk work
Ensure programs reach those most impacted
MyRWA EJ person (Melanie) Find out about Barr grant?
Climate eXchange

Carbon pricing at city level w/equity built-in

On new bldgs/rebate to renters (tied to energy?)
or low-income homeowners or no-strings-attached?
Rental registry. Ties energy to housing stability.
Learn from Covid responses/mobilization (City, private
sector, community, etc.) --send someone to go learn?

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key Questions: Stormwater and Resilience

Air quality issues (tie in w/health) Share STEP/CAFEH data
Valuing open space
Being outside is safer? (Weather dependent. Now summer heat.)
Variation in quality
Equitable access

3. Potential Responses

Put people to work improving green space
Think about resilience planning in compounding crises
Hard and social infrastructures
Tie mitigation message in

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2. Impacts on Climate Action Area + Key Questions: State and Federal Policy

Awareness of importance of state advocacy and municipal action
Municipal leadership does matter to the state?

3. Potential Responses

Ensure programs reach those most impacted

Push for carbon price with equity aspect (Benson bill?)

Federal stimulus and being ready with shovel ready project

Work w/other municipalities on bike infrastructure