

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2022, 2021 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Attending: Ramón Bueno, Liz Galloway, Eliza Johnston, Aladdine Joroff, Julie Wood, Larry Yu (chair), Christine Blais (ex-officio)

Commissioners Not Attending: NA

Staff Attending: Erin Noël, Office of Sustainability and Environment

Meeting started at: 7:04 PM

City Updates:

- Introduction to Erin Noël, Community Engagement Specialist. Commission members recommended connecting with the Sunrise chapter at Somerville High School.
- Community Choice Electricity Program
 - Christine Blais presented an overview of Somerville's CCE program (see attached slide deck).
 - City needs to suggest a range of total Class 1 % on top of state required 20% as well as a price range to consultants.
 - Currently the default rate is set at 10% and we are considering raising to 15% or 20%.
 - The Commission is interested in understanding the different options compared to the Eversource base rate. Christine explained a benefit of the program is fixed pricing. We do not have insight into future rates for Eversource and they are variable and change every six months.
 - The Commissioners expressed the key goal is to maintain participation in the program and maintaining competitiveness with the Eversource residential basic service rate, while also being aggressive with climate goals.
 - The Commissioners advised that we could increase the Class 1 renewable energy mix to between 15% and 20% if the rate is reasonably anticipated to be somewhat consistent or ideally lower than the Eversource base rate to maximize retention and minimize opt-out.
 - If City wanted to get more aggressive, Commissioners discussed the possibility of developing a program to help offset bill for low-income homes, possibly tying in tenant assistance for energy retrofits.

Guidance from CEUCC for American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") funds

- Our guidance might be a better fit for Infrastructure Bill-funded projects
- Most of the ARPA funding to COVID-relief, less likely to have energy/climate impacts. However, some funding could go to energy-retrofits and health impacts, including but not limited to building retrofits, the I-93 air quality impact mitigation and hut-covers over bus stop benches.
- Commissioners can attend ARPA public meeting in late February.

- Commissioner Wood MOTIONED to VOTE for the ARPA sub-committee to draft guidance on behalf of the Commission to submit to the City's ARPA Specialist. Commissioner Bueno SECONDED. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY AT 8:31 P.M.

Planning for 2022 and what CEUCC has done in the past

- Deferred to next meeting.

Any and all business before the Commission.

- Commissioner Joroff asked if the City is planning to comment on the Department of Energy Resources new net-zero stretch energy code straw proposal. Commissioner Galloway is part of a practitioner's group that can provide some insights. Commission subcommittee can offer comments.

Links and attachments:

- Community Choice Electricity 2022 Update Presentation (attachments)
- Community Choice Aggregation Renewable Energy and Cost Perspective Comparison PDF (attachments)
- Competitive Infrastructure Funding Opportunities for Local Governments Fact Sheet (attachments)

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.