

Somerville Commission for Women

Working Together for a Stronger Community

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Somerville Commission for Women Application

Personal Information:

Name: Melissa Alfone

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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
Commission Appointment

Renewing

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:

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

Questions for renewal of term:

- How have you spread the word about the work of the Somerville Commission for Women?
- Why do you want to continue to serve on the Commission?
- Can you tell us how your personal and/or professional experience has enriched the Commission?
- What have you gained from serving on the Somerville Commission for Women?
- 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.

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

As someone who's never heard of city commissions prior to joining the Somerville Commission for Women I was excited to spread the word to the community. Although I've probably talked more to people about what commissions are, I've also been able to talk about what we do and who we are.

I work with a lot people just moving into the Somerville area and there's always a lot of room for small talk during our meetings, so this gives me a chance to tell people about upcoming events and ways they can get involved with the community.

- Why do you want to continue to serve on the Commission?

I'm excited to move forward with the Commission. I thought the Commission was falling apart during the absence of an executive director over this past year but I believe that absence will make for a stronger Commission moving forward. I believe the women that are left on the Commission are serious and also excited to grow. I feel that we're rebuilding the Commission at this time and it's an honor to be a part of it. We have a lot of projects that need attention, and I think once we're a full commission again, and able to meet quorum, we'll be able to focus on providing the community with more, whether it be informational events, support, etc.

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

I'm very social and I like to have fun no matter what I'm doing. Although I think I've brought other things to the Commission I believe my enthusiasm has been my biggest contribution. It may sound silly but I don't remember going to many meetings in the past where people seemed very excited to be there. There would be a simple exchange of hellos amongst people, and then we'd get started. I'm serious about getting things done, but I'm a strong believer in getting things done with a smile. As a business owner I would never greet a client without a smile and I know a little something about each and every one of them. At meetings now everyone knows a little bit about everyone else, because we all chat, and most of the Commissioners exchange hugs upon entering and exiting. Of course I'm not the main reason for this but I truly think my high fives helped out. And because the Commissioners are happy, we work better together, and can therefore serve the community better.

Aside from my enthusiasm, I'm goal oriented, very organized and I love party planning. I don't mind helping meetings to get back on track when discussions go off agenda. I can help plan any event we're organizing/helping to organize.

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

I've definitely gained a better understanding of city official roles while serving as a commissioner. It may not be the importance of the question but I find the different roles in the community fascinating. I'm not a person that likes discussing politics and I'm therefore not very interested in what's happening with government roles but I have been a lot more interested since joining the commission. I've learned about and have come to appreciate some local programs and organizations that focus on women's rights.

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

I think my biggest concern with the Commission at this time is its ability to meet quorum. I'm sure this can explain itself but my main concern is we can't discuss our agenda without quorum and that leaves us at somewhat of a standstill. Although I think quality wins over quantity I'd like to see us focus our efforts on finding new commissioners. I suppose the key here is to find passionate Commissioners, that will come to meetings each month and have an opinion when it matters.

I'd like to focus our efforts moving forward on involving the community more. A few commissioners have mentioned events such as us sponsoring a car seat check. Something like this would need some planning and volunteer time from Commissioners, but this could help increase public awareness about the commission. While increasing public awareness we'd also be working on important issues.

Lastly, I'd like to see the Commission focus on supporting more local projects. In the past the executive

director handled most of the Commissions needs, which made it get difficult for me to get too involved. I'm sure there was more I could have done to involve myself but I didn't always understand what our role was. With the current status of the Commission, assuming we're able to meet quorum in the next few months, I feel confident the Commission will meet it's potential this year.