Drafted on 10/31/2026

BYLAWS
of the
CLIMATE ACTION COMMISSION
of the City of Somerville, Massachusetts

ARTICLE I. PURPOSE & DUTIES

Please refer to Sec. 2-304. Establishment; function and Sec. 2-308. Powers and duties of Ordinance No. 2025-04 for the purpose & duties of the Climate Action Commission (the Commission).

ARTICLE II. COMMITTEE WORK

Section I. Standing Committees

Any Commission member can propose at any time the creation of a new Standing Committee to take on tasks and projects outside of regular meetings, provided there is a Commission member willing to serve as the new Standing Committee Lead and at least two (2) other Commission members who wish to join the Standing Committee. The creation of a new Standing Committee shall be subject to a vote by a simple majority of the members present at a regular Commission meeting.

Each Commission member has the option to participate in the activities of one (1) or more Standing Committees. Each subcommittee shall be organized by one (1) or more Leads, who shall be identified through a self-nomination process. Lead(s) shall have the option of attending Officer meetings and may change at any point depending on the needs and interests of Standing Committee members. Standing Committees may not reach quorum during their meetings. All decisions on issues requiring a Commission vote shall occur during the Commission's regular meetings.

While the specific work of each Standing Committee shall be flexible to the leadership and collaboration of its members, each Standing Committee shall be responsible for keeping the Commission apprised of its work by:
1. Periodically summarizing Standing Committee meetings and/or work for the full Commission at regular meetings.
2. Sharing and aligning with the full Commission on the Standing Committee's direction and goals.

Once confirmed, the names of Standing Committees should be published on the Climate Action Commission website.

Section II. Public Involvement

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Standing Committees may add members of the public as regular members of their committee at the discretion of the Standing Committee Lead(s). Members of the public may express their interest in joining a Standing Committee in a full Commission meeting or by reaching out to the Sustainability division staff liaison to express their interest. Members of the public who wish to join a Standing Committee must commit to attending at least 50% of the meetings in a year.

Section III. Standing Committees Dissolution

Any Standing Committee member can also propose the dissolution of an existing Standing Committee at any time. The dissolution of a Standing Committee shall be subject to a vote by a simple majority of the members present at a regular Commission meeting. The members can then form a new Standing Committee or join other Standing Committees.

ARTICLE III. MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section I. Membership

Please refer to Sec. 2-305. Membership; appointment; term; removal of Ordinance No. 2025-04 for the membership requirements.

We build upon these requirements to require that the Climate Action Commission membership consists of:

- At least two (2) members who reside in each zip code in Somerville (02143, 02144, 02145). There is a further desire to have at least one (1) member who resides or owns a business in each ward.
- At least one (1) member who is age 65 or older at the time of appointment.
- At least two (2) members who rent their residences.
- At least two (2) homeowners.

The Climate Action Commission shall further seek to include among its membership, individuals with a working knowledge and/or experience in one or more of the following areas: Public outreach and engagement, equity, buildings, energy, natural resources, waste, transportation / mobility, community health, resiliency, municipal and school operations, social resilience, state climate policy, public finance, cleantech, Somerville community-based organizations or advocacy groups, or workforce development.

The Climate Action Commission shall strive to open up applications in October of the current year and have incoming members appointed and confirmed by the City Clerk by January of the following year.

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Section II. Member Participation Standards

Ordinance No. 2025-04 Sec. 2-305. Membership; appointment; term item (d) states *If any member is absent from three or more successive meetings, the commission may request the mayor remove that member from membership.*

The Climate Action Commission acknowledges at least four ways members can participate to accommodate different strengths, schedules, and Commission needs, of which members must do at least one (1). These pathways can be changed in the future:

- Attendance of at least two-thirds of Standing Committee meetings per year
- Attendance of at least two-thirds of regular Commission meetings per year
- Participation in at least three (3) climate community engagement events per year as a delegate of the Commission or of the Sustainability and Environment Division (e.g., Sustainaville events, Pumpkin Smash)
- Ongoing support of a City of Somerville climate program (e.g., serving as a Youth Climate Action Fund mentor)

ARTICLE IV. OFFICER ELECTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section I. Officers

Members shall annually nominate officers: Chair, Vice Chair, and Clerk. Nominations shall take place by the second meeting of the calendar year, and elections to follow in the third meeting. Positions will be held for one (1) year. In the event that a Commission member holding an Officer position is not reappointed to the Commission for another term, that member will be allowed to join as a temporary member and retain the Officer position until a new Commission member is appointed to that Officer position.

Section II. Officers' Roles and Responsibilities

1. Chair
    a. The Chair shall be the primary representative of the CAC and is responsible for setting agendas, facilitating meetings, organizing subcommittee structure, managing external relationships with the public and City staff, and overseeing CAC communication, including the writing and signing of official CAC correspondence.
    b. The Chair may designate any of these responsibilities for any duration to the Vice Chair
2. Vice Chair
    a. The Vice Chair shall fill Chair duties when the Chair is not present.
3. Clerk
    a. The Clerk shall be ultimately responsible for managing meeting minutes and attendance records and sending them to the Liaison within one week following the meeting.

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b. The taking of meeting minutes may be designated to a rotating Acting Clerk. The Clerk may organize an Acting Clerk schedule, whereby select members of the CAC will take turns recording meeting minutes, including maintaining a record of members, Ex Officio members, and guests in attendance, and reviewing/editing draft minutes. The Clerk shall ensure that Acting Clerks fulfill their duties and assist in reviewing and editing draft minutes.
c. In the event that the Clerk position is not filled, the Chair or Vice Chair will organize the Acting Clerk schedule.
d. The Clerk shall fill Vice Chair duties in the event they are not present.

ARTICLE V. ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Section I. Voting

Voting may only occur at regular meetings when there is a quorum, defined as a simple majority of Commission members present in-person and online. Voting may not occur at a Standing Committee meeting.

Section II. Communications with external stakeholders

The Commission may create public communications that represent the Commission's interests or opinions (e.g., letters). Such communications shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the members present at a regular Commission meeting, and signed by the Chair. Commission members are free, at any time, to communicate their personal views to the public, the press, or to the government. In doing so, however, they must make it clear that they are not speaking for the Commission.

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