



## Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.

### Remote Participation

#### **In Attendance:**

Chair John Hayes  
Vice Chair Jeff Cohen  
Chris Cantone  
Gail Kubik  
Phil Koch  
Rick Nye  
Meg Riccardi, City Council liaison  
Esmeralda Bisono, City staff  
Jenna Ide, City staff  
Stacy Kilb, City staff/Recorder  
State Representative Paul Tucker  
State Representative Lori Ehrlich

**Not in Attendance:** Doug Bowker

#### **Public:**

Flora Tonthat, Member, Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Council  
Stan Franzen, Vice President, Salem Alliance For the Environment (SAFE)  
Sean Selby, Architect, Arrowstreet  
Patrick Schmidt, Avison Young  
Pat Reed, SATV (recording)

#### **Introductions**

**Discussion with Representatives Lori Ehrlich & Paul Tucker on [Bill S.2995: An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy.](#)**

*A link to the full bill is above. A summary is found [here](#).*

Rep. Paul Tucker:



- Discusses bill that was vetoed by Governor Baker.
- Thanks the Board for its work, feels he is up to speed and ready to fight for this. Lori Ehrlich will summarize bill and future actions.

#### Lori Ehrlich:

- First bill she voted on as a Representative was the Global Warming Solutions Act; much was aspirational with few tools to get there.
- This bill is more impactful b/c puts together a toolkit that will accomplish goals set out in 2008 w/GWSA, which are also enhanced.
- Impacts of climate change are currently being seen so we are ready for action.
- Bill has been 2 years in the works, with many authors.
- Senator Mike Barret and Rep. Tommy Golden lead the way

#### Highlights of the bill:

- Vetoed at end of session, new session starting.
- Senate passed, then house, conference committee puts together ideas in a final bill.
- Statewide emission limits set every 5 years rather than every 10.
- Roadmap plans in place to reach each limit.
- Regular reports.
- Emissions sub-limits for 6 economic sectors in place: electric power, transportation, commercial and industrial heating and cooling, residential heating and cooling, industrial processes, and natural gas distribution and service.
- Writes Environmental Justice into Mass. Law.
- Codifies Mass greenhouse gas limit for 2050 at net zero.
- Emissions reductions to be achieved on the way to net zero:
  - 1991 considered the baseline measure.
  - Gross emissions by 2050 must fall at least 85 percent below 1990 levels.
  - Limit for 2030 shall be at least 50 percent below the 1990 level,
  - Limit for 2040 must be at least 75 percent below the 1990 level.
- Offshore wind: requires utilities to purchase 2400 Megawatts of generation, increases total state auth to 5600 megawatts.
- Boosts demand for renewable energy standard by 3% each year 2025-2029, to 40% renewable by 2030.
- Directs DPU to balance priorities going forward, balancing safety and affordability with equity, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Bolster finances of CEC (Mass. Clean Energy Center), minority and women owned, small bus, Environmental Justice communities, fossil fuel workers.
- Local option net zero stretch energy code incl. Also options at the building level (contentious). Takes responsibility from BBRS and shifts it to DOER.
- Instructs EEA to set explicit emissions reductions goals for certain plans via Mass Save. Requires DPU to report on reductions achieved.
- Numerical benchmarks for breakthrough solutions
- Promote & protect natural working lands, which provide carbon sequestration.



- Includes a first time Greenhouse Gas emission standard for municipal light plants, which must purchase 50% non-emitting by 2030 and 100% non-emitting by 2050.
- 5-year moratorium on biomass-burning facilities, like the one planned for Springfield.
- Nudges utilities to get into new lines of work by piloting renewable energy technologies that can substitute for NG (geothermal on a district wide scale). This is because natural gas companies have written into their charters that they cannot do anything but sell natural gas, must change so they can do this.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> pilot project as well
- Household and commercial appliance efficiency set via CA efficiency standards.
- National Grid safety items, addressing gas leaks, DPU will issue new regs for training/certifying utility contractors hired, as currently gas companies can't quality control their contractors. Several additional items are outlined.
- Mandates transparency about input/output assumptions used in modeling of state climate policy.
- First state in the country to do something this comprehensive with serious goals in mind and a way to get there. Creating a blueprint for other states, if they want to do something similar.
- Disappointing that governor vetoed this when no longer in session so no chance to override; Chairs are committed, bill will be filed, tomorrow and a vote taken then. The Bill will then be sent to the Governor. There was a veto proof-majority the first time, and they are hoping to obtain one again. It is up to Governor to take the next action, but the Legislature will be in session to address.
- Stretch code is somewhat controversial.

Jeff Cohen: Introduces Mayor Driscoll. Comments:

- Thanks everyone for their work, other cities/towns rely on these policy leads, excited but overwhelmed by amount of work to be done.
- Many partnerships at work:
  - “Resilient together” with Beverly
  - Salem Sound Coastwatch helps us think about coastal resilience.
- Growth happens here, how to do it the right way, healthy and sustainable
- Looking forward to bill being implemented
- Thanks SERC for volunteer efforts.

### SERC Questions/comments

Jeff Cohen comments on opposition to the Net Zero stretch code:

- Combination of building organizations and realtors opposed.
- In 2018 the Realtor Association quashed a mandate for Mass Save Energy Assessments. For those who don't have funds for solar or air source heat pumps, Mass Save can get them insulation, thermostats, and efficient appliances.
- Architects and builders have said a paradigm change needed toward sustainability is not a financial burden, but both large and small investments can result in much greater efficiency/financially viable properties.



John Hayes:

- Grateful for the work of our Representatives; is a teacher at Salem State, students learn about these acts.
- Solar Energy policy favors those who are educated, with access to bank loans and who can take advantage of state and federal deductions, but what about those who have fewer resources?
- Representative Lori Ehrlich:
  - Bill mandates that DOER prioritize low-income communities in the smart solar efforts described. Food insecurity, homelessness are addressed. The Bill writes into law a compromise between tax assessors and developers re clean energy installations.
  - Closes gap in net metering law to allow small buildings to host rooftop solar.
  - Allows utilities to own solar projects in certain cases.
- Paul tucker
  - Bill addresses Environmental Justice, the haves and have nots, which is important. Must be a level playing field.

Chris Cantone:

- Congratulations, all around a great bill.
- Solar: many good things made it into bill.
- He contradicts what was discussed: in the solar industry, there are issues with allowing utilities to own generation.
  - This was not allowed during many years of deregulations and it is unclear what this means. If they have an easement into a property but don't own it, this does put ownership back into utility hands, not those of consumers who could control the price.
  - Utilities also involved in connection process, if they can own, they can control others.
  - Also from solar perspective this limits taxes. Proposal allows for personal property tax but not real property tax, which must be combined otherwise a project may not be financed, thus excluding low-income users from undertaking projects.
  - Some loopholes on solar side must be closed that take away from deregulation and affordability.
  - Payment in lieu of taxes pilot agreement – bill does not allow towns to enter, this leaves tax issues for the life of the project. Good that DPU oversees so there are some checks and balances.

Lori Ehrlich:

- Notes this is a helpful perspective.
- May need to tweak, nothing is ever final.
- Rep. Tucker: large bills may need to be revisited.



Phil Koch arrives 7:16PM

John Hayes:

- Be optimistic that bill passes and is veto proof.
- Would like to work on climate change literacy in K-12 classrooms. Students in freshman level climate change college classes are woefully ignorant of the issue. How have other states incorporated climate change literacy?
- Representative Tucker mentions a Civics bill he sponsored, requiring that it be taught.
- Representatives are voting on this tomorrow, Senate President and House Speaker came up after the veto, noting they would pass the Bill in same form it was sent, and will not water it down.
- The Governor can make changes as they are in session and can respond.
- A significant number of republicans voted for this a few weeks ago and it is hoped they will do so again.

Phil Koch agrees about the need to educate young people, but also wonders how to educate older people in DC about climate change.

Jenna Ide:

- Excited to see how statewide goals for gas emissions play into utilities programs, hit a wall w/deep energy retrofits b/c calculation didn't show them to be cost effective Lighting yes, boiler, yes, but fundamental review of envelope is hard to address.
- Higher and more generous incentives will be needed to help Environmental Justice communities – those that have successfully implemented measures tend to be those w/higher incomes.
- Carbon pricing: Bill mentions this but does not outline. Will revenue coming in be targeted to Energy efficiency in low/moderate income areas and municipalities?
  - May be a standalone bill coming back. Did not make it into this piece of legislation, unsure what will happen with it this session. This bill is encompassing, but the missing piece is transportation. 1/3 transportation, 1/3 thermal, 1/3 energy production. Governor has been surprisingly upfront in leading TCI (Transportation and Climate Initiative), which is like RGGI (Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative), but for transportation
  - It will generate money, program is not yet at final stages, but agreements between states are being drawn up. 10 states are interested.
- Representatives who support TCI can sometimes face opposition.
- Representative Ehrlich has problems w/carbon tax; RGGI carbon tax gave money back instead of funding green projects; TCI would take care of this.
- Jeff Cohen: Better to call it “carbon pricing.”
- Representative Tucker: carbon pricing did not make its way in b/c bill had some controversial pieces that a small minority objected to. With a large bill like this, the more we put in, the more controversial it becomes. Would have lost more republicans if carbon pricing had been put in, so many thought it would be best as a standalone bill w/own separate hearing and vetting process.



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- Talked to Seth Moulton, in house in Congress there is interested, but support is lukewarm on Senate side. Would be better if this was at the Federal level.

Jeff Cohen: 25Kw and greater – we have a small commercial solar deficiency; net metering cap issues have contributed to this.

Lori Ehrlich: Will be filing a bill about urban shade trees, want more shade coverage in cities, in process of being drafted right now.

John Hayes: Greening the Gateway Communities is a good program.

Stan Franzen (SAFE):

- DPU controversy: concerned about a company called FTI Consulting, a major global company that does promotion for fossil fuel industry and was contracted by DPU to do an analysis on National Grid. This is a blatant conflict of interest. They are studying 19-117 Audit, and the Attorney General (AG) has already made an objection to FTI doing this work. Exposés have been done about this company. Suggestions for how to deal with this?
- Lori Ehrlich requests more links through Jeff Cohen and Paul Tucker

Sean Selby (Architect, Arrowstreet)

- Applauds representatives for bringing this back.
- Individuals in his firm lobbied to have governor sign the bill, and they intend to continue that pressure.
- Does not understand why real estate groups are against it, when their individual people are for this.
- Jeff Cohen notes that Mr. Selby is involved in the Shetland Park redevelopment.

John Hayes:

- Pleased by 5-year moratorium on wood burning, what is happening with the moratorium?
- DOER Doing analysis? Must assess climate change and public health impacts of biomass burning, would be internally developed.

### **Public Comment**

Included above

### **Review & Approve Meeting Minutes**

*Motion: Approve the December 10, 2020 regular SERC meeting minutes, with all revisions to be submitted to Stacy Kilb and Esmeralda Bisono by 12PM Friday, Jan. 29, 2020.*

*By: Jeff Cohen*

*Second: Gail Kubik*

*The motion passes unanimously in a roll call vote*



Jeff Cohen	Yes
Chris Cantone	Yes
Gail Kubik	Yes
Rick Nye	Yes

## Green Building Ordinance Updates

### Jeff Cohen:

- Councilor Riccardi brought bill, approved in City Council, then moved to the Committee on Public Health, Safety and Environment, of which Meg Riccardi is the Chair. It will be in front of them. Work to be done is described; Jenna Ide and Esmeralda Bisono from the City will weigh in.
- Jeff Cohen emailed revisions after input, though it is not up to the Committee to change items, as it acts in an advisory capacity only:
  - Mandating Mass Save energy assessments for buildings being sold by homeowners. There was resistance to this, so it was removed. Kept the part that says that if an Energy Assessment cannot be done, sellers must provide previous consumption information.
  - Size of buildings: Cynthia Nina Soto is a developer who is also on the Design Review Board (DRB), who has said that multifamily homes of 8 units is a financially feasible number.
- Input received from LEED AP (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Advanced Professional) people, learned about certification process, now it is in front of Meg's Committee, so once the City has weighed in, there should be a public hearing and positive recommendations to the Council.
- Meg Riccardi: A lot will depend on State climate bill, City Solicitor is reviewing this as well.
- Jenna Ide: Kickoff meeting w/Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to develop process map and may obtain Technical Assistance Program (TAP) grant. Will have more info to share Monday.

## Updates on City Projects

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

- **Engagement Updates**
  - Social Media – hired a new intern to manage.
  - Was on SAFE meeting last month, presented on RT.
  - **MindMixer** campaign ends Feb. 5, this is a discussion forum for the public where questions on Plan elements are asked for public to engage.
  - Raffle going on until MindMixer is over. Esmeralda will send links.
  - Jenna Ide mentions they are looking to do focus groups with diverse groups of people.
  - **Transportation** is one of highest areas in state and is increasing in emissions.
    - Chris Cantone asks if they could reach out to larger employers in the City.



- Reaching out to Point Neighborhood Association for additional input is suggested. Esmeralda will do this.
  - Stan Franzen suggests Andrea Leary of North Shore Transportation Management Association (TMA) as a contact.
- **Joey Wolongevicz** of Salem State University, who leads the Salem hub of the Sunrise Movement, is planning a webinar at which Esmeralda Bisono will be a speaker.
  - No date is set yet for this connection to college students.
  - It is unknown if Erina Keefe, Esmeralda's counterpart in Beverly, has been invited.
- **Final Climate Action Advisory Committee meeting** is March 11 at 1PM John Hayes is on the Committee, representing SERC.
- **Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) Building Electrification Accelerator** is w/Doug Bowker, but he is not on today's meeting.
- Esmeralda elaborates:
  - Final workshop tomorrow, update next month, final presentation to wrap up.
  - John Hayes: if successful vote tomorrow, will impact RMI activities, is this being discussed? Larger RMI team has been discussing Climate Bill, sent email templates and letters that Councilor Ricardi and Mayor Driscoll signed.

#### Other Updates

- Jenna Ide: projects such as Bertram Field Solar and EV are on track, working w/intern at SHS for interpretive sign re sustainability.
- Forest River will have solar panels and be fully zero net energy.
- Other projects underway: school master plan, seeking consultant team, important as schools drive majority of energy use.
- John Hayes: How long for school master plan?
  - Immediate need is that two schools in Museum Place Mall want to move out.
  - High School needs renovation as it is 70's electric, Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) who funds school projects, will need to assist.
  - However, school needs to be rethought as it is extremely overbuilt, for 2,500 students when only 900 attend.
  - There are immediate, 5-year needs, but overall, there are 10-year benchmarks, pending funding.
- John Hayes notes demographics are affecting Salem State as well.
- Jenna Ide notes that schools have recurring maintenance needs that must be addressed every 5 years: roof, envelope, parking, systems, etc.

#### New Business

None

#### Public comments





None

### Upcoming Events

- John Hayes working with Joey W. at Salem State on the above-mentioned webinar.
- Jeff Cohen suggests inviting Joey to speak about Sunrise Chapter at a future SERC meeting.

John Hayes found Chris Cantone's comments interesting.

- Asks if there is an industry white paper that describes concerns so Committee can be more knowledgeable.
- Chris Cantone received a draft of what will be submitted tomorrow by an Architects association; he will send this.
- Deregulation was done to avoid utilities owning both generation and supply, so this change is a step back. Towns and municipalities like Salem will have tax issues. 3<sup>rd</sup> parties are taxable, which cannot be financed. Will hurt municipalities. Believes it was an oversight.
- Jeff Cohen: other than 41 communities w/own power company plus Fitchburg, two utility companies cover the entire state.

**Next Meeting – Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 6:30 P.M. Via Zoom**

### Adjournment

- Chris Cantone motioned to adjourn the meeting. Rick Nye seconded. The motion passes unanimously.

The meeting ended at 8:00 P.M. Minutes respectfully submitted by Stacy Kilb.

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