

**Somerville Interim Climate Action Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 12, 2026, 2025 7:00 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting**

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

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

**Attendees from the City:** Kate Bossingham (OSE)

**Attendees:** Aiden Smith, Alex Marston, Alyssa Scheiner, Ben Capraro, Claire Miziolek, Christina Bleicher, Georgia Graham, Jacob Wronski, Lisa Nold, Monte Allen, Ritika Philip

*Meeting called to order at 07:02 PM.*

**Agenda item**

- **Introductions**
  - Commissioners, OSE staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
- **Approval of April meeting minutes**
  - Commissioner Johnston moved to approve the April meeting meetings with corrected typos noted by email. Commissioner Koslow seconded. The motion was approved unanimously at 7:07pm.
- **Sustainaville Week**
  - OSE seeking feedback on the what went well and what could be improved. And also how the CAC could be helpful in future years.
  - 2027 will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sustainaville Week
  - Appreciation for the diversity of events. Something for everyone, including kids and families. Overall feedback was good and Naomi Gross, Community Engagement Specialist, deserves a lot of credit, as well as the rest of OSE.
  - The Energy Efficiency house tour worked out great, on the same day as Open Studios. Good experience with a lot of traffic in the homes. All four houses were retrofit all at once, including three that were new builds. So they weren't necessarily relevant to all homeowners. Will share some experiences with past sustainability tours with Mothers Out Front, which helped to organize the tour. Other feedback is that the City could use 100 more energy advisors, like Shannon Taylor, and that the Commission could help get the word out about the energy advisor program. The position is funded through the Community First Partnership, which is part of the Equity Initiative of Mass Save. The program offers one on one coaching including how to access Mass Save incentives.
  - The book club, reading *Climate Action for Busy People*, by Cate Lafortune-Mingoya, a Somerville resident, didn't have a large turnout. It was a rich conversation anyway.

- The Elm St. block party was a good way to tell more folks about the Neighborway transformation. A lot of folks tabling.
- CAC could play more of a role in helping to staff some of the events.
- CAC could also play a role in organizing an event on its own.
- The next book club will be June 23, reading *The Secret Life of Groceries*.
- **Updates from the Office of Sustainability and Environment: Sustainable Purchasing Policy, food waste drop-off bins, Planning Board meeting presentation, Open Door Chats w/ Jake Wilson: Sustainaville**
  - OSE is working on a sustainable purchasing policy for the City. The Somerville Climate Forward plan calls for it and it was also in the City's Zero Waste Plan. Previously, the City had a "buy recycled" policy but the sustainable purchasing policy will be more comprehensive. It's part of a Mass DEP requirement as part of a grant program, the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program, that the Department of Public Works (DPW) takes part in.
  - The sustainable purchasing policy is working its way to the Mayor for signature, getting input from DPW and the Procurement and Contracting Services Department.
  - The ICAC/CAC wouldn't need to play a role in getting the policy passed, but would be great to get the word out once it's been finalized. The policy will evolve over time. There may be areas in which it would be helpful to get support as it evolves, but that's not clear yet. Also want to make sure it's comprehensive and simple, so that staff throughout the City administration don't need to read it line by line every time they buy something.
  - Working within a framework set by the statewide purchasing policy. It covers all sorts of things the City purchases, from laptops to food and beverage at events to vehicles.
  - Would be good to make it widely known once it's in place.
  - OSE is also working on food waste drop off bins. We have a curbside composting pilot in East Somerville, which started in November, 2026, and is running through 2027. The next step is food waste drop off bins, working with DPW. Working to determine vendors for the bin enclosures, as well as vendors to do the hauling. Starting discussions about placement of where these food waste bins would be, mostly City property. Would be on the order of 10-15 sites. Funded for \$125,000 through participatory budgeting, which would cover upfront costs and multi-year hauling contract and is not tied to the fiscal year. Then it would have to be incorporated in the regular budget.

- OSE presented at the Planning Board meeting on May 7. Several state policies have caught up to our zoning code. OSE has been researching to understand how smoothly the two complement each other. Includes everything from Somerville's zoning to its native plant ordinance to the tree ordinance to engineering to fossil fuel free incentives, to permitting and land use to grid capacity. By this Fall, OSE will submit a full package of amendments, including a framework for each area.
- The US Green Building Council, which runs the LEED certification program, has a LEED for Cities certification, which Mayor Wilson's transition team also flagged. It could be a good metric for the City to aspire to. They have a lot of resources and there are Somerville residents with expertise that OSE could speak to.
- Open Door Chats. Mayor Wilson has recorded "open door chats" with City staff that he's interviewing each month. He interviewed Director Nutter most recently and the recording is available. If you want to know broadly what's going on, it's something to watch.
- **Update on CAC candidate review and selection process**
  - The review and selection for all new boards and commissions members, including the Climate Action Commission, is going to be centralized within the Mayor's office and HR, with the liaison division, in our case the Office of Sustainability and Environment advising. So interview requests will likely to come from the City of Somerville HR department. Kate Bossingham, Environmental Policy Manager, will also be in the interview panels.
  - Interview requests will go out in the two weeks, most likely.
- **Next meeting date and agenda**
  - Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for virtual on Tuesday, June 9.
  - A follow-up scheduling poll will determine whether another date in June can be found for which Commissioner Bueno can attend.
  - One potential agenda item is to invite Meredith Elbaum to speak at the next meeting about LEED for Cities. Meredith runs Built Environment Plus, which is essentially the Massachusetts US Green Building Council arm. Commissioner Koslow will reach out to Meredith.
  - Another potential agenda item is to ask Commissioner Behrens to talk briefly about what was happening at the school level with sustainability education pilots, how it went and what the plan is for the year ahead.
  - It might be good to also have some cadence around updates on municipal building decarbonization and the capital planning process. As well as "breaking news" from OSE.
  - Commissioner Koslow moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnston seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

*The meeting adjourned at 7:53PM.*