

Commission for Energy Use and Climate Change

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2019

Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue., Somerville, MA

Attendees:

Ramon Bueno – Commissioner

Liz Galloway – Nominated Commissioner

Stephen Moore – Commissioner

Juliette Rooney-Varga – Commissioner

Julie Wood – Commissioner

Larry Yu – Nominated Commissioner

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

Review and adopt the minutes from the May 8, 2019 meeting

- Approved

Recap of CEUCC participation in ResiStat meetings

- No relevant notes.

Somerville Climate Forward-related FY20 budget items

- Seven major departments requested funds in the current budget for a total request of ~\$512K, which were approved by Administration.
 - Major newly funded initiatives include:
 - Parking optimization study
 - Parking Department is already working with Brad and focused on mobility, changing dependence on cars
 - Establishment of a program for tree health in parks
 - Sustainability Office will be hiring an energy manager focused on city operations (existing and new buildings, fleet, and anything else that uses energy)
 - Part of leading by example component of Climate Forward
 - The Energy Manager will develop a building energy management system
 - From existing funds:
 - Housing division will be hiring an on-call contractor to assist with heat pump installations in income-restricted home owners and renters
 - Continuation of the EV charging infrastructure strategy program
 - Engineering Dept will be using \$50K from revolving fund for researching potential stormwater management projects
 - Support for Climate Ambassadors Program
 - Continued bicycle network planning
 - Consumption-based GHG inventory

- All departments who asked for funding were involved in creation of Climate Forward plan, so they were engaged in the process and willingly contributed.
- Discussion about native species planting:
 - Difficult questions about what is ‘native’
 - Questions about whether or not native species will be able to adapt to a changing climate
 - Sharing information about which trees will be planted
 - Vanessa will reach out to Julie to discuss this issue when urban forestry plans move forward

Update on Community Choice Aggregation

- Extra renewable energy will now be 10% higher than grid through Green Energy Consumer Alliance. Only RECs from New England and no bioenergy. Bids were lower than current cost. Contract from Jan 2020 to Nov 2022.
- Added a 50% renewable energy opt-up option
- >93% of eligible accounts are in program, which is very high compared to other municipalities.
- ~300 accounts out of 24,000 accounts are in 100% opt-up program, which is notably low.
- City plans to promote opt-up program for 2020 program
- Communities that are purchasing RECs are pushing Green Energy Consumers Alliance to limit – beyond 10%, cost goes up to greater than Eversource rate.
- Marketing is provided by Good Energy. We need to decide how much marketing is needed.
- The shorter the contract, the higher the price.

Update on Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program project

- We obtained one of largest MVP awards in state, at \$350K, with four components:
 - Add to Engineering Dept’s ongoing stormwater modeling project
 - Update model to include cc-impacted events
 - Stormwater infrastructure toolkit
 - Communications toolkit on flooding preparedness
 - Workshops with city staff on messages that need to be communicated on preparing with flooding risks, impacts, resilience, etc.
- This will be a topic of a future meeting

2018 greenhouse gas inventory

- Same methodology as 2016 and 2014.
- Intern from Tufts University working on 2018 inventory and beginning work on a consumption-based inventory
 - Consumption-based inventory will likely depend on assumptions about economic activity
 - Consumption-based emissions are likely to be 2x as high as city GHG emissions
 - High levels of uncertainty on consumption-based emissions
- Most of community inventory is modeled and therefore not as reliable as city operations inventory, which is based on actual data.

- Likely that emissions reductions are now flat after an initial reduction, so further progress will require significant action
- Consumption-based emissions inventories have been done in other states (e.g., state of Oregon) and cities, so there are lessons learned that we could benefit from
 - E.g., banning certain types of concrete b/c of associated emissions, encouraging tool-share libraries, measure non-economic means of wellbeing (e.g., Happiness Census).
 - User-friendly tools like Cool Climate maybe available
- Opportunities to leverage business community for consumption-based emissions

Any and all business before the Commission

- Working on application for next MVP round (August), with Somerville leading Boston, Chelsea, Everett on infrastructure vulnerability
- Attention to policies that can be taken at regional, state, federal level
 - Concern over plastics
- ArtBeat – theme is ‘consumed’
 - Volunteers?