

Somerville Commission for Women

Working Together for a Stronger Community

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Somerville Commission for Women Application

Personal Information:

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

☐ Less than 1 ☐ 1-3 ☐ 3-6 ☐ 6-10 ☒ 10-20 ☐ 20+

What is your current Somerville Commission for Women Status?

☐ 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. Note: I've put this info below.

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.

Questions for renewal of term:

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

I've helped enhance materials the SCW uses to inform the public of its mission and its specific events. Mostly recently I made non-trivial contributions to the SCW pamphlet. It's been my ongoing practice to help with both concepts and specific text for our materials. I have extensive experience as a writer and editor; even though that's not my official career (I'm a technologist), it's something that I (in effect) get paid for.

At our events, I actively engage with attendees including public officials (aldermen, school board officials) to tell them about our work. This was notably so at the 2015 Women's History Event and the 2014 Vigil.

I tell people I'm on the SCW as a routine matter.

With respect to Facebook etc: I am not able to be on social media due to the complex nature of my work life (in security and privacy). I can explain this if desired.

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

I want to help women and girls live better lives – and to “act locally” while doing so. It's also my belief that those who can contribute to the welfare of others, should. I'm at a place of my life where though I'm very busy, I'm also able to contribute.

I see firsthand in my job life and personal life how much discrimination still exists for women. This is why I choose to use my time specifically to help women and girls and not just “people.”

(I'll note that my technology employers do not care about this type of public service. It doesn't “count” for them. What I get out of participating in the SCW is the satisfaction of “doing the right thing.”)

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

I analyze and design information technology (IT) systems that deal with identity, security, and privacy for a living. The skills to be a system designer in these areas include clarity of concept, attention to the big picture, and also the ability to sweat the details.

The “clarity of concept” and “big picture” skills help me provide input on where we direct our efforts and how. And they've helped us reach decisions (when we had quorum). The “sweat the details” skills have helped us organize events, and (as mentioned above) have helped with our public materials.

I've also used my IT skills to help us better organize past events (March History and ArtBeat) via use of not only Google Docs and Sheets, but specifically how information is organized with these tools.

I also believe my knowledge of what it's like to be a woman in a highly male-dominated field is a useful input to the SCW.

I also have another career (currently non-paying) as a playwright and songwriter. The training I have in these areas makes me attentive to “audience” and to the words we use in our documents and presentations.

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

As I mention above, it’s my belief that those who can contribute to the welfare of others, should. Participating in the SCW, gives me a sense of contributing in a meaningful way to my community.

I’ve also enjoyed working with the other Commissioners and other City employees involved with the SCW.

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

- Domestic Violence: awareness and reduction
- Healthy relationships and self-esteem (particularly related to body-image)
- Reducing risky behaviors in girls (a topic we’ve talked about but have not had action on)

I also am very interested in helping the Commission itself stay on track to meet its goals via good procedures, hopefully great materials, and enhanced use of technical tools.

I’d also be interested in helping with more “computer-literacy,” and also knowledge about safety on the Internet – though these are not specifically SCW topics.

Thanks!

Marlena