

Sustainability Energy and Resiliency Committee (SERC)

Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2022, 6:30 P.M.

Remote Participation

Attendance

Chair John Hayes

Vice Chair Gail Kubik

Chris Cantone

Doug Bowker

Rick Nye

City Staff:

Jenna Ide, Director, Sustainability and Resiliency Department & Capital Projects

Esmeralda Bisono, Manager, Sustainability and Resiliency Department

Vanessa Pineda, Energy Manager

Stacy Kilb, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator (recorder)

Chris Malstrom, Lead Outreach Coordinator

Public:

SATV (recording)

Stephanie Ericson

Robert Rogers

Erin Casey

John DiModica

Not Present

Phil Koch

Jeff Cohen, City Council liaison

Introduction

Robert Rogers, resident. Concerned about sustainability and environment, wants to get involved at the local level.

Public Comment

None

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes – December 15, 2021 and February 23, 2022

- Rick Nye notes that February minutes should say at the top that there was no quorum



A motion to approve both sets of minutes, pending edits to be sent to Stacy by Monday the 28th close of business, is made by Gail Kubik, seconded by Rick Nye and passes 5-0.

- Jenna Ide suggests that when items related to the Green Building Ordinance come up and SERC will play a role, members should review minutes before the meeting so that they can be discussed in depth during the meeting so that edits can be agreed to by all Board members.
- Board members will be sure to come to future meetings with comments on the minutes.

Guest Speaker: Breathe Clean North Shore – Peabody Peaker Plant (Mireille Bejjani, Energy Justice Director, Community Action Works)

- 60-megawatt natural gas and oil peaking power plant
- Funding and permits obtained
- Expands natural gas infrastructure
- Located within one Environmental Justice (EJ) community and less than a mile from 8 others
- Impact has not been evaluated
- Site locus
- EJ communities outlined
- 14 municipal utilities signed 30-year contracts, but some have withdrawn b/c it would be cheaper to withdraw from contract and buy energy on the open market
 - Chicopee and Holyoke are out
 - Wakefield, South Hadley, and Hull are reconsidering
 - Many communities purchasing power are not close to the source of their power in this case
- Made some adjustments to project: no oil tank, replace ammonia with urea
- Agreed to retire one Peaker in Peabody but no plans for this were shared
- Proposed to integrate hydrogen fuel but uncertain if this is a feasible alternative
- MMWEC moving forward
- BCNS wants:
 - Re open the Mass Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process and conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as this has not been done; the 2015 threshold was higher (see <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/301-CMR-1100-mepa-regulations#11-03-review-thresholds>)

“Energy.

1. ENF and Mandatory EIR.
 - a. Construction of a New electric generating facility with a Capacity of 100 or more MW.
 - b. Expansion of an existing electric generating facility by 100 or more MW.
 - c. Construction of a New fuel pipeline ten or more miles in length.
 - d. Construction of electric transmission lines with a Capacity of 230 or more kv, provided the transmission lines are five or more miles in length along New, unused or abandoned right of way.
2. ENF and Other MEPA Review if the Secretary So Requires.
 - a. Construction of a New electric generating facility with a Capacity of 25 or more MW.



- b. Expansion of an existing electric generating facility by 25 or more MW.
- c. Construction of a New fuel pipeline five or more miles in length.
- d. Construction of electric transmission lines with a Capacity of 69 or more kv, provided the transmission lines are one or more miles in length along New, unused or abandoned right of way.”
 - Conduct a CHIA (Community Health Impact Assessment)
- Recent actions are outlined: Day of Action, petition, Board of Health appeals to Baker Administration
 - A group of 6 affiliated w/350 Massachusetts went on a hunger strike
 - “Fix the Grid” rally on the Boston Common. Delays of wind and solar entering market until 2028. Also went to some locations that would buy power from this plant
- John Hayes comments: Original ENF in 2015? It was 2017, then got an air permit in Sept. 2020. SERC signed the petition after the Committee voted on it; activism pushing Gov. Baker re battery storage? Yes, battery storage is a viable alternative and should be considered
- [Stratagen Consulting Report: Energy Storage Alternatives for Project 2015A](#)
- John notes that we are discussing this in a Salem board even though it’s in Peabody b/c it affects all of us. Peaker plants running coincide with the worst air quality days of the summer, if they are natural gas
- If in winter a Peaker plant is needed, it would have to run on oil b/c gas might not be available due to higher demand for home heating
- Jenna Ide: They usually have to do an analysis of where air pollution goes; can we see this as it may affect Salem on certain days? A visual would be helpful but is not currently available; all data is in table form
 - Don’t need Peaker plants if energy is managed correctly through demand response, which saves customers money and costs nothing
 - Not sure if Peaker will be water-cooled or air-cooled. If the former, they would need a water permit which could be difficult to get as it is on the river directly upstream from Salem and Beverly. Thermal pollution of a water body could be an issue
- Gail Kubik: 51,000 tons of CO2 annually would be emitted and there is no offset plan, though MMWEC claims less will be emitted. May be called to run more than older Peakers, so it is permitted up to 51,000 tons and could reach that. Gail is surprised that a plan for offsets is not mandated
- Timing of project permitting is described
- Chris Cantone: Agrees that battery storage is cost competitive to a point but asks why Peabody has decided they need to increase the size of the plant they are replacing? The existing plant is a 20-25 megawatt. Do they anticipate a larger gap in what they are regulated to cover? Demand response/programmatic solutions should be lowering that gap
 - Mireille Bejjani: Outwardly this was not billed as a replacement, it started as an addition and three Peaker plants would exist in Peabody, two owned by PMLP and this by MMWEC, only as a result of organizing did they decide to retire an existing plant. Was that the plan or only after



- they were pushed? They have not moved to retire the smaller plant that belongs to PMLP, 30% of that power goes to Peabody, the rest to other MMWEC communities. The math does not quite add up
 - Not just about Peabody, more about MMWEC, which covers many municipalities and has a large area where they could promote demand response
 - Mireille also notes there are additional opportunities for battery storage. They do not need to put 60 megawatts of battery power in Peabody, can put it in another town of MMWEC
- Mireille to send article and actions individuals can take on this issue
 - <https://www.cleangroup.org/ceg-resources/resource/energy-storage-alternatives-peabody-ma/>
 - https://www.massclimateaction.org/clean_the_peak
- Lori Ehrlich and Paul Tucker have decided not to run again, new candidates should be informed of this. Manny Cruz is running to replace Paul Tucker

City Updates

Report from Ordinance, Licenses & Legal Affairs (OLLA) Committee 1/6/22 (Jenna Ide)

- Municipal Green Building Ordinance passed, is now law
- Applies to Municipal Buildings, Operations and Transportation owned by the City
- 12.251 Green Municipal Buildings
 - Net zero energy. Projects over a certain size must meet Passive House or LEED gold standards. Or can propose another rating system to be presented to SERC
 - Smaller projects must also include sustainable elements
 - Design teams must be qualified
 - Green infrastructure and permeable materials required
 - Maintenance and training
- 12.252 Green Municipal Operations
 - Environmentally Preferable Purchasing program to be developed and submitted to SERC for comment
 - Waste reduction
- 12.253 Green Municipal Transportation
 - EPPP: shift fleet to hybrid or electric
 - EVCS (charging stations)
 - Bicycle parking
- 12.254 Approvals and Waivers
 - Waiver process is described; must come to SERC for input/recommendations. Will help us understand what is hard to do and help revise GBO moving forward
- John Hayes: 3 areas where SERC input is required. This meets the goal to play an advisory role
- SERC may need to form a subcommittee for review. Gail Kubik agrees, must do like Conservation Commission– materials provided a week in advance, members



review prior to the full meeting. Will need to devise a system. Jenna agrees. An agenda item should be added for April to discuss rules about submission and Applicant timing for participation in SERC/being on the Agenda/SERC returning comments to Applicant

- Can we ask an Applicant to present to SERC? Yes. Gail approves of Applicants appearing before SERC so they can get real time answers. Doug Bowker also concurs.
 - Chris Cantone asks if SERC is allowed to meet outside of the standard meeting to discuss projects. You can meet but not have a quorum (up to 3 members can meet). John Hayes explains that a subcommittee of 3 members could be formed for this purpose. Chris suggests they could meet 1 hour before the SERC meeting
 - Doug Bowker notes the subcommittee members could rotate
 - Developers will need to figure out how to submit plans. Must also submit to Sustainability Dept. for review
 - City Council joint meetings are outlined. Planning Board wanted clarity around “EV-ready” in one Ordinance; subcommittee will need to work through
 - Questions around cost must be addressed

Update: “Resilient Together: The Point” (Esmeralda Bisono/Chris Malstrom)

- Point Project is described
 - Modeling done, entering solutions phase and getting community input
 - Next community forum end of April, date TBD
 - Working with NSCDC, Latino Leadership, Shetland Park, Palmer Cove (Phase 2 of design)
- Outreach
 - Full recording of first community forum is on website and broken down by topic
 - Outreach: hourlong survey/\$50 gift card and an in-person event to gather resident input (discussion and walk-through Point neighborhood)
 - Engagement Partners: Salem Pantry, NorthShore CDC
 - Majority of residents in Point are renters; lots of affordable housing. NSCDC owns hundreds of units in the Point
 - How to communicate to property owners that green can save them money over the long run
 - How to engage owners who can help renters with flooding issue

Update: Building Electrification Alliance (BEA) (Esmeralda Bisono)

Not provided at this time.

City Council Liaison Report (Jeff Cohen not present – presented by John Hayes)

John Hayes reads Jeff’s report. He is grateful for having the opportunity to work with SERC



- GBO: best ordinance statewide for municipal properties, SERC is part of the process
- Working on a version for private properties that will address needs
- Other Ordinances:
 - Councilor Varela: Polystyrene ban in process
 - Urban Agriculture Ordinance had favorable endorsement from BOH & Building and positive public hearings
 - Revised/improved Wetlands Ordinance is on track for quick passage. Gail represented SERC
 - Ground Mounted Solar Ordinance: Joint meeting was held, thinks it will move forward but language for bicycle and EV charging must be expanded
 - DOER Straw Proposal re stretch code: Many environmentalists believe it is not strong enough and does not adhere to what was mandated by State Climate Roadmap Bill. Letter was signed by Chair, Mayor and 8 Councilors
- This Council can act more than any before to address climate issues

New Business

- Discussion and vote on remote meeting through July 15, 2022

Board name: **Sustainability, Energy and Resiliency Committee (SERC)**

Number of board members, as well as any clerks, staff, alternates, etc. (please include any vacancies on your board; we are looking for the total number of potential persons who could attend, not including the public): **13, including Board Members, City Council Liaison, Sustainability Dept. Staff, and SATV recorder**

The recurring day and time of your board's meeting (i.e. 2nd Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m.): **4th Wednesdays 6:30-8:00PM**

Please indicate the date when your board will resume in-person meetings (this should be the first date on which your board will meet in-person): **July 27, 2022**

Bold and underline your board's first choice for a meeting location when in-person meetings resume:

- Annex, 1st floor large
- Annex, 1st floor medium**
- CLC, great room
- CLC, board room

Bold and underline your board's second/back-up choice for a meeting location when in-person meetings resume: **Board did not want a 2nd choice . They strongly feel that the medium room is the best place to meet for SERC.**

- Annex, 1st floor large
- Annex, 1st floor medium
- CLC, great room
- CLC, board room

- Do we HAVE to go back in person? Hybrid? Hybrid can be complicated but access is expanded when others can attend virtually. Board members agree that meetings should be remote up through June, then hybrid starting with the July meeting



- Stacy to send Doug Bowker an invite to zoom room trainings
- Remote April, May, June. Hybrid in July moving forward
- Jenna describes the rooms. Medium conference can do 20, large 50 in Annex. Great room in CLC can do 100 but is very open. Board room is max of 10-15 in CLC
- Not supposed to meet on 3rd floor of Annex b/c they have to open staff areas to public
- SERC will meet in medium room 1st floor Annex

A motion to meet remotely in April, May and June with a hybrid format starting in July if possible, is made by Rick Nye, seconded by Doug Bowker, and passes 5-0.

City Departments to Invite

- Gail's idea was to have SERC meet w/individual City depts, one per month, that would present to us how they are currently incorporating sustainability/resiliency measures into their Dept.
- Would allow SERC and the public to ask questions and SERC to notice trends (I.e. opportunities for Dept. Collaboration, SERC can compile a list of recommendations)
- Would increase access to community and City's social resilience
- Is this a good idea?
- Rick Nye notes we should narrow the scope of discussions to avoid long conversations about nonrelated activities
- SERC now has more clout; this is the right time to get to know other City aspects and let them know who we are
- To be vetted for next month, Stacy to reach out, start in May
- List of potential Departments sent to Gail & John
- John: Day 28 of Putin's war, our heart goes out to those in the Ukraine.
- School Facilities Master Plan: Still gathering information. Schools have more capacity than students and there is no projected growth, buildings are highest investment in City have the highest impact on sustainability, resiliency, and transportation. For more information, or to participate in public forums and surveys:
 - <https://www.salemma.gov/home/news/school-facilities-master-plan-survey>
 - <https://www.cannondesign.com/salem-public-schools-facility-master-plan/>

Goal Setting

Postponed to April meeting

- **Upcoming City Committee Meetings**
 - **Recycling Committee:** First Tuesday of the month, 4/5/22, 6:30-7:30PM
 - **Tree Commission:** Third Monday of the month, 4/18/22, 6:00PM
 - **Conservation Commission:** Third Tuesday of the month, 4/19/22, 6:30PM
- **Next SERC Meeting** - Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 6:30PM on zoom
- **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn is made by Rick Nye, seconded by Chris Cantone, and passes 5-0.



The meeting ends at 8:06PM



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