



**Sustainability, Energy  
& Resiliency Committee**  
City of Salem, MA

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The Salem Sustainability, Energy, and Resiliency Committee held a public meeting on  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM** via remote participation.

**In Attendance**

**Board Members:**

Chair John Hayes	Chris Cantone	Phil Koch
Vice Chair Jeff Cohen	Doug Bowker	Rick Nye

**Not in Attendance:** Gail Kubik

**City Staff:**

Meg Riccardi, City Council liaison	Esmeralda Biso, City staff	Stacy Kilb, City staff/Recorder
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**Guest Speakers:**

Courtney Koslow of Beacon Communities and Michelle Apigian of ICON to discuss Salem Housing Authority Redevelopment of Lee Fort Terrace

**Public:**

Alan Hanscom, SATV (recording)

**Screen Names:**

Erik	p.luzinski	Laurie
Kelly Barrett	Cristina Nuncio	Mary W
Scott	Ella Speidel	Joe M
Chris Meen	Cjerzylo	Frank
Lori Stewart	Kristin Macek	

**Introductions**

**Committee Comments**

John Hayes apologizes that, during zoom public meetings, the chat function is disabled.

He notes that Committee Member Gail Kubik was invited to be on a new Wetlands Working Group, by the City of Salem. With her experience in wetlands conservation and resiliency, it is a good fit. She was tapped as the choice for the SERC member to be on the Working Group, which will amend the existing and/or develop new Wetlands regulations for the City of Salem. This will help when there are conflicts between large developments and the City of Salem.



**Public Comment** (limited to one minute per person, must be limited to current discussion/within SERC jurisdiction)

**Review & Approve Meeting Minutes - Feb. 24, 2021**

Jeff Cohen motions to approve the above minutes, with any revisions to be submitted to Esmeralda and Stacy by Friday. The motion is seconded by Chris Cantone and passes unanimously.

**Guest Speakers: Courtney Koslow, Development Director of Beacon Communities and Michelle Apigian, Principal of ICON Architecture - Salem Housing Authority Redevelopment of Lee Fort Terrace**

Courtney Koslow, Beacon Communities:

- Sustainability is integral to the redevelopment of Lee Fort Terrace.
- Virtual Community meeting March 1<sup>st</sup> - No new information since then.
- Lee Fort Terrace current conditions are described.
- Work of Beacon Communities is described. They are long term managers as well as owners.
- Other projects are described.
- Other partners:
  - New Ecology - Sustainability Consultant
  - Bohler Engineering – Civil Engineering
  - BSC Group – Landscape Architecture
  - LEC Environmental – Permitting
  - Tinti, Quinn, Grover & Frey PC (Attorney Joseph Correnti) – Local Permitting

Michelle Apigian, ICON:

- Sustainable, Community Centered Healthy Homes.
- Site locus presented, including solar resources.
  - 2 parcels: Lee Fort Terrace itself (3 acres) and City of Salem parcel (2+ acres) next to it that is available for consideration. Easements/contamination will be addressed.
- Interior photos of current apartments - no improvements/updates have been made since they were built. Mold, unhealthy environment. They cannot remodel/remediate.

Courtney Koslow, Beacon:

- Flood risk: present day – keeping in mind sea level rise and nuisance flooding.
- Integration of site to community; accessibility and enjoyment are main considerations.
- Goals are outlined:
  - Resiliency
    - Cannot renovate b/c not allowed to have dwellings on first floor during flooding events.
    - Should we even be developing on a floodplain? This was discussed; building on a podium w/building at grade and units above makes it possible, and positive.



- This is coastal and not tidal floodplain; should we convert to wetlands? No, wetlands creation will not absorb this.
- Will also address streets/infrastructure so site will not become an “island.”
- Hoping to be a “resiliency hub,” providing reliable backup power to both residents and others affected by outages.
- Environmentally Positive
  - Carbon sequestration will mean it has a positive impact – in the future and today, with landscape design.
    - Will not use spray foam insulation, will try to minimize use of steel and concrete.
  - Demolished buildings will be reused when possible.
- Low Energy Building Design
  - Passive House (PHIUS+) certification, solar and geothermal being explored.
- Healthy and Human Centered Design
  - Make it “visitable and universally accessible.”
- Work already being done in Salem by groups such as SERC, Salem Sound Coastwatch, etc.
- Opportunities: Marblehead example.
- Site Investigation: Beacon is very early on in the process; no site plan is available. Trying to understand site, develop goals, solicit community input.
- Will be mixed income. Have been pursuing grants. Will be less than 224 units; that was the best-case scenario using all 5 acres but that is not actually feasible. Working with state Housing Planning to sort out. That figure was put out for grant application purposes.

Michelle Apigian, ICON

- Survey: Current Conditions w/easements for utility infrastructure (gas, power, bike path) that all have limitations on what can be built.
- Passive park area: Primary building area and proposed passive park are shown. Latter would be within the limit of Commonwealth Tidelands b/c that area cannot be built.
- Passive park precedents – sample photos.
- Next steps: conceptual plans, community input, etc.
- [www.courb.co/leefort](http://www.courb.co/leefort): View project info., subscribe for updates, FAQ’s and to leave feedback.

Committee Discussion:

Doug Bowker

- Notes that heat and a/c bills must be high. No trees onsite.

Chris Cantone

- Potential net zero or net positive is good, however renewables are not always affordable; what is the plan?



- Courtney Koslow: These will be rental units with utilities included but the rent of the lowest cost units will be based on 30% of the income tier. Applicant will need to make it fit in their development budget. Funded differently than public housing. Salem Housing Authority owns land, Beacon and SHA together will own and manage the site. The City will not be funding the project. Low Income housing tax credits, state incentives, etc. will be used. Past developments have successfully included renewables.
- Vision for City Property? This was covered, and issues outlined. Cannot build on most of the site. That parcel will become a passive park due to easements, etc.
- Nice design on public park and its layout, but he wonders how many units they will be removing that exist today, that could be renovated as they are grandfathered in? They will not be able to get funding/permitting to renovate units in a floodplain. ICON will pay the costs to move/house the current 50 residents during construction. They will then build at least 50 new units (it will be more, but plans have not been made yet) in a multi-story building. It will not be garden-style apartments.
- Park Design must be part of resiliency/accommodating flood zone. Civil Engineering and Landscape Design will be heavily involved in this.
- How many units are needed to be a feasible project? This is not yet known but they are working w/State Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, expecting HUD to put out funding application in a few months that will help determine what can be done.

#### Rick Nye

- Currently 50 1-bedroom apartments, at least this many will be developed.
- Parking will be underneath, along with some surface parking.
- Will try to shield parking w/berms and plantings.
- Elevators planned? Yes.
- All units intended to be one floor but could be some 2-story townhouse style, but no plan yet.

#### John Hayes

- In 2020 the City updated Hazard Mitigation Plan; he recommends they review it. It was coordinated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and Salem's Conservation Commission was a local Team member.
- Would like to learn more about collaborating partners; it is a good team. This year the 6<sup>th</sup> assessment of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will come out.
- Likes the idea of a "resiliency hub;" with climate change and heat waves, could the property host a cooling center? This can be considered.

#### Doug Bowker

- 100 yards from power plant; does it really need energy storage? More practical to have a backup generator as most facilities do. Storage must be stored and maintained for it to work when a backup generator must be tested once a month.
- Jeff Cohen replies that there are innovative new storage systems; he is excited by the prospect.



- Courtney Koslow notes battery storage = grid stewardship. Solar energy accumulated during the day gets put onto grid; this stresses the grid. Can store onsite and give back when needed if stored.

Public Comment:

Cindy Jerzylo, co-chair Willows Neighborhood Assoc.

- What happens when parking on first floor floods, how do you get people out of the building?
  - Will also be stairs, not just an elevator. Will be mixed, not all elderly. Expectation is to shelter in place; building is meant to withstand. Can go for weeks in winter without energy and maintain heat/cooling depending on season.
- Is it ADA acceptable?
  - Wheelchairs must go to stairwell and wait for someone to come and bring them down in any building whether there is an elevator or not.
  - Michelle Apigian adds: Will be regular entryways, and cars. She expects lobby levels to be higher than cars. Cars may be in a few inches of water, but points of access will be safe to exit.
- “Mid-rise” is 5-12 floors. Most residents to not want a high rise, which is 5 floors. Courtney Koslow notes this conversation can happen in design phase. Ms. Jerzylo comments that proposals have already been requested and that “They already know what they will be building.”
- She comments that Courbanize.com notified her of the meeting at 4:56PM, and that this not enough time.
- Jeff Cohen notes the meeting has been on the City website and the agenda up for more than 48 hours as per open meeting law. SERC is addressing only the 3 components of sustainability, energy, and resiliency, and while we understand there may be issues w/configuration, etc., tonight’s job is to address sustainability and resiliency.

Cristina Nuncio, Salem Willows

- Thoughtful presentation re sustainability, buildings, and site.
- “Energy, Sustainability, Equity” have been mentioned. Echoes Chris Cantone’s questions about current residents. Right now, 50 1-bedroom units for the elderly exist, she wants that equity reflected.
- Notes Beacon is a for-profit organization, wants assurance that we are not building to redevelop a site that does not benefit existing residents.
- If mixed-use market rental, you will not have parking spaces available for all units; unlikely they will only have one car.
- Concerned about traffic.
- Courtney Koslow notes that Beacon is for-profit but is mission driven, equity is high on their list. Want to support a range of incomes.

Mary W

- Difference between tidal floodplain and coastal floodplain?



- Tidal floodplain comes from a river, water system connected underground; Coastal floodplain comes from coast.
- Modeling of tides/water/force?
  - Yes, information has been obtained. They recognize that water will come through the site; anything at ground level would be vulnerable. Will ensure that residences are above that.

Steve Kapantais, 23 Wisteria St.

- Equity – Conflicts with the need to provide profitability over 10 years?
- Affordable housing – 8.6% is all that is proposed to be affordable. City currently requires 10%
- Courtney Koslow: Numbers he quotes are from a previous application; those numbers are not what they are building, but were based on applying for a planning grant, and are not relevant to sustainability. Will be more than 10% affordable units.

Chris Cantone

- When will they present to the City again? This is unknown – too early in the process and financing is TBD but must be done before plans can progress.
- Public forum for design through City? Not yet. Trying to hear from people first in the community, official public comment will come during permitting.
- Concerned that City is giving up property, what is the benefit of this? Ms. Koslow notes they are creating public space on the City property, 1/3 will go toward open space at Lee Fort Terrace itself and ALL City space going to be open space.

Joe M

- EV parking possible?
- Electric bike rack?
- These will be considered.

Stacia Kraft

- Opposed to building on floodplain; these have a function, what percentage will “not function” if built on?
  - This type of floodplain does not function like that; this is about water from the ocean flowing into and off the site. A building sits on top of land, so it is about water going out to the ocean, not down into the ground.

Erik Nowak, 19 Columbus Ave

- Asks about traffic in the area, especially post-COVID.
- Traffic has been studied and will continue to be studied. More information will be presented at Planning Board public meetings; too early in process to determine now.

**Discussion of [Bill HD.1972](#): “An Act achieving a green future with infrastructure and workforce investments.”**



- Bill S.2995 “An Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy” was Vetoed by the governor but the Legislature overrode.
- Net Zero Building Requirements delayed 6 months.
- No funding apparatus with previous Bill, so HD1972 submitted to House to address this via infrastructure and workforce investments.

### **Green Building Ordinance Updates**

- Will this be discussed/debated after Urban Agriculture? Yes.
- Urban Agriculture Ordinance is discussed here.
- One meeting re Urban Ag has been held. Ordinance is actively being reviewed by City Solicitor, as it requires changes to zoning. Team drafting the Ordinance is working with Solicitor and Zoning officer as they are not familiar with Ordinances. Committee within the Committee will report back to the Committee on Public Health, Safety, and the Environment.

### **Discussion of Harbor Plan Committee Meeting on 3/17/21**

**Fill out the Harbor Plan survey:** <https://harborplan.salem.com/>

- This is the Footprint Property across from Lee Fort Terrace, public comment can be submitted to City. Jeff Cohen prefers less residential – deadline for public comments? Unsure what the deadline is.
- John Hayes: Footprint trying to draw investors that would develop wind/Salem as a marshalling area for offshore wind. We do not know how actively they are doing this but they said they are trying.
- Last week Footprint proposed a plan for residential.
- Power Plant has a termination date in 2050 so we could think of this plan as marshalling of wind for offshore development, then the power plant is decommissioned, so medium-term site development will be needed. Short term contrasting for 35 acres, but do not lose sight of CLF agreement w/City that plant is to shut down in 2050.

### **Updates on City Projects**

**[Resilient Together](#) - Beverly/Salem Climate Action & Resilience Plan (Jenna Ide & Esmeralda Biso)**

- Planning process ends at end of June.
- Consultants working on final Plan draft, will have 3-4 weeks to review/provide edits when done.
- Community Engagement:
  - Beverly and Salem meeting w/consultants to discuss next week.
  - Final focus group w/business owners this Friday.
- Final Actions done, narrowed down to 10 actions for each Plan element.
- Both Cities have full lists, including what was eliminated, in case anyone wants to consult.
- Would like to review more thoroughly next month.



## New Business

### RETF [Enabling Act language](#)

#### Potential letter to the Mayor (Sustainability Department)

- In conjunction w/SERC developing Ordinance redefining itself/its relevance/giving it review rights.
- As well as having a line item in the budget.

#### Third-party energy suppliers door-knocking

- Jeff Cohen reminds everyone that door to door solicitors are required by City law to register w/Police Department if what they are presenting has a financial aspect to it. Ask them if they have done this. (They may run away.)
- We have power choice in Salem. City negotiates on behalf of all ratepayers, so we have a good rate, energy is 100% green, and we know where the power comes from.
- If they say they are part of National Grid Supply Dept., they are NOT. Beware.
- Chris Cantone notes that any door-to-door solicitor must have a proper ID badge visible, as well as the company brand on their clothing. These State requirements are for safety purposes.
- Jeff Cohen notes that the Citywide energy program is an opt-out program. The City signs us all up, and there are benefits to the City-run government aggregation program. Specific terms to protect users/consumers must be in the contract. Rates do vary, and the City goes into contract w/sellers, so the rate varies w/time depending on market. It will change from time to time. No need to worry.
- Can opt in the next time City changes supplier if you have previously opted out.
- Jeff Cohen: Ours is called Power Choice, letters coming out touting other programs have the word "choice," (Clean Choice, Energy Choice, etc.) so it can be confusing.
- We were 4<sup>th</sup> community to do this and 18 followed.

## Upcoming Events

### Webinar Series: [Salem State University Earth Days](#) (John Hayes)

- April 12-16
- Virtual format = greater attendance?

Jeff Cohen thanks members of the public for coming. Nathan Young had a lot to do with the Green Building Ordinance.

## Next Meeting – Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. Via Zoom

- Esmeralda to present.
- Barbara Warren of Salem Sound Coastwatch is to be a guest speaker. She is the Coordinator for the City of Salem in the Greening the Gateway Cities DCR program, which promotes improvement of the urban tree canopy.

## Adjournment

*Rick Nye motions to adjourn, and Doug Bowker seconds. All are in favor.*



The meeting ends at 8:15PM.

*Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 39 §23B, and City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033. Please contact Jenna Ide at [jide@saalem.com](mailto:jide@saalem.com) or 978-619-5699 for more information.*



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