

**Somerville Interim Climate Action Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 28, 2026, 2025 7:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Commissioners Attending:** Larry Yu (chair), Courtney Koslow, Eliza Johnston, Ramón Bueno (vice-chair), Steven Nutter (ex-officio)

**Commissioners Not Attending:** Alexis Washburn (clerk), Jason Behrens (ex-officio)

**Attendees from the City:** Kate Bossingham (OSE), Naomi Gross (OSE)

**Attendees:** Bella Smith, Clair Miziolek, Courtney Foster, Dana Cohen-Kaplan, Hannah Henkin, Janice Hagerman, Kelly Simpson, Monte Allen, Polina Ermoshkina, Ritika Philip, Isabella Buford, Roman Madaus, Caller from 15083977607, Dana Coheen-Kaplan, Logan Casey

*Meeting called to order at 07:03 PM.*

**Agenda item**

- **Introductions**
  - Commissioners, OSE staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
- **Discussion about AI and notetaking**
  - Following up the March meeting, when Commissioners enquired about using AI to take minutes for ICAC meetings, OSE staff consulted with the City Clerk. The City Clerk advised that the city doesn't have general AI use policy right now. And in the absence of a general AI use policy, the Clerk discourages boards and commissions from using AI for note taking.
  - Such a policy may be under development, but there is no current timeline.
  - Not using AI is consistent with our concerns over the actual and perceived environmental impact of AI use.
  - Commissioner Koslow asked whether a City staff person could take the minutes. Given that the CAC is so small, dedicating a person to taking the minutes often removes that person from actively participating in discussion.
  - Commissioner Yu volunteered to take the recording and draft the minutes for the meeting.
- **Approval of November meeting minutes**
  - Commissioner Bueno moved to approve the March meeting meetings with corrected typos noted by email. Commissioner Johnston seconded. The motion was approved unanimously at 7:16pm.
- **Sustainaville Week**
  - Sustainable Week is coming up. Six events happening over a week in collaboration with a number of city departments, local community-based organizations, and folks OSE has been working with. May 2 through May 8.
    - May 2: Block party on Mossland St with Division of Mobility.
    - May 3: Electric efficiency house tours.

- May 4: Sustainaville book club, reading *Climate Action for Busy People*, by Cate Lafortune-Mingoya, a Somerville resident.
  - May 5: Compost giveaway at Glen Park Community Garden.
  - May 7: Kennedy School energy efficiency tour.
  - May 8: Arbor Day picnic in the park with Urban Forestry. Community groups will have picnic blankets instead of tables.
- Events span the gamut of OSE work from decarbonization and energy efficiency to composting.
- Not requesting RSVPs, so never sure what turnout will look like. That's an intentional choice to lower the barrier for participation and be accessible.
- Most of the events are kid-friendly.
- Commissioners are encouraged to help get the word out.
- **Update on CAC application review**
  - OSE received 49 applications for the CAC. Seven applicants who own or do business in Somerville. Three applicants between the ages of 15 and 17, eight between the ages of 18 and 25, and three applicants who were 65 or older. Applicants from all seven wards. Thirty-four applicants are renters and 13 are homeowners, a ratio that echoes the homeownership population of Somerville.
  - Really excited by the applicant pool.
  - Standard operating procedures for boards and commissions will be available within a week. OSE has started to look at the applications, but can't formally start evaluating and interviewing until the standard operating procedures are in hand.
  - Commissioner Bueno expressed the hope that whomever is not selected finds ways to stay involved.
  - Commissioner Johnston asked whether we have a general sense for the timeline. Likely a few months still.
  - Monte Allen asked how many commissioners will be selected. The Ordinance calls for between 5 and 13 members.
- **Sustainability-Focused Community Design Workshop for New School Building**
  - Commissioner Koslow attended a community-design workshop for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. Commissioner Bueno and Director Nutter were also present.
  - Background:
    - The school at 115 Sycamore was closed 3 years ago when a panel fell from the ceiling roof into a stairwell over a weekend.
    - The City applied to the Mass School Board Authority (MSBA) to have MSBA offset roughly 40 to 50% of the cost of a new school building. Somerville applied for the Winter Hill school as well as the Brown School.
    - MSBA accepted the Winter Hill school but not the Brown School.

- The City decided on a larger school at the Winter Hill site. The existing building likely will be taken down and a new building we put in its place through the MSBA process.
  - Perkins Eastman is the architect. They had a sustainability focus group workshop a few weeks ago. Somerville has adopted the specialized stretch code. So it will be a really energy efficient building, really airtight, and high performing, with all-electric HVAC. There are other ways to design a building to meet our climate goals from different angles. Broke the workshop into three working groups covering XYZ
  - Three groups during the workshop focused on carbon (operations and energy, embodied), wellness (daylight, materials, IEQ, mobility, arts & discovery, and site (outdoor play, gardens, transportation, ecosystems, safety).
  - Discussed ideas like embodied carbon in building materials, biophilic materials, indoor air quality, plantings and outdoor learning, and others. It seemed like a comprehensive view of the intended use of the building and the materials from building through to end of life.
  - It gave the architects a sense of what people here care about, what they'd like to see. And then there'll be more opportunities in the future to come back and see how they've taken that and integrated it and to get feedback along the way. They'll probably need to put a price tag on some things and make some tradeoffs.
  - There are probably lessons to be learned from the high school campus project.
  - Several Commissioners commented on how the project touches on numerous actions in the Somerville Climate Forward plan.
  - Mayor Wilson has publicized that the City will seek a vote that would allow a Prop 2 ½ override, to raise real estate tax bills above 2.5% of the total budget. The City may seek overrides twice, once for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School and a second time for a citywide school decarbonization plan. It's encouraging that the City is in the process of developing a school decarbonization plan.
- **Legislative update from OSE and discussion**
    - Two major bills in process.
    - First is the Mass Ready Act, a \$3.6 billion bond bill. It includes \$500m for the Municipal Vulnerability Program, \$120m for coastal flood resilience for Amelia Earhart Dam. Plus, policy provisions such as requiring home sellers to have a flood history and risk disclosure requirement when they sell their home. The bill was passed by the Senate. There are opportunities to engage with House members. Mayor Wilson was at a legislative briefing for senators and representatives last week that was hosted by the Mystic River Watershed Association.
    - Commissioner Yu asked whether the Draw 7 Park renovation is dependent on the Amelia Earhart Dam funding. The Draw 7 Park renovation has its own funding.

- Second is the Energy Affordability Bill. The version that passed the House kept the state's 2030 climate commitments. But it included cuts to MassSave of \$1 billion. Also, Alternative Compliance Payment funds would go to ratepayers rather than toward clean energy projects. But it has a lot of good things, including allowing municipalities to ban third-party energy suppliers. The House passed the bill. There are opportunities to engage the Senate. OSE is working on a letter for Mayor Wilson to advocate to state senators.
- There is a lot of advocacy in the climate community right now around the cuts to MassSave.
- Claire shared that \$1 billion cuts are out of a \$4.5 billion MassSave program and that would disproportionately come from the back half or year of the three-year cycle.
- Courtney Foster added that the MassSave cuts would have implications is workforce development. The equity workforce training programs that the state uses pertinent to clean energy are funded by the MassSave program.
- **CAC and next meeting date**
  - In response to questions about the mandate of the Climate Action Commission, Commissioners shared that in the past, the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change has had advisory roles and outreach roles, and that future agenda would ideally be shaped by new members of the Climate Action Commission.
  - Next meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, May 12.
  - Commissioner Koslow moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bueno seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

***The meeting adjourned at 8:37PM.***