



**Sustainability, Energy
& Resiliency Committee**
City of Salem, MA

The Salem Sustainability, Energy, and Resiliency Committee held a public meeting on
Wednesday, September 22 2021 at 6:30 PM via remote participation.

In Attendance

Board Members:

Chair John Hayes
Vice Chair Jeff Cohen
Doug Bowker
Chris Cantone
Gail Kubik
Meg Riccardi, City Council liaison

Not in Attendance:

Phil Koch
Rick Nye

City Staff:

Jenna Ide, Director, Sustainability and Resiliency Department & Capital Projects
Cassie Moskos, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development Department
Stacy Kilb, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator, Sustainability and Resiliency Department
(Recorder)
Esmeralda Bisono, Manager, Sustainability and Resiliency Department

Public:

Tyler, SATV (recording)

Screen Names:

Richard Stafford
Stan Franzeen, SAFE
Charles Hildebrand
D4-Michael Cusick (W4 Chair)

Introductions

Public Comment (limited to one minute per person, anything under SERC jurisdiction but not related to other Agenda items)

John Hayes notes Boston Globe Sept. 20 Article on the State Commission on Clean Heat. This is on the SERC Facebook page.



Review & Approve Meeting Minutes – August 25, 2021

A motion to approve the minutes, after the incorporation of edits to be submitted to Stacy Kilb no later than 11:00 AM Monday, September 27, and pending public comments, is made by Jeff Cohen, seconded by Doug Bowker, and passes 4–0.

John Hayes Yes
Jeff Cohen Yes
Gail Kubik Yes
Chris Cantone Yes
Doug Bowker Yes

Guest Speaker: Chris Burke: “Why native biodiversity is critical to sustainability and resiliency”

- Salem colonists recorded what was growing here in Salem. We have a rich history of botany.
- Biodiversity authors now document how many species have been and are being lost, and what we can do to sustain biodiversity.
- Native oaks support 300+ species of native caterpillars; ginkgoes support none.
- We need diversity of species, but they are getting wiped out due to habitat loss
- This can be mitigated by planting native plants.
- From tree committee to landscaping, planting natives helps.
- Notes all of Bertram Field new plantings are native, but this is not the case elsewhere in Salem.
- Cites need for a Tree & Trail Committee or not for profit to protect trees; work has been done. Notes last month’s solar field that cannot happen due to conservation restriction on 40 acres at golf range. But it also protected the perimeter of Lynn Sand & Stone. No permanent or temporary structures may be built on parcels at the edges of their properties.
- 80 acres of land are under the conservation restriction; this was unknown to the City
- Land must be protected even if it can’t be built upon. Golf course – some did not want it to be built. We need City involvement in wooded areas to manage them.
- Native plants are being lost to invasive species. City intervention is required.
- Trails and bridges must be built and maintained; there has to be control of trees being cut and user-created bike and hiking paths.
- Knowledge needs to be put into action in projects. Purpose of cutting down on GHG etc. is to sustain us and our native environment.
- We can do it directly.
- Notes upcoming projects.

Gail Kubik:

- Spoken to tree warden re only planting native species in free tree program? Yes, he is aware of the issue.
 - He is not pleased with how the Tree Committee is planting.



- Of 190 trees the first year, only 30 were cultivars of natives.
- Ex. Not just a red maple, but a cultivar. All others were nonnative.
- The tree list includes 25 nonnative trees that can be planted.
- Gail asked because one of her neighbors got ginkgos, so coordination could happen at that level.

Chris Burke notes there is a place for nonnatives e.g. PEM walkway or cemetery, showcasing specific plants, or in an arboretum.

Doug Bowker finds this fascinating and enlightening, and agrees that the tree program should be coordinated in an environmentally sustainable and native-friendly way.

Chris Burke notes that street trees must be tough. Native sycamores are susceptible to a certain disease. London plane trees, a hybrid, are much more durable. Arborists want trees that won't have their leaves eaten. Can be tough to find a balance.

Gives a shout out to Rich Stafford to remind the City of their control over pristine woods in Salem.

John Hayes notes that all large trees on the former KinderCare property at 602 Loring Ave. were cut down after the sale of the property.

Rich Stafford gives Chris Burke credit for preserving Salem's wilderness areas.

Re Solar proposal for Swampscott Rd.:

- No one wants to be against solar, but it seems counter intuitive to take down trees to save energy.
- Many suggested where solar could be placed; timing was excellent as City is getting federal stimulus money.
- Would like to see it go to solar panel arrays on garages, municipal buildings and schools that do not yet have them.
- Would be an investment today that would provide a 4–10-year payback.

Jenna Ide

- Must confirm what funding can be used for; has not heard it can be used for Solar but we don't have all details yet.
- Proposals for solar on a couple schools are in the works.
- Hiring an Energy manager, who will look at this.
- Garages are tough b/c panel life is 25-30 years, there are structural issues (if you add solar) and we may not want to keep the garages that long.
- High school would incorporate solar into its large reonvation if approved.
- Also looked at off of Old Rd., where hospital has leased a parking lot that is city owned, could be a solar canopy project but would need to work w/hospital. Favorable site, close to power lines.
- Rich notes infrastructure is an appropriate category and solar would qualify.



- Jeff Cohen: Feasibility studies of City properties done, many innovative things but state incentives are not great for larger projects.

Presentation and Committee Discussion on Green Building Ordinance (Jenna Ide) and Solar Ordinance (Cassie Moskos)

Jeff Cohen identified red flags, met with Jenna, grateful to Cassie for her work.

Cassie Moskos/Solar Ordinance:

- Solar Ordinance is targeted at large, ground mounted solar arrays, to give City a review process to ensure it will be in line with all other requirements/elements of review for trees, stormwater, buffers, lot coverage, etc.
- Solar is an exempted use by the State so developers can just come in and do it with no City input.
- Being internally reviewed.
- Will be working w/fire district, which has very strict policies, which has limited amount of solar on buildings.
- Array sizes:
 - Large = Over 40,000 square feet (State definition)
 - Medium = 1,750-40,000 square feet
 - Small = Under 1,750 square feet
- Jeff Cohen notes residential portions were very restrictive; approves that Planning will review the fire regulations, which are overly restrictive.
- Jenna Ide notes discussion was helpful and they can also meet w/Cassie Moskos. Some fire requirements were incorporated, some cut out; may need to stand on its own.
 - The ordinance allows that if the building is already non-conforming, they can still put solar on and not affect nonconforming use. Must be word smithed to make this clear.
 - Fire ordinance and best practices must be revised too.
- Jeff Cohen:
 - The current City fire regulations make most residential installations non-viable as can't install enough for a reasonable ROI. These can be adjusted to ensure safety, but also allow for larger arrays. For example, the regulations don't pertain to slate roofs, which would have the same issues. The upcoming solar ordinance should encourage, not discourage solar.
- Current fire codes are discussed

Jenna Ide/Green Building Ordinance

- Will be divided into 3 different parts of the laws/regulations
- Objectives
 - Update City ordinances and zoning for green buildings.
 - Net Zero energy stretch code plan requirement added. Don't want to contradict state requirements.



- How can the GBO focus continue in the future?
- Process is outlined.
- Resilient Together Action Items.
- Process Map:
 - Short-term goals: Get this to City Council and pass ASAP. GG requirement for City-owned buildings is a standalone Ordinance.
 - Amend zoning code and Site Plan Review.
 - Medium-term: Adopt net-zero code for Salem. State will develop code, Cities must opt in, we must adopt it to require it.
 - Long term: Convene stakeholders, get input, draft guidelines for developers.
- Ordinances
 - Greening Municipal Building Operations and Transportation new part in code of Ordinances.
 - Net zero plan requirement for Site Plan Review
 - Bike parking and EVCS added to Zoning Ordinance
- Other government entities and organizations/companies have GBO's or similar
- Sustainable/Green ratings systems.
- Beyond buildings: municipal operations and transportation
 - Greening Municipal Buildings
 - Green Certification
 - Design Teams
 - Green infrastructure and permeable materials
 - Greening municipal operations and transportation
 - Capital projects checklist over \$25K
 - EPP purchases
 - Waste Reduction
 - Clean transport alternatives
 - EVCS
 - Bicycle Parking
 - Can add to this if desired
 - Net Zero Energy Plan
 - We know the state is proceeding this way.
 - Developers may not be ready but will be required to commit for SPR how they will get to zero net energy. Must discuss this at Planning Board.
 - Site Plan Narrative
 - SPR Distribution
 - SP Application Review Criteria
 - GHG emissions criteria
 - Special Districts
 - Bicycle parking and EVCS
 - R3 and above will be required to offer bicycle parking
 - Commercial/industrial also
 - All new dev over 5,000 sf will have EVCS and must be future ready to add more



- Jeff Cohen: This is not for existing, only new developments? Yes, new projects only. Major renovations requiring zoning or SPR would also need to do this. If existing, it will not trigger it. JC asks if multifamily homes being converted to condos would trigger. Not sure, Jenna will check if change in use triggers.
 - Chris Cantone wonders why multi-family is included as they may not own EVs. This is so the infrastructure is there, in 2030 we are heading towards all EVs. Chris Cantone says we assumed they could afford solar, they may not be able to as a 5,000 square-foot home will have 3-4 families renting.
 - Doug Bowker notes that he lives in an 1885 2-family converted to condos in 2000, it is 5000 sf at least, it would make sense to require EVCS in some cases. Maybe not just square footage, but a valuation threshold?
 - Jenna Ide: Options here can be explored to make this requirement more feasible.
- Ordinance is being amended so it is clear how the existing is changing (see document w/changes) p. 70 and on.
- Jeff Cohen: Passive house in municipal, notes CDC projects, possible to include that as an option?
- Process moving forward
- Nothing to do w/existing and residential.
- JC discusses ROI or lack thereof on smaller multifamily, also notes we should incorporate green, solar, or other roofs to ensure roof is as green as possible. JI recognizes this, net zero plan will probably include solar but wants to open to putting this in. Phrasing will be discussed.
- Having clear expectations by the municipality will be beneficial.
- This is a pathway to net zero energy, we can add more.
- Dave Kucharsky (Traffic & Parking) wanted to make sure bus amenities and connections are there.
- MAPC training program for staff and developers is being created.
- JC: Purchasing aspect is huge.

Review of Sept. 7th Public Forum: Wetlands Protection Policy Synthesis of Input; Next steps (Gail Kubik)

- Public survey, hot topics.
- Other areas, what we can do in them. We can effect change in our wetlands ordinance for our resources and how they can be resilient to climate threats and impacts. Many residents say, “My house floods, help me,” but we are not zoning, areas under consideration are those that impact wetlands themselves.
- Upgrades to storm sewer infrastructure.
- Diversity for carbon sequestration.
- Vegetated biomass in replicated areas.
- Remaining Concerns/New Protection Guidelines.
- JC: Identification of vernal pools? The state keeps a list of identified vernal pools, when a site is purchased, due diligence is to delineate wetlands/find vernal pools.
- Adjust 100’ buffer zone.



- Add additional no-build buffer zone for vernal pools.
- Add “Previously disturbed” definition.
- Add IVW criteria (Isolated Vegetated Wetland).
- Next Steps/will be a 4th public forum after draft released, this will incorporate public feedback. Will be presented to Conservation Commission for adoption. Final draft to City Council for adoption, fall 2021.
- JI: people used to devalue wetlands. A Working group compared draft to Boston and Arlington. While Salem is not comparable, it is important to think in terms of what those Cities have adopted as they are at the forefront of regulation for climate adaptation.
 - We want to make sure that the public thinks it’s important, we want to review good resources.
- JC: First forum created definitions where people were previously confusing wetlands and floodplains.
- Changes brought up tonight will be presented to the working group.

SERC attendance at Recycling Committee Meetings

We asked a representative from the Recycling Committee to come here, but she said no one from SERC goes to their meetings.

SERC and recycling committee should swap agendas to facilitate; Stacy to reach out to Micaela.

New Business

October speaker invitation

Upcoming Events

Recycling Committee (First Tuesday of the month, 10/5/21)

Conservation Commission (Third Tuesday of the month, 10/18/21)

Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 27, 2021, from 6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn is made by Jeff Cohen, seconded by Doug Bowker, and passes 5–0.

John Hayes Yes

Jeff Cohen Yes

Gail Kubik Yes

Chris Cantone Yes

Doug Bowder Yes

The meeting ends at 8:20PM.

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@saalem.com or 978-619-5699 for more information.

