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The Salem Sustainability, Energy, and Resiliency Committee held a public meeting on **Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 6:30 PM** via remote participation.

**In Attendance**

**Board Members**:

Chair John Hayes

Vice Chair Jeff Cohen

Doug Bowker

Phil Koch

Rick Nye

**Not in Attendance**:

Chris Cantone

Gail Kubik

**City Staff**:

Meg Riccardi, City Council liaison

Esmeralda Bisono, City staff

Stacy Kilb, City staff/Recorder

**Public**:

Alan Hanscom, SATV (recording)

Screen Names:

Linda Stark

Caroline Watson-Felt

Stan Franzeen (SAFE)

**Introductions**

**Public Comment** - none

**Review & Approve Meeting Minutes** - March 24, 2021

*A motion to approve the March minutes, with edits to be submitted to Stacy Kilb and all SERC members by Friday, April 30 at 11:00AM, is made by Jeff Cohen, seconded by Doug Bowker, and passes unanimously.*

Chair John Hayes Yes

Vice Chair Jeff Cohen Yes

Doug Bowker Yes

Phil Koch Yes

Rick Nye Yes

[**Resilient Together**](https://resilient-together.org/home) **Presentation** - Beverly/Salem Climate Action & Resilience Plan (Esmeralda Bisono)

* Climate Action and resilience Plan partnership w/Beverly and Salem
* Overview of planning process; 2 months remain. Public comment process will be at the end of May.
* Salem & Beverly share a water supply as well as a bridge, notes John Hayes.
* Ways to get involved: website, social media and contacts are outlined.
* A link to the presentation can be found [**here.**](https://www.salem.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif3756/f/minutes/rt_serc_presentation_4.28.21.pdf)
* Plan Elements: Buildings and Development, Energy, Infrastructure, Natural Resources, Public Health and Safety, Mobility, Solid Waste. Each has 10 associated actions.
* Two Plan elements will be outlined tonight - Buildings & Development Actions, Solid Waste. Consider:
  + *Priority*
  + *Which ones are Salem working on?*
  + *Which can be combined/done simultaneously?*
  + *Potential Partners?*
* **Buildings and Development Actions Outline/Discussion:** The 10 Actions for this category are outlined. Discussion:
  + Jeff Cohen agrees that the Green Building Ordinance (GBO) and Roadmap Bill address several of these. Part of the bill is an opt-in stretch code; SERC will recommend that Salem and Beverly opt in. If we do, it will address some items in GBO.
  + Also, both communities can do better educating people about what’s available.
  + John Hayes asks if there is a GBO under development in Beverly. They are interested in doing one but do not yet have a draft. Beverly has a Clean Energy Committee.
  + Phil Koch asks about the Energy code the Hampton Inn downtown had to meet. Jeff Cohen notes that as there is no GBO, they are held to the regular building code, but they do have a green roof even though it was not mandated.
  + Jenna Ide notes the stretch energy code is in place; there is only a small difference between that and the regular energy code. The new bill will make a more significant difference.
  + John Hayes has proposed a site visit to the green roof at the Hampton Inn for the summer.
  + Jeff Cohen notes that a Resiliency Ordinance is desirable to address some items in #6-10. It would go beyond a GBO. He asks if Councilor Morsillo would speak about her research and work.
  + Rick Nye comments that #9 (upgrades in historic buildings) is a sticking point for him. Historic looks of buildings sometimes get in the way of upgrades.
    - Jenna Ide notes that this has been discussed; we recognize that there are many things they can do.
    - Engagement/outreach/education may help get the information out so that Salem residents can tailor their efforts. For historic buildings, there are companies who will renovate historic windows, fix glazing, etc. While they won’t have the energy rating of a new window, they will be better.
    - It’s not historic homes that are “breaking the climate bank,” so they don’t all need to be completely renovated. There are many opportunities in buildings up through the early 1980’s. This would not be a huge push that would turn a lot of people off.
  + Jeff Cohen notes that the Historical Commission has upgrades to their guidance on their agenda. A lot of guidance restricts things that could make homes more sustainable.
  + Caroline Watson-Felt, President, Historic Salem Inc. (HSI), attending as a resident, notes that there is no evidence that aluminum/modern materials are more efficient. Also saving materials that exist keeps them out of landfills. The idea of restoring/preserving historic homes is good for the local economy.
    - Current guidelines were stablished in 1982 and do not reference newer materials that ARE good for use in homes, and no reference is made to sustainability.
    - The Historic Commission’s review of the guidelines will specifically include modern materials and craftmanship, and to benefit energy and sustainability in the home.
    - Prep meeting happened this afternoon, and the meeting where this will be discussed is on May 5th.
    - HSI is a stakeholder in that process and that the new guidelines will empower conversations about why preservation is good for the environment and your home.
  + Doug Bowker comments re #10 (education and outreach re flooding) that some are concerned about projects being built in a floodplain, but that there is a distinction between types of floodplains, e.g., due to flooding/rising seas vs. the type where it has to do with groundwater/rivers. These are two different situations, but terminologies are used interchangeably so many people don’t understand the subject. Information is out there but it’s too much and needs to be contextualized, simplified, and made applicable to our city but also understandable.
  + Jeff Cohen: City Council is evaluating/strengthening wetlands protection.
  + Phil Koch re #7 (Assess public buildings for energy efficiency upgrades). Schools and colleges are the best payback for geothermal. Is funding available to research this?
    - Jenna Ide notes that investigations of major renovations should include this. She feels some of the plan is too high level.
    - “Assess buildings” is a small, weak action for a government trying to lead in these efforts. ‘Public buildings shall install all energy efficiency upgrades that have positive life cycle analysis,” would be stronger, more effective language. Things have already been assessed, now they should be implemented. What they consider “actions” here are more like “visions” or “goals.” Don’t assess it, do it.
    - Money is secondary, this should be budgeted for if you are doing something big.
  + John Hayes replies: If a new real estate development was encouraged to be assessed for geothermal microgrids, it would be important to do. But don’t mandate exactly what they should do – they can choose. Jeff Cohen comments that efficiency should be mandate but builders should have options – for example, they could do LEED, Green Roof, or solar. To Jenna’s point, it’s about what is possible, not what is necessary.
  + Important for SERC to be strong as there will be pushback from who want to use more passive language. Just do the upgrades as appropriate for the site; the language has been around 30 years. Education, outreach, and making it doable is important but we don’t have time [for endless visioning].

**Solid Waste Actions Outline/Discussion**

* #3 (Promote residential renewable energy, etc.) Jeff Cohen: PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy for commercial buildings) program is a good way for commercial properties to become more sustainable.
* Next Steps: Final plan public comment June 3-16.

**Committee Updates**

**Wetlands Ordinance Working Group (Gail Kubik)**

* Presented by Councilor Morsillo as Gail Kubik is not in attendance.
* $30,000 approved by City Council along with $10,000 by the Conservation Commission to pay for technical assistance with writing the updated wetlands and floodplain regulations/ordinance changes.
* Part of that work will be public education.
* It IS confusing talking about coastal wetlands/floodplain differences/issues.
* Meetings w/Salem Alliance For the Environment (SAFE), SERC, Salem Sound Coastwatch (SSCW) have happened, now ready for a technical expert.
* Jeff Cohen thanks the Councilor for her work.

**Green Futures Act HD 1972 Committee Discussion/Vote (Jeff Cohen)**

* Legislature passed Roadmap bill w/no mechanism to pay for it.
* Before them is HD 1972, sponsored by Rep. Driscoll.
* Components:
  + Unlocks $10 billion over next 10 years.
  + Will go to closing state’s polluter loophole, generating $500-$750 million.
  + Establishes a green bonding program as part of capital budgeting process, money to invest in sustainable buildings.
  + Goal is to incentivize 1 million homes in MA to convert to air source heat pumps.
  + Money will be routed to communities. $10 million to help those employed in fossil fuels to transition to renewable energy.
  + Direct payments to households.
  + 60% of money directed to communities will go to Environmental Justic neighborhoods.
  + Will establish a Board to administer that funding, half of those on Board must represent minorities/marginalized communities.
* Jeff Cohen hopes the Committee will endorse this bill. A letter in support will be drafted.
* Jeff Cohen asks Councilor Riccardi if it makes sense to have SERC send a resolution to the City Council, including the Fact Sheet? She thinks it would be a good idea but is unsure.

*Jeff Cohen motions that SERC endorses House Bill 1972 and is seconded by Doug Bowker.*

*All are in favor.*

Jeff Cohen Yes

Phil Koch Yes

Rick Nye Yes

Doug Bowker Yes

John Hayes Yes

**Municipal Harbor Plan** <https://harborplan.salem.com/> -Footprint offshore wind marshalling

* Jeff Cohen mentions that the Footprint people are now open to offshore wind marshalling. John Hayes mentions that there has been media coverage of this.
* Stacy Kilb can post links to articles in the Committee on the minutes and website.
* Jenna Ide: We are on the frontlines of climate change, so the solution of “build it up” is not really a solution and is still not addressing existing properties.
  + What kind of use/what use is best on harbor, and how do we protect residents? Some will say, “The City should rebuild the seawall, fix drainage, fix this, fix that,” but we can’t fix things to withstand 100-year storm every 20 years, and protect the people who already live there.
  + What uses are compatible with coastal or riverine floodplain? Different cities have approached it in different ways, with the recognition that it is not something to be taken lightly, “just raise it up.”
  + There is vulnerability in how you get there. A homeowner says, “I’ll raise my house 30 ft.” but this doesn’t help when all roads are flooded.
* Doug Bowker: Many details need to be worked out re offshore wind marshalling. There were many trucks/complaints about them during footprint construction, but that was temporary. Will materials come in via the harbor? No, that was not the initial plan.
* Jeff Cohen notes it would also be a lot of construction/transportation to put 1000 condos onsite, with ongoing traffic even after they are built. And do we really want to put more housing on the water? Footprint was resistant but current zoning does NOT accommodate residential. It does accommodate deep water offshore uses, such as wind.
  + A sea change and unexpected change of direction by Footprint management occurred. The assumption had been that they were focused on selling to a residential Developer.
  + Members must realize that the City has done a lot of work knowing this is a private property. Maintaining the zoning there is one way to prevent residential development.
* Jenna Ide: People worry about one impact or another but may not understand what we’re getting into. The only thing that would have minimal impact would be turning it into a wetland. Jeff Cohen points out that Footprint wants to make money.
* Phil Koch wonders what’s wrong with a combination? Jenna Ide replies that nothing wrong with it, but it is not currently allowed at the site. A change to harbor requirements or regulations would require state approval to make it into something not water dependent, such as housing or retail shops.
* John Hayes comments that with the size of commercial turbines now, if you are wind marshalling, you will need land for 10-20 years to support the offshore wind industry.
* Phil Koch doesn’t think wind fits onsite. This would not be onsite; this would be a marshalling area to prep equipment to install it at sea.

**City Projects**

**Letter of support from SERC for the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Grant Application for Modeling of alternatives/adaptations for the Point area of Salem**

**(Jenna Ide & Esmeralda Bisono)**

* Grant will be submitted later this month, requesting a letter of support from SERC.
* Woods Hole presentation for Salem, modeling was also done for Marblehead.
* More extensive modeling was done for Marblehead, we want them to look at the Point area of Salem through this lens.
* Combine w/an approach to outreach/Point community, use as an education process.
* Outcome may be partnerships, not just infrastructure, but could also be “how do we help community residents have an emergency shelter,” etc.
* Shetland Park was interested in working with us on this.
* SERC will draft a letter with information from Esmeralda, it is needed soon.

*Jeff Cohen motions that the Committee issue and sign a letter of support to CZM, based on information provided by Esmeralda Bisono, is seconded by Phil Koch, and all are in favor.*

**Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Update (Stacy Kilb)**

* Each station has 2 ports and there are 3 stations (6 ports) per location.
* Active stations, charging $2/hr: Salerno Auto School, Bentley, Forest River.
* Bertram Field’s 3 stations are installed but not yet activated (waiting on NGrid).
* Looking into upgrading charging stations at two garages using EVIP grant funding.
* May seek additional station locations for future grant submissions.

**New Business**

**Letter to the Mayor re: Sustainability Department**

Not discussed at this time.

**Discussion of PACE program (Jenna Ide)**

* John Hayes: Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)
* Jenna Ide: Presentation by Mass Development, Mayor and others are interested in joining this voluntary program for commercial owners. We take in tax assessment, and send the money to lenders, who lend it.
* In conjunction with ramped up education program. Links will be sent.
  + <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/commercial-pace-property-assessed-clean-energy>
  + [www.massdevelopment.com/pace](http://www.massdevelopment.com/pace)
* Please familiarize yourself with these brand-new program guidelines.
* Jeff Cohen notes that the Mass Save Energy Assessment does not apply to commercial properties, even small ones. We don’t think of how to encourage businesses to be more sustainable, and there is a misconception that doing so is a financial burden. But those that invest in LED lighting, electrifying sales vehicles, etc. have seen benefits and can pass them on to consumers.
* Jenna Ide: One of biggest benefits is that the assessment carries w/property so the lender can lend for larger projects that would take a long time to pay off.
  + Developers will use this tool in their toolkit, since it goes w/property.
  + Can be used for all kinds of things, incl. solar but also if businesses have to redo the roof to get solar.
* John Hayes asks if it is too late for KLA (Kim Lundgren Associates) to incorporate PACE into their assessment? Beverly is also moving forward to opt in, and there will be joint community outreach. It is in committee.
* Meg Riccardi hopes for this to be the topic at the next Public Health Safety & the Environment (PHSE) meeting on Thursday, May 6 at 6PM). It will not need to go to the City Council Committee on Ordinances, Licenses and Legal Affairs (OLLA).

**Upcoming Events**

**Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 6:30 P.M. Via Zoom**

**Adjournment**

*A motion to adjourn is made by Doug Bowker, seconded by Phil Koch, and passes unanimously.*

The meeting ends at 8:00PM.

*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@salem.com*](mailto:jide@salem.com) *or 978-619-5699 for more information.*