

CITY OF SOMERVILLE
ORDINANCE NO. 2025-
IN CITY COUNCIL: _____, 2025

Be it ordained by the City Council, in session assembled, that Chapter 2, Article V, Division 12 of the code of ordinances of the City of Somerville is amended as follows by deleting the ~~struckthrough~~ text and adding the underlined text.

DIVISION 12. – CLIMATE ACTION COMMISSION ~~ON ENERGY USE AND CLIMATE CHANGE~~

Sec. 2-304. – Establishment; function.

- (a) There ~~shall will~~ be a climate action commission ~~on energy use and climate change~~, hereinafter called the "commission."
- (b) It ~~shall will~~ be the function of the commission to:
- (1) Address and reverse both the climate and environmental crises through community and local government operations toward the ultimate goals of creating a healthier, safer, thriving, equitable, resilient community, advancing environmental justice, and adapting to climate change, and reversing the climate and environmental crises.
 - (A) The commission may consider and pursue interventions in any relevant areas, including: public engagement; environment; policy; adaptation; mitigation; climate science; public finance; business and workforce; equity; social and infrastructure resiliency; community health; buildings; natural resources; waste; municipal and school operations; transportation; or, mobility.
 - (2) Advise the mayor and municipal staff.
 - (3) Mobilize Somerville residents and stakeholders by educating the public, sharing information, conducting through outreach and engagement.
 - (4) ~~Act as a centralizing force in the city and the community which will address issues of climate change and sustainable environmental policy, providing information, referral, guidance, advocacy and coordination, and offering and providing technical assistance to other public agencies, organizations and institutions engaged in activities intended to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to local, regional, national, and international efforts to protect the earth's climate.~~
 - (5) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in taking all necessary steps to effectively control the release of greenhouse gases within the city and ensure the energy efficiency of municipal operations to protect the climate.~~
 - (6) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in implementing cost-effective measures such as energy conservation, the adoption of "clean energy" standards and "smart growth" policies, as a component of urban development plans.~~
 - (7) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in advocating and promoting transportation strategies that give people incentives to reduce car use.~~

Sec. 2-305. – Membership; appointment; term; removal.

- (a) The commission shall be composed of no less than five and up to thirteen voting members who shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Members shall be residents of the city, except one member who owns or does business in Somerville may reside outside the city. Two members shall be youth representatives, one between the ages of fifteen and seventeen and the other between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. ~~The commission shall consist of seven members and one associate member, six of whom shall be appointed initially by the mayor and confirmed by the city council to serve for the following terms:~~

- ~~(1) Two members shall serve for a one-year term.~~
- ~~(2) Two members shall serve for a two-year term.~~
- ~~(3) Two members shall serve for a three-year term.~~
- ~~(4) One member shall serve ex-officio.~~
- ~~(5) One associate member shall serve for a one-year term.~~

~~After the initial terms all commissioners shall be appointed for a term of three years.~~

- (b) Initial appointments to the commission shall be staggered, with three members appointed for a term of one year, five members appointed for a term of two years, and five members appointed for a term of three years. Subsequent appointments shall be for a term of three years, with the exception of the youth representatives who shall be appointed for a term of one year. Unless otherwise stated in the ordinance, members shall serve a term of three years; however, of the members first appointed to the commission, three shall be appointed to a term of one year, five shall be appointed a term of two years, and five shall be appointed to a term of three years. Subsequent members of the commission shall be appointed to a term of three years by the mayor and approved by the city council. Members shall be residents of the city, with the exception of one member who owns and does business in Somerville. It is the intention that each year, approximately one-third of membership of the Commission will be subject to appointment and confirmation. If any commissioner is inexcusably absent for three meetings of the commission during a calendar year, that position of said commissioner shall be automatically vacated upon certification to the mayor by the commission.
- (c) If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a member's term, a new member shall be appointed by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council, to serve the remainder of the vacated term. Two members shall be designated youth representatives and shall be appointed for a term of one year each. One representative shall be between the ages of 15 and 17 and the other between the ages of 18 and 25 at the time of appointment. Both representatives will have the option to renew for one term. After the initial appointments, subsequent members of the commission shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council with recommendations provided by the commission. If a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of the member's term, an appointment shall be made to serve for the remainder of that term.
- (d) After the initial appointments, subsequent members of the commission shall be appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the City Council. If any member is absent from three or more successive meetings, the commission may request the mayor remove that member from membership. The commission at all times shall strive to be representative of all socioeconomic segments, religious creeds, national origins, sexes, sexual orientations and racial segments of the city as well as different neighborhoods.
- (e) In appointing members of the commission, the mayor shall at all times consider diverse representation of its membership including by socioeconomic status segments, religious creed, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity segments of the city as well as different, and neighborhood.
- (f) A quorum of the commission shall be a simple majority of the members serving on the commission.
- (g) Members of the commission shall be classified as special municipal employees for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 268A.

Sec. 2-306. – Support for the commission. Environmental coordinator to serve ex-officio.

- (a) The director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment, or their designee, shall serve as a member of the commission by virtue of their office. The city's environmental coordinator shall serve as an ex-officio member of the commission whose selection and shall coincide with his or her length of employment. The environmental coordinator shall be a voting member.

- (b) The director of the Office of Sustainability and Environment, or their designee, shall serve as the staff liaison to the commission, and serve as the custodian of all records for the commission, including recordings, attachments, minutes, agendas, advertisements, and materials. The city's environmental coordinator shall be the custodian of all records for the commission.
- (c) The superintendent of Somerville Public Schools, or their designee approved by the mayor, shall serve as a member of the commission by virtue of their office.

Sec. 2-307. — Qualifications of commissioners members.

- (a) ~~All prospective members shall have interest in at least one of the following areas: public engagement; environment; policy; adaptation; mitigation; climate science; public finance; business and workforce; equity; social and infrastructure resiliency; community health; buildings; natural resources; waste; municipal and school operations; transportation; or, mobility. All prospective commissioners shall have knowledge of and/or expertise in one or more of the following areas: energy management, energy conservation, transportation, architecture and contracting, environmental education, and/or urban planning.~~
- (b) ~~Members of the commission shall be classified as special municipal employees for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 268A. Commissioners must be residents of the city.~~
- (c) ~~Members of the commission shall be classified as special municipal employees for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 268A.~~
- (d) ~~The appointed associate member will not vote on commission decisions. The appointed associate member shall be designated by the chairperson to sit in the place of any member incapacitated by personal interest, inability to act, or absence.~~
- (e) ~~No member of the commission shall receive compensation for service on the commission.~~

Sec. 2-308. — Election of chairperson; by-laws.

The members of the commission shall elect a chairperson from among its members; and ~~shall~~ adopt by-laws for the commission.

Sec. 2-309. — Powers and duties.

~~The powers and duties of the~~ commission shall ~~be the following:~~

- (1) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in:~~
 - (A) ~~adapting to climate change and improving the environment; ultimately creating a healthier, more resilient community. To seek to work with the municipal government departments, commissions, and boards, to increase energy efficiency and conservation by the city;~~
 - (B) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in taking all necessary steps to decarbonizing and mitigating the impacts of climate change; and, and improve the environment. To design and implement community education programs that promote environmental advocacy, awareness and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in the city;~~
 - (C) ~~Take such action as the commission deems appropriate to assist the city in ensuring environmental justice and equity are central components of strategies implemented to address climate change and improve the environment. To recommend transportation strategies as a component of urban development plans;~~
- (2) ~~review progress towards the city's climate, environment, and emissions goals, actions, and strategies. To recommend local greenhouse gas reduction targets;~~
- (3) ~~To recommend an action plan to achieve set greenhouse gas reduction target goals, and to monitor its progress;~~
- (4) ~~To work in collaboration with any public organization or group to further the city's goal of local greenhouse gas emissions reduction and energy efficiency and conservation;~~

- ~~(5) To recommend initiatives to the mayor and the city council to ensure the energy efficiency of municipal operations and promote energy conservation and green power use within the city; and~~
- ~~(6) Submit an annual report to the mayor and the city council on its activities of the prior year, including a record of attendance and remaining length of term of each member.~~

Sec. 2-310309. – Interim commission.

- (a) The Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change shall serve as interim membership of the Climate Action Commission until a sufficient number of members to achieve quorum has been appointed. The Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change shall retain all rights and responsibilities delegated by ordinance until the Climate Action Commission has a sufficient membership appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the City Council to achieve quorum.
 - (1) An interim member of the Climate Action Commission may apply for appointment to a full term. Members of the Commission on Energy Use and Climate Change shall be eligible for appointment to the Climate Action Commission.

Approved:

President

Approved:

Mayor