

Somerville Interim Climate Action Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2026, 7:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Attending: *Alexis Washburn (clerk), Eliza Johnston, Courtney Koslow, Ramón Bueno (vice-chair), Larry Yu (chair), Steven Nutter (OSE - ex-officio), Jason Behrens (SPS - ex-officio)*

Commissioners Not Attending:

Attendees: Kate Bossingham (OSE), Garrett Anderson (OSE), Elyse Belarge (OSE), Ashi Mohindru, Clara Rhodes, Edward Woll, Jason Scanlon, Kimmy Cushman, Naima Sait, Corey Donhue

Meeting started at 07:07 PM.

Agenda item

- **Introductions**
 - Commissioners, OSE and SPS staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
- **Approval of January meeting minutes (5 minutes)**
 - Commissioner Johnston made a motion to approve the January 2025 meeting minutes and Commissioner Bueno seconded. The motion was approved at 7:16pm.
- **Further introductions by ICAC commissioners and ex-officio members on their backgrounds and interests (20 minutes)**
- **Update on CAC open position posting (5 minutes)**
 - OSE shared that the new mayoral administration is reviewing the appointment process across all boards and commissions, and that later this spring there will be a new standard operating procedure that will inform the review process.
- **Update from the Office of Sustainability and Environment on a heat resiliency pilot project (10 minutes)**
 - OSE has received a grant from the Barr Foundation to work on community heat resilience. OSE has partnered with Cambridge Health Alliance and Culture House to develop a pilot project to reduce extreme heat in the city.
 - During summer 2025 the team focused on community engagement with extensive outreach in East Somerville. Culture house staff observed how community members utilized public spaces on hot days and formed a community advisory group to generate some ideas around potential projects. During summer 2026 the project team will implement three (3) pilots:
 - CHA will prescribe health and wellness cooling technologies to patients
 - Culture House will create safe cooling pop-ups and educational materials around extreme heat.
 - OSE will examine reducing extreme heat through depaving opportunities and improving access to public drinking water.
 - Commissioner Koslow asked what other communities in the cohorts are doing?

- OSE shared that Lynn (community gardens) and Salem (geographic targeting in the Point neighborhood) are exploring similar projects.
 - Commissioner Bueno noted that some bus stops for example do not have any shade structures and asked if that is something that could be addressed through the pilot noting the vulnerability of some of the populations using the bus?
 - OSE bus stop shading was identified but there are challenges with the timeline of the grant and coordinating with the MBTA and regulations as they apply to the public right of way.
- **School building decarbonization (10 minutes)**
 - Somerville Traffic and Parking Department Building will be getting several improvements including a heat pump replacement, updated boilers, and installation of solar array, which would be the largest array owned directly by the city.
 - The City is also replacing metal halide fixtures with LEDs at Dilboy and Trum Field, which could reduce energy consumption up to 70%. Projects are pending city council approval.
 - Completing comprehensive building assessments to ensure that municipal buildings can access incentives available through the utility programs is a current priority of the City especially considering that school buildings represent approximately 60% of the City's energy consumption.
 - Commissioner Koslow asked how the City is approaching building retrofits from a holistic perspective that achieves decarbonization rather than one off replacement projects?
 - Garrett (OSE) shared that the city is thinking about phased installations to limit disruptions to students and classroom time. City is not doing blower door tests in school buildings due to the technical difficulty and cost.
 - Commissioner Johnston asked how we can communicate the importance some of the changes to key decision-makers to support the changes considering the tradeoffs that need to be made?
 - Public comment
 - Corey Donhue asked what is the range of estimated costs to decarbonize school buildings?
 - OSE shared that the cost estimate details would require schematic designs that a professional cost estimator could use to price the project. The current assessments do not include that level of detail within their scope.
- **Discussion of ICAC priorities for 2026 (20 minutes)**
 - Commissioner Yu asked members of the commission to share their reason for joining the commission and their priorities for the upcoming year. Commissioner shared that community organizing was very meaningful for him and that he was very appreciative of different community-led initiatives from across the City from depaving parties to buy nothing groups.

- Commissioner Johnston expressed interest in growing the commission and diversifying our areas of expertise to reach a larger part of the Somerville community.
- Commissioner Koslow shared that she is passionate about school building decarbonization and hopes to see Somerville as a leader when it comes to climate initiatives in buildings.
- Commissioner Bueno explained that his background is in computer modeling and later in his career he focused on climate. He expressed interest in wanting community members to be engaged before there is a disaster. He likes the climate ambassadors program because it builds community capacity.
- Commissioner Washburn shared that she's worked in the climate space for a majority of her career with a focus on buildings and wants to ensure that the City is taking advantage of every grant opportunity available.
- Jason Behrens (SPS) shared that April is Earth Month and asked for Commissioners and other members of the public to volunteer at upcoming events at the schools.
- OSE Director Steven Nutter shared that he is interested in breaking down siloes across different groups by forming communities of practice. He also shared that his past experience has focused on nature based solutions, social connections, and culture change.

8:30pm Commissioner Washburn departed the meeting

- **Public Comment**

- Director Nutter responded to an earlier question in the meeting noting that the Davis Square project as submitted does not speak to our climate goals. Right now, the submission process is paused. We will continue to look at every development.
- Kimmy Cushman introduced The Plant Based Treaty is a global movement rooted at the local level with a mission of transitioning to plant-based food systems.
- Brandon shared that as a Somerville resident in Ward 7 and he is a part of the Local Graduates Initiative of the Plant Based Treaty. They are advocating for more plant-based initiatives to do things like serve plant-based food, tracking consumption-based emissions of meat, and pushing toward plant-based foods as a climate solution.

8:35pm Commissioner Johnston departed the meeting.

- Kimmy: Could we present at the next Commission meeting?
- Larry: We're open to presenting at a future meeting, but we haven't set the agenda for the next meeting yet. Let's chat offline. I will share my email in the chat.
- Steven: I appreciate that Cambridge City Council endorsed you last month. Somerville has a different form of government, of course. But congratulations.

- **Scheduling**

- Commissioner Yu shared that the next meeting of the Commission will be Tuesday March 10.
- Kate (OSE) will reach out to commissioners to see whether we do it hybrid.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37PM.