

Sustainability Energy and Resiliency Committee (SERC)
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
Remote Participation

Board Members Present

Chair John Hayes (First 45 minutes)
Rick Nye (Acting Chair)
Doug Bowker
Chris Cantone
Elvis Alvarez
Phil Koch

City Staff Present:

Stacy Kilb, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator (recorder)
Sal Faustino, Ambassador

Board Members Absent

Vice Chair Gail Kubik
Jeff Cohen, City Council Liaison

Public:

SATV (recording)
Erin Casey
John DiModica

Introduction

Public Comment

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2022 and April 27, 2022

A motion to accept both sets of minutes, pending suggested edits to the April minutes, to be submitted to Stacy by Friday, 5/27, is made by Chris Cantone, seconded by Doug Bowker, and passes unanimously.

- For future meetings, Board members should review the minutes and submit any edits to Stacy prior to voting on them, so they can be immediately posted to the website once approved



- John Hayes notes that once John Bolduc’s presentation on the City of Cambridge, from the April meeting, is made available, SERC members should watch it if they did not attend.
- MVP Assessment and Resilient Together Climate Action Plan must serve as background knowledge for all SERC members
- **City Council Liaison Report (Stacy Kilb on behalf of Jeff Cohen)**
 - Committee on PHS&E continuing to work on the Styrofoam ordinance tonight (Andy Varela to provide an update later in the meeting)
 - Passed a Solar Ordinance this month. Mostly aimed at establishing rules for ground mount solar. Took out the EV charging station and bicycle components.
 - Link to Solar Ordinance:
 - Jeff has developed a 1st draft of a green building ordinance for non-municipal properties, which will include language for EV charging stations and bicycles. Next steps will be to have a couple of meetings with working groups for each component to refine the language and then work with City staff on the final language before submitting to Council. The public hearings will be City Council meetings. Draft language not ready to be shared at this point.
- **City Updates**
 - **Outreach Events (Stacy Kilb)**
 - 4/28: SSU presentation to Prof. Stephen Silvern’s Environment Sustainability and Society Class
 - 3/3-3/5: Beverly Salem Energy Challenge: Small Business & Restaurant Canvassing
 - 5/7: Book Swap
 - 5/10: Salem Common Neighborhood Association Presentation: Yes, You CAN Decarbonize a Historic Home
 - 5/17: North Street North Fields Neighborhood Association Presentation: It’s a Beautiful (Sustainable & Resilient) Day In Your Neighborhood
 - Salem Power Choice Training for Sustainability Department – available for SERC members as well
 - ~~Update: Zoning Ordinance Changes Relative to Salem Sustainability (Jenna Ide)~~
- **Guest Speaker: Urban Agriculture Ordinance (passed) and Ordinance relative to Sustainable Food Ware and Packaging (in Committee): Andrew Varela, Ward 7 City Councilor**
 - *This item is heard last.*
 - **Ordinance relative to Sustainable Food Ware and Packaging (in Committee)**
 - PHS&E sent to full council for first passage with a positive recommendation



- Whittled down to be very simple: eliminate expanded Styrofoam/polystyrene
 - Originally added compostable cutlery and to-go ware requirement, but there was contention/disruption to supply chain
 - 6-year conversation, a win for eliminating Styrofoam. We are the 48th or 49th community in Mass to adopt one of these
 - How can SERC help? This will help eliminate Styrofoam from our waste stream. Polypropylene is recyclable *except for black clamshell containers*
 - Businesses have one year from first passage to implement
 - Wants to provide a comprehensive education piece for food service establishments, would like to bring in finalized document for SERC recommendations
 - Costs will go up b/c Styrofoam is the cheapest packaging you can buy as a food establishment
 - He was confident that we can work through this with our restaurants
 - This bans grocery stores from selling Styrofoam cups, plates, and single use coolers. See a lot of that on the beach
 - A small step toward resiliency, was more comprehensive but can't get everything you ask for. In 8-9 months, will continue to make amendments and proposal to eliminate nonrecyclables from the waste stream. Black Polypropylene is not recyclable b/c of pigment
 - Phil offers help w/writing/marketing materials
 - Sal asks if anyone is doing a version in Spanish for the Point/translated versions for restaurants in the point that use styrofoam
 - Goal is educational component which will be in Spanish, establishments can decide what is usable vs. not, will discuss w/Solicitor to put it in Spanish
 - Other communities have adopted this – close to us, Gloucester, Marblehead, Revere, Lincoln. <http://www.massgreen.org/polystyrene-legislation.html>
 - In discussion with Beverly and Lynn. This is a regional issue, not just a City issue
 - Phil Koch mentions bottle deposits in certain states
 - Doug Bowker: Plastic is used briefly, lasts forever, and we can't recycle it
 - Electronics and appliance manufacturers are starting to package items in paper pulp, which is 100% recyclable, rather than expanded polystyrene.
 - Andy Varela: This is only related to single use from restaurants. Exempt: outside manufacturing coming in. Phil Koch notes it is a first step in the right direction
- **Urban Agriculture Ordinance**
 - Passed 2 weeks ago, 2 years in the making, complex ordinance allowing:



- Residents to do agriculture as an accessory use
- Produce, chickens/eggs/honey may be produced and sold via “pop up farm stand” in front of their home
- Some currently do this but there are no protections. Cites 2017 “Chickengate”/Michele Conway issue. Misunderstanding of someone having poultry for eggs. Some don’t understand it, so legislation to protect residents was necessary
- Notes it is an issue of food security, builds community and also resilience among residents
- There are rules: Soil testing is mandatory, especially for heavy metals, but fees are reasonable, if you want to sell produce
- Sal Faustino notes a personal goal is chickens. How does this affect residents who receive SNAP benefits in public housing? Entities like the food pantry, Mack Park food farm- grows produce, gives away at a Saturday market, also primarily goes to food pantry. Why can't residents do that as well? Provides access to high quality produce to everyone. Opens door for public housing residents to be able to grow on Housing Authority land. Opens door to those conversation
- Biggest issue is land access. MA Food Policy Council Advisory Committee. Lots of state land is under-utilized and clean and could be used for produce or pasture. Residents of public housing can use their voices to advocate for growing not just having a landscaper cut the grass.
- Sal Faustino: most common thing heard from Dominicans, PRs, etc, “We’d love to teach our children about agriculture”
- Wednesdays at Salem State on Loring is the main, largest Food Pantry site, always great attendance
- Sal Faustino: If people have extra soil, could they donate to food pantry for residents to use? Can discuss with Kerry Murphy in Health Department
- Andy Varela is here not just to vote but to promote ordinances
- Lots of communities are beginning to discuss banning single use water bottles, however they eliminate a healthy drink while allowing sugary drinks in plastic bottles. Would love to have a discussion w/SERC. Arlington and Lincoln passed this but are different than Salem. Would negatively impact underserved communities if done here

- **New Business**



- **Discuss return to in person/hybrid meetings in July**
 - A quorum of 4 members must be physically present
 - Do the votes of remote members still count?
 - How to decide who will be remote vs. in person at these meetings?
 - It is unclear why a quorum must be in person or if the votes of those joining remotely will be counted. Stacy to follow up and clarify
- **Discuss possible in-person event in August at Forest River**
 - Jenna to reserve space for SERC? Gathering would be in lieu of a formal meeting
 - *A motion to cancel the formal August meeting and hold an outdoor shindig open to the public at Forest River is made by Doug Bowker, seconded by Chris, and passes unanimously.*
- **Attendance tracking/upcoming term expiration dates**
 - If any members are feeling burdened by SERC meetings, they can step down if desired
 - We do have people who want to serve on the Board – and we are interviewing them so they're ready
 - Typically at the end of a term, Dominick Pangallo, Chief of Staff, automatically renews all Board memberships so he doesn't have to chase down members and confirm they want to continue before doing so, possibly leading to a gap. From here on in, we will check in with members a couple of months before their terms expire to make sure they do indeed want to continue on the Board
 - The importance of regular attendance is outlined
- **Upcoming City Committee Meetings**
 - **Recycling Committee:** First Tuesday of the month, 6/7/22, 6:30-7:30PM
 - **Tree Commission:** Third Monday of the month, 6/20/22, 6:00PM
 - Doug Bowker met w/tree commission today, discussed removal of some neighborhood trees that have damaged the sidewalk, other options were explored. They said, "What's SERC?" This committee needs to promote itself more
 - John appeared in person before City Council in support of tree ordinance, as resident, professor at SSU, and member of RETF and SERC. Good for us to hear this news to make sure we can get the word out
 - **Conservation Commission:** Third Tuesday of the month, 6/21/22, 6:30PM
- **Upcoming Events**
 - June 8th 5-7PM Root Meet & Eat, Culture House, Old Town Hall
 - Our Department, other City Departments and organizations related to food security/sustainability will have a table there
 - Join us for a FREE meal provided by young adults at ROOT



- **Next SERC Meeting** - Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at 6:30PM on zoom
 - *Reminder: Starting in **July**, SERC will hold hybrid meetings in the Medium Conference Room on the 1st Floor of City Hall Annex, 98 Washington St.*
- **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn is made by Chris Cantone, seconded by Phil Koch, and passes unanimously.

Chris Cantone notes that he will not be able to attend the June meeting.

The meeting ends at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy Kilb, Clerk
Sustainability Engagement Coordinator
Sustainability and Resiliency Department
Salem, MA

