

Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 17, 2020

Attending from the council:

Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media, LLC
Charity Fain, Community Energy Project
Kheoshi Owens, Empress Rules
Cheryl Roberts, African American Alliance for Homeownership
Susan Badger-Jones, special projects consultant
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE
Vero Silva, Rogue Climate
Shane Davis, City of Portland

Attending from Energy Trust:

Michael Colgrove	Juliana Hairston
Amanda Potter	Chris Holloway
Steve Lacey	Gina Saraswati
Steve Clark	Kelly Ellmer
Debbie Menashe	Abby Spegman
Tyrone Henry	Diamante Jamison
Shelly Carlton	Alina Lambert
Kate Wellington	Eric Braddock
Hannah Cruz	Ashley Bartels
Sue Fletcher	Ryan Crews
Julianne Thacher	Cheryle Easton
Quinn Cherf	Caryn Appler
Amanda Sales	Kenji Spielman
MacKenzie Kurtzner	Thad Roth
Wendy Bredemeyer	Jeni Hall
Mayra Aparicio	Kyle Petrocine
Tyrone Henry	Mark Wyman
Lenora Deslandes	Adam Bartini
Matt Getchell	Kati Harper
Dan Rubado	Alma Pinto
Scott Leonard	Allison Burns
Alex Novie	Kirsten Svaren
Samuel Birru	Karen Chase
Elizabeth Fox	Dave Moldal

Others attending:

Elee Jen, Energy Trust board	Tina Brooks, Pacific Power
Eric Hayes, Energy Trust board	Shelley Beaulieu, TRC
Mark Kendall, Energy Trust board	Beth Glynn, Cascade Energy
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission	James Donnelly, Elevate Energy
Tracie Tran, Cascade Energy	Heather Moline, NW Energy Coalition
	Whitney Miller, CLEAResult
	Angel Swanson, ICF

1. Welcome

Tyrone Henry, diversity, equity and inclusion lead, convened the meeting at 9:06 a.m. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Tyrone Henry read a quote from Maya Angelou: ““We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” Council members reflected on what she meant. Diversity, equity and inclusion work isn't about achieving goals but developing relationships with people who are different than you and being willing to put yourself on the line for others (Kheoshi Owens).

2. DEI Operations Plan Update

Topic summary

Debbie Menashe, director of legal and human resources, presented the final 2021 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operations Plan. Members saw a draft of the plan in July and their feedback was reflected in the final plan. Debbie Menashe reviewed the 10 goals for 2021 to improve customer and contractor participation and continue to make Energy Trust a more inclusive place. Tyrone Henry reviewed next steps for new Existing Buildings and lighting contracts that consider diversity, equity and inclusion, and reviewed progress on promoting contractor diversity.

Discussion

Council members asked about the use of the term minority in the operations plan and if that was needed. Minority is an outdated term that is not inclusive and increasingly being abandoned because of its connotations with white supremacy (Kheoshi Owens and Vero Silva). Tyrone Henry said the term is in keeping with Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) and government procurement terms. Members said the procurement process is unfair because it requires certification (Kheoshi Owens) and noted that ethnic groups have diversity within them but often get put into one box (Oswaldo Bernal).

Next steps

Tyrone Henry will invite council members to a meeting with COBID officials to discuss terms.

3. DEI Data Enhancement Project Update

Topic summary

Shelly Carlton, senior marketing manager, presented findings of Energy Trust's recent Customer Insights Study, explaining better data is needed to measure progress to goals. This was a large survey of residential and multifamily customers in Oregon to assess awareness, barriers and motivations for program participants. This year's survey oversampled to ensure enough people of color and people with low incomes were represented in the responses. The survey found aided awareness is low in those two groups. Use of contractors is fairly low but varies significantly by race and income. Customers are concerned about energy bills and comfort; willingness to pay more for environmentally-friendly products varies.

Discussion

Council members said they were not surprised by the findings. The fundamental issue with serving low-income communities is it's never going to be cost effective under the current system and how cost-effectiveness is calculated (Charity Fain). The cost-effectiveness requirement assumes customers have to pay into the system to access the incentive. Structural change at the OPUC or legislative level is needed (Charity Fain). Michael Colgrove, Energy Trust's executive director, noted staff can't advocate for such a change. Council members are not restricted, however, and there are nonprofits working on this issue (Charity Fain).

Eric Hayes, a board member attending the council meeting, agreed he was not surprised by the results. Low-income people have learned to do it themselves, he said, and the “green” product has to be the most affordable to appeal to them. In the Zoom chat, council members discussed how some people see energy efficiency as a luxury and are focused on more immediate concerns (Shane Davis). Low-income people do care about energy efficiency and are most impacted by climate change; what they lack is access, and that’s where programs designed to remove barriers is needed (Charity Fain).

Next steps

Shelly Carlton asked for a council member to read the draft report for readability and suggest improvements for the next survey.

4. Energy Trust Response to Wildfires

Topic summary

Sue Fletcher and Karen Chase, Energy Trust’s outreach staff members, gave an update on Energy Trust’s response to wildfires in Oregon that started over the summer. The fires and loss of homes and businesses were unimaginable; the displacement and loss are traumatizing and disproportionately affects vulnerable people. Customers, trade allies, community partners and even Energy Trust staff were directly affected. Household hazardous waste clean-up is largely done, but ash and debris clean-up could take up to 18 months. Most rebuilding will likely happen in 2022 and beyond.

While not an expert or leader on this topic, Energy Trust can be a resource in rebuilding and retrofitting homes and businesses. So far, impacted communities are focused on emergency response and housing, but some have reached out to Energy Trust, including about its manufactured home replacement pilot. Scott Leonard, who manages the residential new construction program, described Energy Trust’s immediate actions, including addressing marketing and customer service issues and forming an internal project team. Energy Trust is participating in local and state forums, conducting outreach to impacted communities and is one of several organizations helping to fund a housing recovery specialist position at the Housing Authority of Jackson County.

Mark Wyman, who manages residential pilots and new products, described potential offers and approaches, including replacing manufactured homes under the current pilot; modifying program designs to accommodate more owners/buildings and more construction; aligning baselines with state code for new construction rebuilding; supporting resiliency measures like solar and energy storage; targeting incentives; and supporting community-wide planning efforts. He called this a “wake-up call” to provide a custom approach to match the challenges people are facing and may again in the future.

Discussion

Council members noted that in Southern Oregon, many groups are working together to meet immediate needs and plan ahead. There is a perception that some people were scared off and don’t want to come back, but that’s not the case (Vero Silva). Tyrone Henry complimented Vero Silva for her commitment to her community through this time.

Next steps

None.

5. Industrial Sector RFP and RFQ

Topic summary

Amanda Potter and Adam Bartini from the industrial sector previewed a request for proposals (RFP) for the standard track and request for qualifications (RFQ) for technical review that will be

issued in 2021. They also gave background on how the Production Efficiency program is run, what sorts of customers it serves and what it offers.

The standard track delivers electric and gas prescriptive and calculated energy efficiency projects. Goals for the RFP include achieving cost-effective energy savings targets; broadening the Trade Ally Network; equitably serving customers across Energy Trust territory; and developing new efficiency measures. Bidders should have experience in industrial energy efficiency, implementation, trade ally management and measure development. Scoring will prioritize pricing and energy savings, followed by diversity, equity and inclusion qualifications, implementation strategy and contracting plan. These are similar criteria to what was used to score this year's Existing Buildings and business lighting RFP.

For the technical review RFQ, Energy Trust seeks an energy-efficiency engineering contractor to perform technical reviews of studies, incentive offers and project verifications. Technical reviews ensure program requirements are met and verifies energy savings. Bidders should have experience in industrial energy efficiency, project management and with some systems or technologies used.

Draft plans were presented, and details could change.

Discussion

Council members asked how less experienced firms gain experience to be considered for contracts (Kheoshi Owens) and whether such firms will decide to not apply when they see the requirements (Oswaldo Bernal). Tyrone Henry said Energy Trust encourages firms to do mentoring and teaming on bids.

Members asked what the qualifications are for community-based organizations (CBOs) to be involved in bids, suggesting the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund had a good criterion that could be an example for Energy Trust (Charity Fain). Amanda Potter said staff is open to feedback. Tyrone Henry suggested CBOs qualify for COBID status and encouraged council members to advocate for that.

Council members also asked about diversity in subcontracting, including whether disaggregated data on employee race could be required (Kheoshi Owens) and how to ensure subcontractors who help scoring get the proper share on contract spending (Charity Fain). Amanda Potter noted new contracts for Existing Buildings and business lighting require tracking of spending in this way.

Next steps

Staff will ask for a council member to be on the scoring committee for the standard track RFP.

6. Announcements

Michael Colgrove said staff is putting finishing touches on the 2021 budget and will send slides to council members for review soon. The budget has changed since the budget workshop in October based on public comment and feedback, including from council members.

Mark Kendall from Energy Trust's board gave an update on board's DEI Ad Hoc Committee, which was formed to better understand diversity, equity and inclusion and how to measure the organization's progress. The committee is changing its approach based on feedback, and council members were invited to join the committee.

Kheoshi Owens said she is working with Equitable Giving Circle to raise money for housing needs in BIPOC communities, with the goal of paying rent/mortgage costs for a year. She asked

for matching funds, noting that she is suffering, her community is suffering and everyone needs to step up. More information at www.equitablegivingcircle.org.

Tyrone Henry announced Energy Trust's next Diversity Thursday event on Dec. 3 will feature a panel discussion on the LGBTQ community, and invited council members to attend.

Chris Holloway from Energy Trust's program marketing team said Energy Trust is looking to expand its contract pool of writing professionals and hopes to diversify the pool with new voices and life experiences to help reach customers who haven't connected with Energy Trust in the past.

Charity Fain announced Community Energy Project is looking to hire a climate justice associate to work on policy issues and asked council members to spread the word.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.