

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change Meeting Notes

March 11, 2015

Tufts Administration Building 67 Holland Ave. Somerville, MA

Attendees:

Andrea Ranger -Commissioner

Matt Miller-Commissioner

Spencer Lawrence-Commissioner

Vanessa Boukili-Commissioner

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

Melissa Lowitz –Attendee, member of Somerville Climate Action

Jerrad Pierce - Attendee

James Basham - Attendee

Jon Crowe- Attendee

Sarah Luchner- Attendee

Jennifer Haugh- Attendee and Guest

Russell Koty – Attendee and Employee of Housing Division of City of Somerville

Initial discussion, items:

Agenda for next time: rules of meetings. Oliver to contact John Long, City Clerk, to explain for next meeting.

Oliver to check with city clerk on repository for documents, etc. from committee

March 24 – pre-proposal conference for RFP for Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

Send Oliver additional vendor names to add to the vendor list for the GHG inventory.

The City views the GHG inventory as one half of the baseline for a long-term climate change plan. The other half of the baseline will be a climate change vulnerability assessment. The City is actively looking for ways to fund the assessment and receive technical assistance. As part of the Metro Mayors Coalition, Somerville may have access to technical assistance (e.g., shared climate projections data).

Russell Koty indicated that the City is still working on a final award decision for energy efficiency vendor to partner with City (at time of meeting).

Update on Union Sq planning efforts:

Union Sq planning/zoning is not overhauled to the same extent as other neighborhoods in the proposed zoning ordinance.

The Commission would like to support the development of an amendment to the zoning code that will address energy and environmental issues.

Andrea: Taza Chocolate building and Greentown Labs areas (which includes Artisan's Asylum are "maker spaces" that will be left alone, but Boynton Yards area (D3) across from new T station (D2) is in play for new. The Commission could probably work on those areas for net zero recommendations.

Task Force/Sub-committees (Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), Solar for Somerville, Zoning)

The Commission established three subcommittees to focus on specific issues. now and next meeting, each subcommittee will hold a first meeting to set goals and desired outcomes. The subcommittees will communicate with City staff on their progress as well as future coordination with City departments and other City initiatives.

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). Committee will advise the mayor/city on the program and sell the idea to them to make good choices going forward with policy, know how, expertise. Meeting with the mayor needs to happen soon to discuss the option (introduce the whole process). Pros and cons of CCA to be explored, educate and advocate the green energy component as well as reduced cost, benefits, approval process, etc. Melrose worked with board of alderman to introduce and approve the plan and is a good contact is Lori Timmerman, co-chair of Melrose's Energy Commission. Patrick Roche at MAPC is that organization's point person on CCA.

Andrea Ranger- head
Vanessa Boukili - co head
Jerrad Pierce

Zoning: The subcommittee of CEUCC will focus on taking an energy and environmental perspective on the proposed zoning code overhaul and ultimately may advise on efficient buildings, energy economics, green architecture, efficient transportation towards the 2050 net zero plan in Somerville.

Spencer Lawrence co - head
Sarah Luchner - head
Russell Koty
Andrea Ranger

Solar: Elizabeth Johnston and Matt Miller to head/subhead the committee for solarize somerville. Survey has been sent (previously with Russell/Oliver interaction) and information/people collected who are interested as well as for action/help on project. Subcommittee will help develop RFP for city solar program, identify partners in business, partners in the community, and educate

the city residents on “going solar”. Russell Koty from the City will coordinate with the subcommittee. The subcommittee may recommend the creation of an official task force on solar energy that would include industry experts who have already been talking with the City on this topic, such as Jurgen Weiss.

Eliza Johnston– head
Matt Miller – co-head
Melissa Lowitz
Jon Crowe
James Basham

Other business before the Commission

“PACE” was brought up Jared Pierce. “Property assessed clean energy” – property value tie to solar cost (mostly for business right now). Hasn’t been approved by Mass. yet as a vehicle for paying solar for Mass. residents.

Jen Haugh, Guest invited to discuss art project and link to energy/other consumption and impacts: Art and renewable design tied together (Seattle is good example). Haugh is the head of Iconic Energy and works for Harvard office of sustainability. She came up with idea for outdoor art sculpture letting public know progress of energy efficiency goals (evolving structure with visual feedback to city on energy efficiency progress). What can Somerville do with this idea, type of idea, to visualize the change or progress towards energy efficiency (natural gas saved?), solar residents who went forward, etc.?