

November 8, 2023 6:30 P.M.
Meeting Minutes - Remote Participation

Board Members Present

John Hayes, Chair
Chris Cantone, Vice Chair (left at 7:03PM)
Erin Casey
William Winn (Came on at 7:00PM)
Rick Nye

City Staff Present:

Stacy Kilb, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator (recorder)
Neal Duffy, Director, Sustainability & Resiliency Dept.

Absent

Elvis Alvarez

Public:

SATV (recording)
Liz Bradt
Tricia Arrington

Introductions

Approve Meeting Minutes – September 27, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes is made by Chris Cantone, seconded by Rick Nye, and passes unanimously:

John Hayes	Yes
Chris Cantone	Yes
Erin Casey	Yes
Doug Bowker	Yes
William Winn	Not yet present
Elvis Alvarez	Absent

City Updates

Municipal Opt-In Specialized Building Code (Neal Duffy)

- Neal will present to the Committee on Public Health, Safety & the Environment (PHSE) at their Nov. 28th meeting, then the matter will go to the City Council for approval/adoption Dec. 7th
- Effective July 1, 2024

Draft Presentation:

- Energy Code Choices
 - Codes get more restrictive: base code --> stretch code --> specialized code.
 - Salem is automatically in stretch code so all of those requirements will be in effect.
 - Specialized opt-in code will include specialized appendices in addition to the IECC 2021 base code, MA Amendments, and Stretch Code amendments we already use.
- Map of energy code adoption by municipality
- Salem's Resilient Together Climate Action Plan
 - Goal: Net zero emissions by 2050.
 - Related Action: Adopt the state net zero energy building code.
 - Outline of Salem's CO2 emissions by sector – RT plan done by a 3rd party consultant.
- Electrification is the main strategy to meet this goal.
 - Fossil fuel sources will be replaced by renewables coming onto grid, leading to less emissions even if no other action is taken.
- Specialized code basics
 - Applies only to new construction, not additions or renovations.
 - Accelerates electrification now and facilitates it in the future.
 - Proposed effective date of 7/1/2024 to align with update in stretch code.
 - Difference between specialized and stretch code is not large.
 - Requirement for MA DOER Climate Leaders Program (and grant funding).
 - High performance standards for large homes using fossil fuels (these must be net zero energy).
 - Prewiring required for buildings using fossil fuels, for future electrification.
 - Solar required for fossil fuel buildings.
 - High performance standard for large multi-family; if over 12K conditioned square feet must use Passive House pathway.

- Specialized vs. Stretch Requirements for Low Rise Residential
 - Will renovations be forced to put solar? Only if new construction and only if NOT electric, renovations must comply with stretch code but not specialized code, stretch code does not have solar requirements.
 - Specialized code makes it difficult for someone to decide to build with gas but does not prohibit it. If building a single or multifamily under 4K sf, there is no difference between specialized and stretch code.
- Chris asks re Climate Leaders program and grants:
 - How do we update our municipal decarbonization plan?
 - Nov. 10th deadline? Salem has submitted its statement of interest on time and is discussing how to determine our decarbonization pathway now. Options include:
 - DOER discussed and they may provide support for this, but the City is doing work such that we could put one together. Can plug in details on timeline e.g. High School, OTH.
 - PowerOptions also has a decarbonization roadmap program, which would be sufficient for the Climate Leaders Program, but would not give us technical specifics.
 - Chris Cantone is concerned about the water infrastructure and age of piping. He offers to help where possible.

William Winn joins the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Chris Cantone leaves the meeting at 7:03 PM

- Specialized Code Requirements – Commercial
 - Requirements are more stringent for mixed fuel buildings vs. electric buildings.
 - Rick Nye asks about gas or propane generators, but Neal is not sure. He will obtain this information. If standalone, they are probably permitted, but if hooked up to a gas line, then the building would not be considered fully electric.
- If a home has NO onsite parking, then no EV space is required. There is no requirement to make a parking space that doesn't exist for an EV charging station.

- MSBA New Policy: if you build a school to the Specialized Code standards, you get an add'l 3% reimbursement of the reimbursable project cost
- Rick Nye hopes the cost of doing this will come down, so that we are not pricing people out of housing.
 - Neal Duffy explains that the requirement to electrify will go into effect on July 1st whether we adopt the specialized code or not, as the stretch code we are already obligated to follow becomes more stringent. Mass Save incentives are very generous right now. Building to these standards is not necessarily more expensive, especially in passive houses, where it can be 0-4% more
 - National Grid incentives can also offset between \$15-\$20K.
- John Hayes: Adoption of specialized code: 24 or 25 communities doing it
 - Some communities did not pass but this is better than what happened with stretch code when first introduced. The stretch code is our baseline, specialized code is incremental.
- John Hayes asks if a letter of support from SERC would help. A letter or vote would be helpful.

Rick Nye motions that SERC support the adoption of the specialized code by the City Council, and is seconded by William Winn.

Andy Varela comments that explaining the simplicity of the specialized code and how it is not a major leap will be important for the City Council.

Roll call Vote:

John Hayes	Yes
Erin Casey	Yes
William Winn	Yes
Rick Nye	Yes
Chris Cantone	Absent
Elvis Alvarez	Absent

John Hayes will write a letter in support of adopting the specialized opt-in code.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (Neal Duffy)

- Completed 5 add'l charging stations downtown funded in part by a Green Communities grant.

- 2 in Church St. Lot
- 1 in Green Lot
- 2 in Crombie St. Lot
- Charging fee of \$.35 kWh instituted across the board; garage and park stations are no longer free.
 - Fee will not cover all maintenance/expenses but will help defray these costs.
- Rick Nye asks about pole mounted charging stations like in Melrose.
 - Still under discussion, may be an opportunity in the future, but nothing immediate.
 - John Hayes: Could SERC invite a City rep from Melrose to present on this: how is it going, constraints/issues.
 - Neal Duffy: Possibly a good idea, Martha Grover could present along with Lori Timmerman.
 - Andy Varela: Is there a push to add more EV charging stations in the City? Yes, we will continue to install more EV chargers, but where and when is not known.
 - Analysis on usage to determine the current fee revealed that downtown chargers are used a lot so that's where we may focus. Good to have them at parks and schools, but downtown sees the most use.

Past & Upcoming Events (Stacy Kilb)

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Heat Pump Coach Opportunity (Stacy Kilb)

- Liz Bradt: Trained as Heat Smart Alliance coach, happy to be a coach for Salem

City Council Liaison Update (Andy Varela)

- No updates, will provide in January after City Council specialized code vote in December.

Old/New Business

- Discuss formation of SERC sub-committee to Assess Climate Change Resiliency Planning for Wastewater Treatment Plants
 - Case Study: Saco ME Water Resource Recovery Project Resiliency Upgrade: Why Resiliency?

- Weather and drought events, adjusting to extremes.
 - Resilience.
- Saco, ME, is building in resilience to wastewater treatment.
- ME community spending on sewer upgrade projects.
- Video of flooding at plant.
- Cost of doing nothing was explored.
- Funding is outlined.
- Invite SESD for a conversation and encourage them to plan for resilience in face of climate change.
- Discussion
 - William Winn: We had frequent rain/beach closings this year; will a report go out on this and how SESD is trying to resolve?
 - Erin Casey notes that people can get emails when there are sanitary sewer overflow events. There were a few underground pipe failures.
 - Beach closures were impacted more by runoff and nonpoint source pollution, not just sewerage overflows.
 - Rick Nye notes the hazard w/aging pipe going across the harbor, City did apply for funding and a letter was written to Dave Knowlton, but nothing came of it. Is the City reapplying?
 - Andy Varela: SESD feeds more communities than Salem. This could be a complex conversation, because anything involving SESD, escalator clause, must be addressed, but bring in City of Beverly and others served.

Public Comment

- None

Upcoming City Committee Meetings

Agendas can be found at: <https://www.salemma.gov/minutes-and-agendas>

Salem Food Policy Council: First Monday of the month, 12/4/23, 6:00PM

Recycling Committee: First Tuesday of the month, 12/5/23, 6:30PM

Tree Commission: Third Monday of the month, 12/18/23, 6:00 PM

Conservation Commission: Third Tuesday of the month, 12/19/23, 6:30PM

Next SERC Meetings – Wednesday, December 6th, 2023, VIRTUAL ONLY

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Adjournment

A motion to adjourn is made by Rick Nye seconded by Erin Casey, and passes unanimously:

John Hayes	Yes
Chris Cantone	Absent
Rick Nye	Yes
Erin Casey	Yes
William Winn	Yes
Elvis Alvarez	Absent

The meeting ends at 7:52 PM