

**Somerville Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 11, 2025 7:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Commissioners Attending:** *Alexis Washburn, Eri Furusawa, Eliza Johnston, Courtney Koslow, Ramón Bueno, Larry Yu (chair), Christine Blais (ex-officio)*

**Commissioners Not Attending:**

**Attendees:** *Emily Sullivan (OSE), Lindsay Lucke, Ben Capraro*

**Meeting started at 7:02 PM.**

**Agenda item**

- Introductions
  - Commissioners, OSE staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
- Meeting Minute Approval
  - Commissioner Johnston made a motion to approve the January 2025 minutes at 7:06 PM. Commissioner Furusawa seconded the motion at 7:06 PM. The motion passed unanimously at 7:07PM.
- Policy Discussion
  - Three-Year Plan
    - OSE shared updates regarding the Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan and reviewed some of the highlights from the plan including expansion of renter specific incentives such as no-cost weatherization, barrier mitigation, and electrification.
  - An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers
    - The legislation was signed into law by Governor Healy. Highlights from the law include reforms to the energy siting and permitting processes, improvements for community engagement in energy facilities siting proceedings, and expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure and incentives.
- Governance Discussion
  - Meeting schedule 2025
    - Commissioners expressed interest in meeting in person and Commissioner Yu suggested meeting in-person in April and September pending space availability.
  - Commission subcommittees: Affirming roles and assignments
    - Commissioner Bueno will join Commissioner Johnston on the outreach committee.
  - Commission ordinance amendment update
    - OSE staff will submit updated ordinance and memo explaining the changes to the City Council for consideration at the 2/27/25 council meeting.
  - Update to AI notetaking question

- OSE staff provided additional context regarding the use of AI notetaking in public meetings including state level requirements that AI products meet consumer protections laws. Staff also clarified that the City of Somerville IT Department has not yet issued a formal policy on the use of AI technology.
  - There was discussion amongst the Commissioners on strategies to reduce notetaking burden including appointing a secretary of the commission.
  - OSE staff clarified that meeting minutes are required as a part of Open Meeting Law and that meeting minutes are not required to be a direct transcript but can highlight key takeaways from the discussion including noting at a minimum start and end time of the meeting, recording votes, and attributing votes to the respective members.
  - Commissioners expressed concern with the use of AI due to its environmental impacts as well as privacy concerns. Given these concerns, the commission will revisit the use of AI at a later date when there is more information and guidance available from the city.
- Staffing Updates
  - Open positions on the commission will likely be posted after approval of the updated ordinance to streamline onboarding of new commissioners.
  - The hiring process for Environmental Policy Manager and Energy Manager are ongoing.
- Buildings discussion
  - As requested by the Somerville Educators Union, an updated memo city staff prepared and shared with the School Committee its bi-annual School Decarbonization memo dated January 31, 2025. The memo is to provide update on progress regarding activities the City is undertaking to maintain safe and healthy teaching and learning environments within school buildings and school grounds.
  - Updates in the memo included hiring a new Director of Emergency Management, piloting afterschool climate change clubs at three schools, and hosting SustainaVille Week, the annual climate change week, from May 3-9, 2025.
  - A Commissioner noted that the section entitled Partnership with the City to Become Carbon Neutral was primarily a list of projects to replace mechanical existing systems in-kind, rather than a plan for decarbonization of school buildings over time. Expressed a desire to see the city focusing more on a bigger picture plan, while offering the expertise of the CEUCC members if and when appropriate.
  - A Commissioner also raised a concern related the note in the air quality section of the memo that MERV filters were installed at all schools post-COVID, noting that the filters were not transferred to the Edgerly school when the Winter Hill was moved there in 2023, and the Edgerly did not already have them in place previously. Christine will explore whether this is correct.
- Grants and Support Discussion
  - OSE is waiting to hear back on several federal grant applications and continues to explore other federal and state funding opportunities meet the City's climate goals.
  - OSE is considering applying for the Municipal Investment Fund available from the

Coalition for Green Capital which is funded through Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

- Commissioner Furusawa made a motion at 8:33 PM to draft a letter of support on behalf of the Commission for the grant application. Commissioner Washburn seconded at 8:34 PM. The motion passed unanimously at 8:34 PM

**Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.**