

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2015

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

Attendees:

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

Russel Koty – Residential Energy Efficiency Manager, Housing Division

Andrea Ranger – Commissioner

Vanessa Boukili – Commissioner

Alyssa Saunders – Commissioner

Eliza Johnston - Commissioner

Spencer Lawrence – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

Toni Whitmore – Attendee

Jerrad Pierce– Attendee

Melissa Lowitz – Attendee

Ramon Bueno –Attendee

Gideon Katsh – Attendee

Jen Stevenson – Attendee

Meeting notes from August 2015 were approved

Greenhouse Gas Inventory:

Data collection is going well. At this point, all data collection for City is complete. AECOM having trouble getting utility data from Eversource. Have aggregated data from MAPC that can be used in place of utility data but Oliver is following up with Boston's Eversource contact in hopes of getting it from him.

Very preliminary analysis of municipal use indicates, Somerville municipal operations produce 24,000 tons of CO2 equivalents annually. Data is very preliminary but it's interesting to compare to 1997 baseline (20,000 tons) and emission splits. Currently 85% of emissions come from buildings, compared to 60% in 1997. Better data will be available in October.

Commission discussed regular updating of data, with the hope for annual updates.

Residential Energy Efficiency Program:

Russell working closely with Next Step Living to put together campaign launch and 3-year work plan. Decent scope for Year 1, still working on Year 2 and 3, which will be subject to change based on progress/impact. Different launch initiatives are being considered. Commissioners requested to view scope of work in progress in order to provide feedback.

City is redeveloping City website. Working with the Mayor's office to shoot a "What to Expect" video during the audit. Russell is looking for volunteers to speak in the intro. Video will show audit of Mayor's house. Continue working with Century Bank for the no-interest HEAT loans and other partnerships. The bank is interested in working with us and helping to market the program – the details of the partnership will be discussed in the next few weeks.

Part of the outreach plan will be to reach out to networks – churches, membership organizations, arts council, etc. Let City know if we have opportunities or ideas of groups to reach out to. Toni mentioned MOF outreach to St. Catherine's and Juliette mentioned the schools. Russell and NSL are planning an outreach effort similar to what NSL did with Lincoln-Sudbury High School which was very successful. The plan is to replicate the program with Somerville High's Green Team. Eliza will connect Russell with MOFs PTA meeting rep (Marylou). Outreach to building community is underway. Info should be included in the Welcome to Somerville package. Media outlets (Scout, etc) will also be included. Also interested in exploring an art piece that will graphically display the City's progress on reducing CO2. City is planning to produce multilingual materials.

National Grid and Eversource funding is on hold until the utilities wait for the new 3-year efficiency plan to come out in January.

How can we incentivize / attract renter-population to engage? Having the energy-use data might be a useful leverage chip, but it might not be enough. A few groups have been trying to target in-coming renters. RentRocket (started in Ann Arbor) is the most promising, crowd-sourced energy efficiency information on local housing stock. Andrea has been talking to Fred Berman around affordability in regard to Sustainable Neighborhoods. Some of the things they are considering are programs where landlords get assistance for putting in ee measures/solar, etc., but also commit to keeping the unit affordable for a set period of time in exchange for the financial assistance and asset improvements.

Community Solar

Somerville received the DOER Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant! Oliver is meeting with DOER tomorrow to discuss assessment / evaluation grant. City may have to procure services so may ask for list of potential contractors – NextAmp, Zapotec, Perigrine.

Some questions that should be considered: How will this affect our CCA supplier? Will Community Solar supply be considered an "opt out" supply contract for individuals in Somerville?

Google solar maps developer is a Somerville resident and Eliza has offered to get the communications/outreach folks in touch about publicity.

Residential Solar:

Russell is compiling materials for Solarize Mass application to be submitted in the Fall. Program is very dependent on volunteers – Solar Coach and network of volunteers. Solar Coach is critical to the success of the program and the Commission is the natural place to recruit the Solar Coach, survey also identified several interested parties. These type of program works off word-of-mouth, neighbors and peer groups and Flip-the-Switch-Parties. What is the status of SRECs as a selling point?

Russell will provide a description about what the Solar Coach responsibilities are and Commissioner can submit interest and selection criteria. Training, Tool-Kit and Best Practices are available through CEC as well as check-in calls and person of support. Stipend may be available.

Electric vehicle charging stations:

Residents were interested in getting information about EV charging stations. 3rd station is up in front of City Hall. It will be better publicized once the City's new website is up. Since July 30th (when first 2 went up) – 154 charges, 123 gallons of gas saved.

In residential buildings, they might only be able to support a small number of stations.

Zoning Code Overhaul:

Oliver will check in with zoning team for an update.

Community Choice Aggregation:

BoA will send the motion to authorize the creation of an aggregation plan to the Sub-committee on Open Space, Energy and Environment. Optimistic that Sub-committee will send back to the BoA for approval for Sept 24th meeting.

Alderman Mark Niedergang requested some folks from Task Force/Commission attend the sub-committee meeting on Sept 16th. Toni Whitmore and Vanessa Boukili volunteered to go to Sept 16 subcommittee meeting.

MAPC sent draft RFP and meeting will be set up with other named communities – Arlington and Sudbury to discuss broker. Patrick Roche really appreciated the feedback from the taskforce and shared with other communities. Oliver will provide an update on the RFP after he has had a chance to review.

Upcoming climate change RFPs

Still planning to get Vulnerability Assessment RFP out in October. Rob King (Director of Capital Projects) will be included as well. Please send any vendor names that you are aware of to Oliver. Really looking for a team (vs single company), academic or federal

agency connections. Boston and Cambridge are local communities who have done this work.

New City Website:

Oliver is working with the City communications team to update. Let Oliver know if there is some basic information that should be there, tweaks to mission statement, specific initiatives.

Storm water projects:

Jen and Andrea met with Rob King, Director of Capital Projects. Jen is doing research on reducing storm-water runoff in Somerville. What does the city have in place to mitigate SW run off. What are some of the non-infrastructure options and how can we motivate residents to get involved. Looking into Best Practices. City engineer gave overview of pipes and cause of flooding in Somerville. Much of city drainage is through Union Sq. Increased population has also exacerbated flooding due to increase sewage. A possible long term solution is similar to what happened on Beacon St, installation of vault to hold peak stormwater loads and then gets slowly pumped into pipes to MWRA. Discussed de-paving and other solutions and water table's proximity to the surface. Hope to get the City to present plan to Commission and SCA about plans for vaults – other side of Union Sq (Target/Independent), Nunziato (Dog Park), etc.

Juliette mentioned that her collaborators worked on a green/gray infrastructure simulation model in Milwaukee that may be applicable elsewhere. Somerville might be interested in being a pilot city for future modeling efforts. Could be very interesting to see the modeling and decision making processes as part of the City Brown Bags.