

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

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

**Commissioners Not Attending:** *N/A*

**Attendees:** *Connor Dion, Grace Hall, Jessica Saavedra, Madison Trepanier, Ben Capraro, Lindsay Lucke*

**Meeting started at 7:01 PM.**

**Agenda item**

- Introductions
  - Commissioners, OSE staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
- Debrief and discussion on Chair Yu's One-on-One Check-ins
  - Chair Yu reviewed the summary document noting the feedback he received from one-on-one sessions he had with all CEUCC Commissioners, Director of Sustainability and Environment and Climate Change Program Manager, and with a Cambridge Climate Committee member. Goal of the one-on-one sessions was to gather input on how the Somerville's Commission on Energy Use and Climate might evolve over the course of 2025 as it transitions to the Climate Action Commission (pending City Council approval).
  - Topics in the summary that were discussed include:
    - How might we use our meeting time more effectively?:
      - Discussed focusing on the commissioner's role and how they can serve the city before determining how to set up the meeting more effectively. Would also like to hear from OSE on what would be helpful for them from CEUCC. Will review the summary document at the meeting in April, which will be in person. Larry or Christine will put out a poll for availability of commissioners.
    - Is there a better approach to our ad hoc meeting minutes rotation?
      - Suggestions to do note taking and facilitation in alphabetical order based on agreeing/volunteering to do either or both role. Or OSE ask for note taking and facilitation volunteers when the agenda goes out. Christine and Larry to decide.
    - Set annual priorities—where do we as a commission want to be by the end of 2025?
      - Suggestion to understand what is most helpful to OSE in advance of the next meeting.
      - Commissioners coalesced around doing the groundwork now to set the priorities for what the commission's focused is in 2025 based on what OSE needs and on how the commissioners feel they can be most helpful based on their personal expertise. Then the new commission when it's formed can adjust as needed. Will focus on this in the April in person meeting.

What other elements in the synthesis below should we pay immediate attention to (Appreciation for OSE staff, Role of the CEUCC, Tactical Considerations, Future Steps)?

- Suggestion to bring the Ambassadors into the Commissions work more to benefit from the program and leverage and reinforce it. Could be a once-a-year event.
  - Emphasis on engagement and outreach coupled with the Ambassadors who are engaged in different communities. City has put in a lot of investment into the program and should capitalize on it. Similar with the High School's Green Team facilitated by a nonprofit had great synergy. Helped with age diversity as well.
  - Larry will reach out to Eliza and Ramon offline to meet with Emily & Naomi at OSE to talking more about the Ambassador program
- At the April meeting important to focus on the role of the CEUCC- advisor to Mayor, liaison, determining what the CEUCC owns, so Commissioner can be the most useful with their time and the expertise, and not just be another thing that OSE has to manager.
- Cambridge is a year or two ahead. They have specific things they are tasked with like provide an annual report or summary.
- Policy Discussion
  - MassSave Three-Year Plan
    - MassSave Three-Year Plan is now approved and includes great incentives for air source heat pumps. No more gas incentives. Three-year plan came out right when utility rates came out so high, so now cutting the program by about \$50 million in the residential sector (TBD). May lose some. Still key things to celebrate. More incentives for schools, commercial properties, piloting a new school decarbonization plan. Focus on Environmental Justice communities with a focus on barrier mitigation and electrification.
    - Healy-Driscoll Administration released Energy Affordability Agenda this week. Focuses on interventions that can lead to significant savings over the next 5 years. There are immediate programs like \$50 credit to every electric customer in the next 1-2 months. Asked the DPU on how to lower gas rates. Looking into expanding discount rates to people who are eligible but not enrolled. Looking at electric rates for heat pumps specifically. Reduce or eliminate electrical charges on utility bills. Innovative rate design to reduce the impact of higher rates in winter. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/governor-healeys-energy-affordability-agenda>
- Governance Discussion
  - Commission ordinance amendment update
    - OSE staff submitted the updated ordinance and memo explaining the changes to the City Council for consideration. The ordinance will be reviewed at the next City Council Legislative Matter Committee meeting (virtual) on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

- CEUCC will continue as an interim body. Once get quorum we will meet as the Climate Action Commission. Current commissioners can stay on in the interim body but will need to reapply to be on the CAC.
  - Coordinating in-person meetings
    - As noted above will determine a date in April and May for an in person meeting at the City Hall Annex from 6:30pm-8:30pm.
- Events and Advertising- Spread the word!
  - SustainaVille Sips -networking event Winter Hill Brewing, March 18, 5:30-7:30pm.
  - Networked Geothermal Public Meeting 3/25- to discuss soon to be released report drafted for Somerville, including high school, Ames Building and Ten Hills Neighborhood.
  - SustainaVille Week 2025 will be May 3 – 9, 2025. More info to come.
  - Seed Library is open at every library and thriving.
- Staffing Updates
  - Commission
    - Open positions on the commission will likely be posted after approval of the updated ordinance to streamline onboarding of new commissioners.
  - City
    - The hiring process for Environmental Policy Manager and Energy Manager are ongoing. Conducting interviews.
- School Buildings:
  - Christine provided updates on the following:
    - Argenziano LED lighting through federal funds have been delayed so not doing it over school break, but will be done this spring
    - Investigating a grant opportunity through the Coalition for Green Capital around network geothermal, but not the right opportunity at the right time. Still in touch with the MA Climate Bank on how to implement the geothermal report, which includes the high school
    - Energy Stabilization Fund created around 2021. Takes energy savings that the city has done and reinvested them in other energy savings programs. Have about \$1 million in the fund to date.
  - Discussion of the Capital Improvement Plan and questions of whether or not school buildings were included in it this year? Christine to confirm
  - Question on whether MERV 13 filters are currently in place in all schools, particularly Winter Hill at Edgerly.
  - Discussion of how City staff has recently reported at public meetings that they will need to replace in-kind the mechanical systems now at all schools except Brown and Winter Hill @ Edgerly, pushing off the ability to decarbonize and electrify the schools for another 25+ years. Commission agreed at the next meeting there will

be a priority discussion on how the commission can best help the city with resources on whole-building, systems thinking approaches to renovating school buildings with a decarbonization over time approach, and utilizing methods that allow for schools to be renovated during the school year, while still minimizing disturbances to the students.

- Grants and Support Discussion
  - Commissioner requested that the Commission remain updated on the OSE grants being applied to or considered, as well as any impacted by any recent changes at the federal level. List of grants can be found here:  
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/somervillema-live/s3fs-public/2024-12/CEUCC-agenda-20241210.pdf>
- Meeting Minute Approval
  - Approval of the February minutes delayed until April in order to amend the notes section elated to the Building Discussion will be drafted and proposed prior to the next meeting. Courtney will propose updated language

**Meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM**