

Somerville Commission for Women

Working Together for a Stronger Community

50 Evergreen Avenue Somerville MA, 02145

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Somerville Commission for Women Application

Personal Information:

Name: Kat Rutkin

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Primary Phone Number: (917)612-8916 Other Phone Number:

Preferred Email Address: kat.rutkin@gmail.com

How many years have you lived in the City of Somerville?

 Less than 1 1-3 x 3-6 6-10 10-20 20+

What is your current Somerville Commission for Women Status?

 x Applying for New Commission Appointment

 Renewing Commission Appointment

On a separate sheet of paper please respond to the following questions. This information will help us to get an overview of your interests, experience and expectations of appointment to the Somerville Commission for Women. You may also attach a resume to provide further information.

Questions for first time applicants:

1. How did you first hear about the Somerville Commission for Women?
2. Why do you want to serve on the Commission?
3. Can you tell us about your personal and/or professional experience that you feel would be of value to the Commission?
4. What do you hope to gain from serving on the Somerville Commission for Women?
5. What three issues concerning women in Somerville would you identify as your top priorities?

Questions for renewal of term:

1. How have you spread the word about the work of the Somerville Commission for Women?
2. Why do you want to continue to serve on the Commission?
3. Can you tell us how your personal and/or professional experience has enriched the Commission?
4. What have you gained from serving on the Somerville Commission for Women?
5. What three issues concerning the Somerville Commission for Women would you identify as your top priorities?

The commission's composition is intended to reflect the makeup of the women of Somerville and residents of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

Please be advised that the following information will be used to determine eligibility in consideration of a potential appointment to the Somerville Commission for Women. Further, such information may be deemed a public record and may be disseminated where appropriate.

Individuals with disabilities who need auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, written materials in alternative formats, or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, in order to access the programs and activities of the City of Somerville or to attend meetings, should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Betsy Allen, at 617-625-6600 x2323 or Ballen@somervillema.gov.

1. How did you first hear about the Somerville Commission for Women?

I first saw the webpage a while ago looking for information on small business resources. At the time I was the executive director of Somerville Local First.

2. Why do you want to serve on the Commission?

I want to make the world a better place for women, and I believe locally is the place to start.

3. Can you tell us about your personal and/or professional experience that you feel would be of value to the Commission?

I often say that when I had my first baby I also birthed a feminist. I didn't realize how much society sought to control women's bodies before, and the experience was an awakening and a turning point for me. Since then I've been advocating for women's rights, including better (and universally accessible) postpartum care and family leave policies in Massachusetts. I am also currently training as a postpartum doula so I can provide hands-on care and support for new moms.

My earlier professional experience as a nonprofit director has made me comfortable with event organizing, public speaking and consensus building. I would love to apply these skills to the work of the SCW.

4. What do you hope to gain from serving on the Somerville Commission for Women?

I want to join a team of women serious about working together to improve conditions for women in all areas of life. I want to be able to help the other members advocate for causes important to them, and hope they will also work to further causes of import to me.

5. What three issues concerning women in Somerville would you identify as your top priorities?

- a. Postpartum care and support for new moms/families: Many of us are new to town for school or work, and having babies can be extra isolating and difficult when we are removed from our support network.

Postpartum care for hire should not be a luxury affordable by only a few, or left to the small number of lucky people who can get into Cambridge Health Alliance's doula program or utilize the limited (but amazing!) services of the Somerville Family Network. I want to raise awareness of the struggles many new moms face on their own, which contribute to stress and postpartum depression.

- b. Daycare affordability and access/ work life balance: This is a multifaceted issue with no simple solution, but the lack of quality, affordable daycare in this city (complicated by state standards, voucher payments, real estate prices) is a burden to many parents which forces us to make less than optimal choices about our the care we get for our children. Many of us commute outside of Somerville for work since there are few local jobs available, particularly part time. As a result, those of us able to find "affordable" and acceptable care are scrambling to maintain a work life balance.

- c. Consent education/Misogyny. The recent election cycle has given many folks license and reason to do and say terrible things to women. Misogyny will likely get worse over the course of a female presidency, sadly, and we need to be vocal and present, along with our city's vocal leadership, in advocating for teaching consent to kids early and often, and curbing misogynistic language and acts before they start.