

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: **Kristen Strezo**

Address:

Primary Phone Number: Other Phone Number:

Preferred Email Address:

How many years have you lived in the City of Somerville? **3-6 years**

What is your current Somerville Commission for Women Status?

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 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, Nancy Salamoun, at 617-625-6600 x2323 or nsalamoun@somervillema.gov.

1. How have you spread the word about the work of the Somerville Commission for Women?

I have worked in various ways to diligently spread the word of the commission for recruitment and public education. I have tabled events throughout the years, spoke about topics important to the commission and SCW commissioners and have educated the general public about the past work of the commission.

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

There's still work to be done. I'd like to continue putting in the energy to help complete it. We are working toward a collaboration with Teen Empowerment and the Somerville Police Department. I'd like to do my part to help with that ongoing collaboration.

I think it would also be beneficial to have 15 minutes of our monthly meeting set aside (every six months or so) to allow RESPOND, SPD, Somerviva, BARCC, CHA Health Services and other community partners to update the commission on the most pressing issues and statistics that concern women.

3. Can you tell us how your personal and/or professional experience has enriched the Commission?

Repairing the world is an integral part of how I see my role in society. At my core I am a feminist with a women's studies major. I've worked for the needs of women, children and seniors for many years as an advocate and an activist. I've been fighting for equal rights for decades now, like LGBTQ equality since the Phelps family was protesting egalitarian Chicago churches in the 90s.

I believe that the SCW has been one way in which I could utilize my skill set for an organization. Raising awareness to the inequities women as a whole face and Somerville women, specifically, has been my focus as a commissioner. For example, I've been honored to highlight specific needs facing Somerville women, such as health concerns and poverty concerns through the CHA/city partnership of the Wellbeing Report.

Through the SCW, I have been allowed to contribute my hard work and dedication to the causes affecting Somerville women. I've loved serving as a commissioner and serving two terms as the co-chair. I have dedicated far beyond the required five hours of volunteer time serving as co-chair and continue to do so. During busy times, I would easily argue that I serve five hours per *week*. And I love the work doing so to forward the work of the SCW.

Being a commissioner has given me the opportunity to learn even more about my community and to learn so much about my fellow Somervillens, an opportunity in which I have been so very grateful. I love learning about my neighbors, what's important to them, what could be done better and active steps we can take to improve our city. I've also loved learning about people and the ways in which they're also trying to 'right' the wrongs of the world.

4. What have you gained from serving on the Somerville Commission for Women?

So much. I have truly savored my time serving as a commissioner and as co-chair. It's hard work sometimes but I *love* the work and the chance to collaborate, trying to solve complex issues within the city. I loved the deep working relationships I've gained with fellow commissioners. I've loved the diverse group of women who step forward to serve their community as SCW commissioners and I have been honored to serve them as their co-chair. I've loved working side-by-side other idealists hell bent on improving their corner of the world, which happens to be a city I love with a passion.

I've loved holding a spotlight on complex problems that concern women in the hope that it will help change the problem for the better. I've loved the chance to address issues in our policy subcommittee and advocate for policy change to benefit the lives of women.

5. What three issues concerning the Somerville Commission for Women would you identify as your top priorities?

1. Continuing the work to assure that all Somerville women have a seat at the table.

Making sure that a wide variety of Somerville women are chosen reflecting Somerville's diversity.

2. Preserving the future of the Commission.

Making sure that quorum is always met. That recruitment is continuous. That our bylaws and ordinance are occasionally reviewed and updated, if a need and/or demand calls for it.

3. Ongoing municipal collaborations.

In addition to our regular SCW events (March Women's History Month, October's Domestic Violence Vigil, etc.), we have the ability to initiate programs that are annually performed, and I'd like to help make this happen.

Examples:

-Domestic Violence work throughout the year, not just at our annual October vigil. This can be best enacted in February, focusing on the fact that February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness month. An ongoing collaboration with Teen Empowerment can help make this possible.

-A RAD Training led by the police department two times a year.

-Bring back the car seat check. It's a small but vital service that can make a large impact. I'd love to see this happening every spring.

-Biannual Bystander Training and Salary Negotiation workshops.

-Biannual public SCW fundraisers