



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

KATJANA BALLANTYNE

MAYOR

Somerville Pollinator Action Plan Advisory Committee Charter

INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and to advance her open space, ecology, and equity agendas by transforming public spaces to create healthier urban ecosystems, the City of Somerville will create a Pollinator Action Plan. The Somerville Pollinator Action Plan (SPAP) will identify interventions that create the best habitat for pollinators and wildlife in the city. It will focus on understanding and supporting Somerville-specific pollinators while also creating ideal habitat for regional and other native pollinators.

To best achieve these objectives, the City will harness the community energy around ecosystems to get people excited about learning about pollinators and creating restorative pollinator habitats at every scale. The City of Somerville, led by the Public Space & Urban Forestry Division (PSUF), seeks to engage the broader community in informing the development of the SPAP. A Somerville Pollinator Action Plan Advisory Committee (SPAPAC), composed of interested and diverse community members and advocates, inter-departmental City staff, and members of relevant Somerville non-profit groups and youth will be formed to collaborate with consultants and engage the broader public. This charter serves as the basis of agreement for the recruitment, scope, and rules of conduct for the Somerville Pollinator Action Plan Advisory Committee.



Purpose, Objective and Scope

A. Purpose

In recognition of the importance of establishing and protecting native vegetation for plant conservation and native pollinator and wildlife habitat, the City's Public Space & Urban Forestry Division (PSUF), under the leadership of Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, intends to create a Somerville Pollinator Action Plan (SPAP).

B. Objective

The SPAP aims to understand the context and identify the interventions within the urban landscape that create the most extensive and best quality habitat for pollinators and other wildlife in the city. The SPAP will focus on understanding and supporting Somerville-specific pollinators within the city's network of urban open spaces, while also ensuring the city has suitable habitat for other pollinators and wildlife in the region. The SPAP also aims to educate both public servants and city residents on the interdependence of urban habitat, pollinators and ecosystem functions, and the ways in which they can support Somerville-appropriate pollinator habitat.

Creating the SPAP will involve community members, City employees, and other stakeholders through inclusive committee and public processes. To this end, a SPAP Advisory Committee (SPAPAC) will be created. The SPAP Advisory Committee's objectives are to:

- Provide a space for an exchange of information, citizen and stakeholder input, and deliberation.
- Advise and collaborate with City staff and a consultant team composed of experts in pollination, ecology, horticulture and the urban environment, to understand the interventions that a municipality can perform to create the best environment to nurture pollinators.
- Attend and facilitate public meetings and outreach events aimed at educating people about the importance of urban pollinators.
- Help coordinate and run events to get input from the broader Somerville community about the SPAP.
- Assist in synthesizing community feedback and identifying key issues and ideas for the consultant team.



- Generate ideas about programs that could increase pollinator habitat on private land.

C. Scope

Once formed, the SPAPAC will:

- Review Pollinator Plans and guidebooks from other municipalities, acknowledging that there are few and that Somerville's will be one of the first.
- Assist in generating and reviewing the scope of work for inclusion in the Request for Proposal (RFP) with guidance from the City's Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) Department.
- Review and evaluate proposals submitted in response to the RFP for the Pollinator Action Plan Consultant with guidance from PCS.
- If interviews are part of the evaluation process, work with PSUF to interview the consultant teams with guidance from PCS.
- Compose a memo with a recommendation to the Mayor for hiring a team.
- Once a consultant team is selected, review and discuss drafts of the SPAP.
- Participate in public events to inform residents about the SPAP and work on the implementation of the Plan.

The SPAPAC serves an advisory role in the creation of the SPAP and will refrain from direct involvement in additional processes unless its scope is officially amended. Individual committee members are free to participate in other planning and project review processes, but the group is formed to work only on the SPAP.



SPAPAC Composition

D. Membership

This Community Engagement Group is designed to include representation of the key interests and concerns of direct and indirect stakeholders, and will be composed of a minimum of 7 members and a maximum of 10 members, which will include the following:

1. General Community Member
2. General Community Member
3. Member of the Somerville Conservation Commission
4. Member of the Urban Forestry Committee
5. PSUF Representative
6. City Urban Forester
7. Representative from the Department of Public Works involved in care of the City's trees and/or landscapes
8. Relevant (and different) Non-Profit Group Member
9. Relevant (and different) Non-Profit Group Member
10. Youth Member (Somerville resident under the age of 25)

A representative from each of these categories will be selected through an application process and appointed by the Mayor.

E. Membership Terms

1. Members are selected for a 1-year term. There will be 2 meetings per month for the first 4 months and then one meeting per month while the Plan is being written. Participation in public outreach events is encouraged. The committee's work and the creation of the SPAP is anticipated to take 1 year.
2. Representatives are requested to notify PSUF if they are no longer going to participate in the committee so that a replacement can be found. Any member who fails to attend 3 meetings in a row without



informing the SPAPAC and its staff facilitator will be considered as no-longer participating and a new member search will begin.

F. Member Selection Process

1. The City of Somerville will make every effort to advertise this opportunity widely.
2. Those interested in participating will submit an application to PSUF.
3. Applications will be reviewed by PSUF and members will be appointed by the Mayor.
4. The following criteria will be used in the selection committee members:
 - Knowledge, understanding of, and interest in the key substantive areas for exploration including but not limited to ecology, urban planting and horticulture.
 - Willingness and ability to work constructively toward a vision for the SPAP, engage in respectful dialogue with other participants, listen actively, and seek creative options to address the interest of their own and others' perspectives.
 - Capacity to seek input from the individual's networks, Committees or Commissions and the broader public and keep them informed about the discussion and proceedings of the Advisory Committee.
 - An interest in discussing the key substantive areas, understanding operational challenges, and engaging members of the public whose voices have not historically been heard.

G. Committee Rules of Engagement

1. All participants agree to maintain an open and collaborative discussion by speaking one at a time and with concision; refraining from interruptions or digressions; and listening attentively and thoughtfully to work toward consensus. All participants will make every effort to review available materials and documents prior to each meeting and be prepared to discuss them.
2. The SPAPAC and SPAP process will be run by PSUF staff who will be responsible for guiding deliberations and helping to ensure that the process runs smoothly. The facilitator will be responsible for implementing



the agenda, timekeeping, guiding the discussion, and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to speak.

3. The SPAPAC members will rotate the preparation of meeting summaries. The summaries will identify key points of discussion, action items, points of tentative agreement and next steps, and will generally be written without attribution. The summaries will synthesize key points, issues and ideas rather than provide detailed transcripts or meeting minutes.
4. PSUF will be responsible for providing technical information and substantive expertise, drawing as needed on their staff and those of other City Departments. Other expertise will be engaged as required.
5. The City will make all meeting materials and final meeting summaries available to the public through the City's website.
6. In the interest of an open process that is transparent to the public, communication between meetings will not include or take the place of group deliberation. Individuals are free to speak to the media (print, web, radio, T.V.) and in their own communications about the process in general and about their particular interests, concerns, and ideas. However, participants agree not to speak for, represent, or characterize the views of others or the Advisory Committee as a whole in the media or any public communications (newsletters, websites, etc.).

CONCLUSION

Under the leadership of Mayor Ballantyne, the City of Somerville has the opportunity to serve as both a statewide and national trailblazer in the restoration of urban pollinator habitat, demonstrating a vital commitment to the city's ecosystem. A thorough and well-researched Somerville Pollinator Action Plan produced in partnership with the community will undoubtedly become a model for pollinator and wildlife conservation in challenging and multivalent urban contexts. The SPAPAC provides a crucial platform for engaging and educating Somerville residents and a model for solving problems with advocates. The plight of pollinators is cause for major concern, but the growing call for pollinator protection in the public sphere should be a source of both excitement and purpose. With the SPAP, Somerville can have an impact far beyond its boundaries, leading other U.S. cities and setting the bar for what meaningful urban ecosystem stewardship looks like in the future.