

Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change
Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2024, 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Attending: Larry Yu (chair), Ramón Bueno (vice chair), Eri Furusawa, Courtney Koslow, Eliza Johnston, Alexis Washburn, Julie Wood

Commissioners Not Attending: Christine Blais (ex-officio)

OSE Staff: Julia Damiano, Garrett Anderson

Members of the public: John Scherbarth, Lindsay Lucke, Ron Cavallo, William Valletta

Meeting started at: 7:03 PM.

Introductions

- Garrett Anderson, new Residential Decarbonization Manager, introduced himself to the Commission.

DOE SOLVE IT Prize

- Garrett presented asked for the Commission to submit a Letter of Support for the City's application to the Solutions for Lasting, Viable Energy Infrastructure Technologies ([SOLVE IT](#)) Prize. Applications are due Friday, 4/12 and should focus on deploying clean energy technology in underrepresented communities. OSE is planning to submit an application with a focus on renters who speak English as a second language.
- Next steps: Julia to share draft letter with Chair Yu on Wednesday for approval.
- Commissioner Johnston made a MOTION for the Commission to submit a letter of support for the SOLVE IT Prize application at 7:20 PM. Commissioner Koslow SECONDED at 7:21 PM. The motion was passed unanimously at 7:21 PM.

3. Community Choice Electricity 2024 Contract Updates

- Julia Damiano updated the Commission on the CCE negotiation outcomes: OSE increased the renewables from 20% to 40% above the state-mandated 24%, bringing the city to 64% renewable. The contract is locked in for 37 months and a more formal announcement will be made at the upcoming Climate Forward event.
- Commissioner Johnston and Commissioner Yu cautioned about messaging and requested clarity on what is implied by the 40% additional, and to align the messaging with recommendations from the Green Energy Consumers Alliance.

4. Subcommittee Updates and Discussions:

- **Climate Forward Launch**
 - Julia Damiano updated the Commission on the Somerville Climate Forward launch event. OSE will hold the launch on Wednesday, April 24 at Greentown Labs; CEUCC members are welcome to either attend as participants or to volunteer via the sign-up form by Monday, April 22. The event will feature different interactive art installations that reflect the pillars of the SCF plan.

- OSE will host an informational webinar on the SCF plan itself on Thursday, May 16th at 6pm.
- Commissioner Koslow asked when the actual SCF will be available. Julia offered to follow up with date.
- Commissioner Yu asked about the change in location from the Armory to Greentown Labs and shared his disappointment with this decision given recent announcements re: Aramco Americas investing in the incubator. Commissioner Yu advised caution regarding marketing and photography given the consideration around optics. Julia offered to relay this to Emily Sullivan at OSE.
- **Policy Subcommittee**
 - No discussion
- **Buildings Subcommittee**
 - Commissioner Koslow asked about the latest membership of this Subcommittee and volunteered to lend her expertise as the latest member. Her focus will include decarbonizing the City's municipal and school buildings, whole-building decarb and electrification (incl. through their capital plan and leveraging IRA funds).
 - Julia invited CEUCC to weigh in on strategies re: building decarb. Commissioner Bueno emphasized the importance of this discussion.
 - Commissioner Johnson cautioned that historically, in the context of decarbonizing the high school campus, the pain point was the siloed decision-making within City Hall and shared that systems thinking and trying to get the right decision-makers in the room was critical.
 - Commissioner Koslow asked Julia to work with Christine to invite the following people to a future meeting (either CEUCC meeting or during business hours): Department of Infrastructure and Asset Management (IAM), the Capital Projects Division within IAM, and Mayor Ballantyne.
 - Commissioner Washburn noted the recent interest in creating school-specific programs under MassSave under their 2025-2027 plan currently in progress. She noted that if there is a larger stakeholder meeting re: decarbonizing Somerville's buildings, Eversource may be interested in participating.
 - Next steps: Chair Yu to circulate list of current members by Subcommittee; use future meeting to revisit membership and Subcommittee goals.
- **Administration**
 - **CEUCC Ordinance Discussion**
 - Julia shared updates regarding ordinance updates: Christine is pulling together a first draft of the Ordinance, which will include language on size and structure of the CEUCC. This is going through the approval process and will be on the May agenda, after which the Mayor will review, followed by Council.
 - Julia posed questions to the CEUCC re: major elements of the ordinance update:
 - Changing the CEUCC name: received unanimous support from Commissioners.

- Expanding by adding other non-voting members, potentially from Departments:
 - Commissioner Koslow supported this idea, specifically the idea of including Infrastructure and Asset Management, Capital Management staff
 - Chair Yu recommended adding Mobility Division staff from the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, and Engineering Department (esp. those in charge of sewers and stormwater)
 - Julia proposed adding all Departments as members but inviting them in only when relevant to the agenda
 - Commissioner Johnston offered that doing this via Subcommittee meetings during business hours may be easier for City staff and CEUCC members. Commissioner Bueno supported this idea.
 - Commissioner Johnston emphasized more conscious engagement with Councilmembers and having open lines of communication to understand what their priorities are and amplify each other's work.
- Engaging youth
 - Commissioners unanimously supported engaging youth, potentially via expanding on the Mayor's Youth Council model in Boston that pairs high schoolers with the opportunity to sit on a Commission. Commissioner Johnson reflected that CEUCC has a history of having regular attendees from the High School Green team on issues of composting, etc.
- Commissioner Yu asked the Commission whether they had a preference between remote and hybrid meetings.
 - Commissioner Johnston and Commissioner Washburn supported having an in-person meeting once a quarter or so.
 - Julia mentioned the benefits of virtual creating opportunities for participants from the public. Commissioner Bueno recalled that in-person attendance was low during pre-COVID times and highlighted the potential to have more people attend if meetings offered a virtual option. Commissioner Johnston suggested that this may also reflect a cultural shift post-COVID.
 - Commissioner Washburn recommended creating ways to increase attendance by making it easier to participate.

5. Review of Meeting Minutes from March

- Commissioner Bueno made a MOTION to approve the March meeting minutes at 8:08 PM. Commissioner Johnston SECONDED at 8:08 PM. The motion was passed unanimously at 8:08 PM.

6. Any and all business before the Commission

- Public Comment

- Ron Cavallo requested the Commission to consider the economics of proposed SCF strategies, specifically through creating incentives.
- Commissioner Washburn shared information about [upcoming listening sessions](#) that will inform MassSave's 2025-2027 Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization Plan.
- Commissioner Bueno proposed that the Commission discuss, during a future meeting, updates on plastics recycling and how to improve the existing recycling process. Commissioner Yu agreed and raised the opportunity to review the Zero Waste Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.