



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR CURTATONE LAUNCHES CLEAN & OPEN ELECTIONS TASK FORCE

Members sought, Apply by 8/22

Focus to include increasing local participatory democracy, expanding early voting, exploring public financing, and more

SOMERVILLE – Somerville voter turnout tends to be higher than national averages, but a new task force established by Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone will take an even broader approach to expanding democratic participation. The new Clean and Open Elections Task Force, which is currently seeking members, will review ways to increase participatory democracy and support clean elections in the city through options such as public financing, expansion of early voting, and more. Interested residents are encouraged to apply for Task Force membership. The deadline to apply is Tuesday, August 22, 2017.

“Voter participation in the U.S. is among the lowest of developed, democratic nations, and we need to ensure we are doing everything we can as a city to reverse that at least locally. Some of our options may be more procedural, such as expanding voter outreach and early voting. But we also need to look at root causes and take a systems approach to ensure fair, equitable, and open elections that inspire greater participation both by voters and candidates,” said Mayor Curtatone. “There are excellent models and ideas in this area including public financing, and having the Task Force explore the best thinking will be a great benefit for the community.”

The Clean and Open Elections Task Force will consist of seven members, one of whom will be the Chairperson of the Ethics Commission. All seven members of the Task Force must be residents of Somerville with a demonstrated interest in democratic participation. Applicants with relevant expertise in areas such as election financing, voter participation and turnout, or disclosure and reporting requirements are sought alongside those passionate about this issue. Once all applications have been reviewed, the Mayor will appoint five members to the Task Force including the Chairperson and will



request that the President of the Board of Aldermen appoint a member of the Board or a designee to the Task Force. The names and qualifications of the selected members will be published on the City's website.

The Task Force is expected to convene their first meeting in September of 2017 and conclude their work within 6-8 months. Meetings will be held twice-monthly, or as deemed necessary. The Task Force will submit a report detailing its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen no later than May of 2018. This report will be shared with the community through various means and will serve as the foundation for broader community discussion and next steps in this area.

HOW TO APPLY:

Interested persons should send the following information via email by August 22 to aconnor@somervillema.gov or by mail with a postmark by August 22 to Attn. Annie Connor, Legislative Liaison, City of Somerville, 93 Highland Ave., Somerville MA, 02143. Please submit name, address, telephone, email, brief statement of interest/expertise, and a resume. All residents are welcome to apply. No nomination is required to submit an application. This is a volunteer position.

SUGGEST AN EXPERT ADVISOR:

In addition to the formal Task Force membership, Task Force Advisors will be sought to serve as a resource to support the committee's research. Invitations will be made to academics, advocates, and others with relevant expertise and experience. Recommendations from residents regarding advisors are welcome. Please send your recommendations to Annie Connor, Legislative Liaison, at aconnor@somervillema.gov.

For additional information, please contact Annie Connor, Legislative Liaison, at aconnor@somervillema.gov.

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