

Somerville Climate Forward
Buildings Working Group Meeting #3
June 12, 2018

Attendance

- Hannah Payne, City of Somerville
- Christine Andrews, City of Somerville
- Rodney Dominique
- Larry Rich
- Stephen Moore, Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change
- Liz Galloway
- Katrina Hall
- Emily Chessin
- Dana Clawson
- Craig Foley
- Mike Powers

Feedback on Implementation Plans for Top Priority Solutions

- **Point of Lease Energy Disclosure/Rental licensing**
 - Gov. Baker proposed bill for point of sale energy assessment/score. Association of Realtors opposes this. Bill stalled in committee but will be voted on in senate on Thursday in Omnibus Energy Bill.
 - Portland Oregon – Implemented energy scoring at point of sale. They have seen pushback from realtors. Earth Advantage ran that program and Craig has a contact with them if we want to learn more about the Portland experience.
 - Need to think about what kind of assessment would be required. HERs assessment gives good information but is harder to do on an existing building and can be costly.
 - DOE home energy score seems more plausible for state program. Energize CT used this. DOE pilot in Springfield, MA in 2013 produced home “MPG” (miles per gallon).
 - Proposed change to MassSave guidelines: DOER program administrators for Mass Save would have to be using the same scorecard.
 - Rental licensing with energy assessment would be challenging for some landlords to complete.
 - Tier 2: related solution to consider– Boulder looked at how they could upgrade the existing building stock by combining efficiency, EV charging, etc. With interest rate less than 4%, payback was equivalent or less than utility costs.
 - DOER pilot program to improve Mass Save to work towards net zero or net-zero ready.
 - Energy disclosure –Broader public energy disclosure would have applicability. Not only at point of lease. Ongoing comparison to neighbors to encourage improvement is valuable.

- Chicago – Reporting energy use in real estate listing had the unintended consequence of identifying unoccupied properties where no energy usage was reported. Need to be aware of privacy and safety issues.
- Would self-reported energy usage (rather than requirement) be more efficient?
- For large buildings, would it be apartment by apartment or average usage for larger apartment buildings? Average might help minimize outliers caused by behavior differences in units.
- Annual energy disclosure for large buildings (BERDO) should be included in plan.
 - Another way to empower people with information – by the time you are signing a lease it's too late to get information about energy. Need to have multiple approaches.
 - Really helpful to be able to compare to an average.
- Create public database to be able to compare buildings that are similar. Need to understand outliers—behavior differences can lead to really different usage.
- Value of energy scoring is that it rates the building and takes out occupancy data completely.
- **Net-zero Standards**
 - AIA looking at opportunities for net-zero overlay map. Coalition of communities with net-zero goals might be able to push for this as an opt-in option.
 - Interest in tours of net-zero buildings.
 - Approach – working on municipal buildings and other projects that the city has more control over first makes sense. Important to lead by example.
 - Phasing in requirement is a great idea.
 - High performing affordable housing is great but will need to come with incentives.
 - What about focusing first on all electric instead of just focusing on net zero? Should make sure that there is no new natural gas service. Couple this with energy efficiency.
 - Note: all electric – one side effect to consider is that electric is individually metered and gas can be centrally metered. Cost could be more easily be passed on to residents, increasing overall cost of housing.
 - If setting net-zero emissions (not energy) requirement, how do you require buildings to meet that standard? Would you require people to buy RECs?
 - All electric might be a good way to get around that.
 - Would cooking gas be allowed, could that be offset? Net zero homes use induction heating, which is what top chefs are now using. Buyers are looking for net zero so are comfortable with no gas.
- Are there opportunities for community solar to benefit those who can't put solar on their roof? Challenge for community solar is that you get credited business rate not residential rate, so financial incentive isn't as strong.
- **Resilience standards for new development**

- Boston's requirements of building 1-2ft above base flood elevation for a 1% annual storm with 40" of sea level rise has worked well. Clear expectations for developers. Would be good to have similar requirements in Somerville.
 - Using ~3ft of sea level rise is not too burdensome because it is now a better case scenario based on where global emissions are heading.
- Cost burden – insurance increases trickle down as equity issue.
- LEED resilience – likely where the industry is going and could be an option for including standard resilience measures in zoning.
 - Other rating systems provide points of entry but LEED is still what people are using because of familiarity and because it is embedded in requirements. Will likely continue to be industry standard.
- City of Boston checklist - Before new policy, checklist was “check the box” policy. The new policy where they require finished floor above flood zone actually directs developers on what to do. Should have something similar.