

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

Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2015

Tufts Administration Building 167 Holland Street, Somerville MA

### Attendees

Eliza Johnston - Commissioner

Spencer Lawrence - Commissioner

Andrea Ranger - Commissioner

Russel Koty - Residential Energy Efficiency Manager, Housing Division

Gideon Katsh - Attendee

Alyssa Saunders - Commissioner

Vanessa Boukili - Commissioner

Allan Klindworth - AECOM

Juliette Rooney-Varga - Commissioner

### GHG inventory

Oliver: primary objective of this project is to get a more recent update on emissions for planning for 2050 net zero. This is one half of plan - other half is vulnerability assessment to be done later next year.

- No strategies to reduce emissions during this phase - that will be accomplished in integrated mitigation-adaptation plan.
- AECOM has been working on this since July.
- Need for Commission to offer input into what would be worth putting into report - from analyses to communication strategies for Somerville public.

Allan Klindworth (AECOM): Explained that he is project manager on this work, representing a larger technical team at AECOM and offering a quick overview of the process and report.

- Report will include a description of the methodology used (which will be covered in a separate document delivered with the inventory.)
- They held a kickoff meeting with city staff to bring in stakeholders involved in different inventory components; obtained electricity and natural gas data for the community data from MAPC and Eversource. They are currently analyzing data and developing inventory.
- Next stage is report, with goal to make it as accessible as possible.
- Last step is to do training and tracking handover so that city can do future inventories with internal staff.

Oliver:

- Mayor signed Compact of Mayors; also signed Mayors National Climate Action Agenda (MNCAA)
- Compact of Mayors - key point is standardizing GHG tracking and reporting in cities
- Methodology that we are using is compliant with that Compact, as well as what most of leading cities are using within MNCAA, and is also approved by the World Resources Institute (and LGO, GPC)

- The City is considering how frequently to update inventory - most likely every two years, on even years.

Slides that Allan brought were reviewed. He explained that they focused on areas where the City has operational control for which they can control physical infrastructure decisions (e.g., what types of lights are installed), not financial control.

- Allan mentioned that this has been the easiest data collection he's been involved in – Somerville did a good job laying the groundwork for inventory.

Eliza asked, “how do municipal emissions data compare to other cities?” Discussion ensued about how there is a need for data on square footage of buildings to come up with a metric that might be able to be compared to other cities and that this would be valuable, as well as other benchmarks (i.e., do we have few vehicles or do we have many that are efficient? Do we have efficient lighting in city or is it that we do not have enough?).

A suggestion was made to include one more bar chart of impact by function of building.

Allan explained that forecast emissions are based on population and city budget projections. Technical document is available to support that. Assumes no adaptation policies of the sort that will most likely be developed in Somerville’s climate change plan.

Other points from discussion:

- The report used GPC (Global Protocol for Community scale GHG emissions). Sectors include residential and commercial energy use, transportation, waste (emissions related to both wastewater and solid waste – including that recycling waste is not a zero emissions activity).
- Suggestions were made to compare residential vs commercial vs municipal emissions, with the take-home message that what the community does matters.
- Transportation is determined using trips that start and/or end in Somerville; ~99% of all transportation emissions are on-road.
- Refrigerants for community are really difficult to determine. Note that fugitive emissions are not a huge problem in US, but it is included in global protocol.

Key message: this is the starting point for a plan; municipal emissions are primarily from schools, and administrative buildings. Community inventory is mostly stationary energy residential and transportation.

### Solar

Oliver explained that Somerville is applying for Solarize Mass program. Commission formed a subcommittee earlier this year, and state program fits many of our needs. The Solarize program is organized by Mass CEC with the goal of accelerating adoption of solar at community level. The premise is that a good way to reduce costs and accelerate adoption is to reduce 'soft costs.' The program includes running a campaign in a community to sign up homeowners for solar. The more people sign up, the lower the price for everyone. This approach balances responsibility among different stakeholders - municipality, state, volunteers and is primarily a volunteer-driven

program, including a solar coach, core network, and other volunteers. Russell has done research into this and found that you're more likely to get solar if your neighbor has solar.

Russell explained that we have to define a team of volunteer community members and a coach. This program will last for six months. Solar coach would be part of background setup; time frame includes mid-March to July for marketing component.

- The installations get lumped together at end of marketing phase, then everything is bulk bought and installations happen within a short amount of time.
- Volunteer team will have training from state on message, how to do this.

Oliver addressed the questions volunteers might have: How much time, what will I be doing, etc?

- We are looking to identify a solar coach and a few key volunteers to name in application. From those people, we need a statement of commitment to include in application.
- During marketing push, time needed could be 8-10 hours a week. Volunteers could be involved in selecting vendors. Solar coach manages all the other volunteers. Need to do both face to face and email/phone work
- Interest in city is strong: about 350 responders from solar survey in city.
- This is primarily a technical assistance grant, and includes a limit of \$2500 for marketing materials. Throughout the entire program, the CEC staff has biweekly calls with city team. Municipalities are allowed to make \$1k as a stipend.
- The program typically unfolds in cycles - marketing cycle, then installation cycle, then marketing, etc.

Questions were fielded from community members interested in solar program:

- Is it only Somerville or can you bring on Cambridge, etc.? It is only Somerville, but Oliver is talking to Cambridge on coordinating outreach message.
- If idea is to pull down soft costs, is installer expected to offer discount? How will they know how much of a discount will be? Any installer will get more business than typical install, so RFP will include discount. They have pricing tiers.
- What about ownership vs renters? We recognize that our city has 60% renters. It is easier if you are a homeowner. We are probably going to focus on low hanging fruit - homeowners. The commission is also looking at community solar as well.
- This is not just about owning panels. We are looking to have a vendor who will do PPA and selling PV panels.
- We are really interested in thinking about commercial properties. We might want a small team who focuses on commercial solar.
- Would a building with 24 units be of interest? If condo association is set up in a way that you can meter electricity, it could work. We would need to look into specifics, but this would be something that we would want addressed.
- What might happen beyond Solarize? We are not going to solve climate change with the Solarize program! We are looking at other options including community solar programs. We just received a grant from DOER to do a feasibility study about this.

- Russell is leading effort on energy efficiency program too. The program is SEEN - Somerville Energy Efficiency Now, and is trying to get people to reduce energy usage. City just signed an agreement with Next Step Living.
- Russell is working on landlord based outreach. Landlords who pay for tenants' utilities are more receptive. There will be a new program that offers more rebates for landlords who insulate etc. for multiple units.
- What to do next? Think about whether you'd want to volunteer, including for solar coach position. We'd like to have people involved with the application, within a couple of weeks.
- Vendors could focus on best roofs. We want to have solar feasibility map - everyone can see a first screen.
- Oliver asked: how did everyone hear about this meeting? Most responded that they filled out the survey.

### Stormwater

Jen Stevenson had set up a meeting with Rob King, formerly the city engineer, who is now director of capital projects. He explained Somerville hydrology (i.e., 2/3 of storm water drains into Union Square). It would be helpful to get a baseline of knowledge about storm water among the community. If we get people informed and energized, then we need to direct them on what to do with that energy. Oliver noted that flooding is an important issue that will be key to the vulnerability assessment, which will be integrated with mitigation. There is a Flood Forum that Oliver is looking to coordinate with to raise awareness about flooding. Andrea noted that Rob is able to explain Somerville hydrology very effectively. Groundwork and SCA could host an event and invite Rob. People who learn something from these meetings could be connected to ongoing policy initiatives. An event organized by a non-City group that invited Rob and Charlie Quigley to speak would be ideal.

A note was made that April would be a good time for such a meeting, as floods are more likely to occur in spring.