

## **Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change Meeting Minutes**

June 10, 2015

Tufts Administration Building, 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA.

### Attendees:

Andrea Ranger – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston – Commissioner

Matt Miller – Commissioner

Vanessa Boukili – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

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

Melissa Lowitz – Attendee, member of Somerville Climate Action

Jerrad Pierce – Attendee

Sarah Luchner – Attendee

James Basham – Attendee

Toni Whitmore – Attendee, member of Mothers Out Front

Meeting notes from May 2015 were approved.

### By-Laws

Oliver suggested that we create a subcommittee to examine bylaws and offered some bylaws to review from city clerk, John Long. The subcommittee will create the role of chair and other roles if needed. Andrea Ranger could outline potential content of the bylaws and present at another meeting when there is more time.

Community Choice Aggregation – the task force has been formulated by the city: Samantha Joseph, Oliver, Vanessa, Toni, Andrea, Jerrad, and Alderman Niedergang. Meeting at City Hall at 5 pm – 6 pm on June 11, 2015. Will help with education of Board and recommendations for educating the community.

Even if we participate in selecting brokers for CCA with the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, we (the City) will have autonomy in whom we select for a broker.

### Residential Solar

Commissioners expressed urgency in seeking to release this RFP by mid-July and will assist in its review or in any way helpful to expedite its release. Question came up about whether the RFP should be split into two: one for residents and small businesses and one for Community Shared Solar. This was not resolved during the meeting.

Eliza Johnston – reviewed the Somerville solar survey that the city undertook in February 2015. There were a total of 333 respondents. The survey showed that there is a healthy interest in installing or purchasing solar energy. We need to differentiate how residents will benefit from a city solar program versus just going to one of the solar vendors who market to them.

Russell Koty, in the City's Housing Division is working on a strategy for residential energy programs that will include moving forward on an RFP for a solar vendor.

The Commission discussed how to balance current demand with preserving "low hanging fruit" customers for a solar program. One of Somerville's differentiators would be cost-savings for installations – but it's not appropriate to tell people to wait for the city program. In assessing a solar program, the City and the CUEUCC will have to ask: will what we offer be meaningfully different than what vendors are offering now?

Additional thoughts on solar program:

- A vendor who's going to be able to help condo owners, multi-family buildings, duplexes.
- James – it's hard to compete on price, can the permitting and installation be accelerated to give the vendor a competitive advantage? There can be a 6 hour window when the installer is waiting for the city inspector. We could try to streamline the city's involvement.
- A program that offers tangible benefits – cost savings, carbon reductions, (make them simple). Loans offered by DOER are 3% - which seem high.
- Will the program look at just roofs or carports for example?
- Make sure there is a good connection between the different solar vendors to make sure that renters, business people, etc. don't feel like they're getting bounced around to different vendors.

We discussed different models for community shared solar and some expressed interest in owning something tangible and others stated we need to be open to all models because some may be much easier and cheaper to administer.

The Municipal Energy Technical Assistance grant from DOER opens up for applications on June 22, 2015. Oliver – we're going to apply for assistance with Community Shared Solar – how to design the program.

The Commission would like to explore what would be the role of solar thermal in a program. MassCEC is offering amazing loans or grants for businesses for solar thermal. Breweries, hotels, etc.

OSE is applying for a DOER grant for technical assistance on community shared solar. Oliver will contact CEUCC members to write community solar interest letters, which are a requirement of the application.

### Zoning

A lot of good information gathered by the zoning subcommittee

There is going to be a daylong workshop on June 29 on district energy at International District Energy Association to be held in Boston. Somerville city officials are signed up to go. Oliver to contact Laxmi Rao of IDEA – to learn about any feasibility study funding.

For next CEUCC meeting in July, zoning subcommittee will have delivered a zoning document for topics to consider for OSPCD.

#### Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Selected a consultant – AECOM. Had a lot of excellent proposals – was difficult to choose. Shooting to have whole inventory done in 4 months.

The team includes Maeve Bartlett – most recent past head of EEA. They have done a lot of work in other big cities – Seattle and Baltimore and they worked on PlaNYC. They proposed an additional project – pathways to 2050 modeling exercise. It stood out as linking the inventory to next steps.

In final contracting phase now.

What about the natural gas leaks we have – every GHG inventory gets better over time but it would be difficult to get information in time on the gas leaks. We could work with the natural gas leak info that we have and AECOM could write up a memo about what to do in the meantime.

#### Residential Energy Efficiency Program

Final agreement has been reviewed by the Law Dept and goes back to Next Step Living.

It is likely that Eversource will be able to do the “Whole House” program in Somerville starting this year in the fall. It’s the Multi-family program.

The first thing to come out of the agreement with NSL is a work plan. The CEUCC wants to be involved in the work plan.

#### Update on Budget Requests for FY16

Requested funding for \$150,000 consultant funding for climate change planning (\$75k for vulnerability assessment, \$35k for outreach about climate change planning and remaining \$40k for strategic planning) and Green Tech \$15,000. Green Tech funding will help pilot EE and RE related products.

#### Other Business

Juliette – Climate Interactive is taking off and in leading up to Paris, French high school students will be experiencing the model. Could Somerville students be experiencing the model as well? (The model is taking off in France, Germany, China, Argentina – there could be a model UN set up). They’re running a training at MIT for educators. Then this experience could link to the actions that we’re taking in Somerville. Juliette will follow up with Mayor.