

Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

September 14, 2021

Attending from the council:

Charity Fain, Community Energy Project
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE
Shane Davis, City of Portland
Cheryl Roberts, African American Alliance for Homeownership
Sherry Tran, Bend small business owner
Rebecca Descombes, Native American Youth and Family Center
Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University

Attending from Energy Trust:

Emily Findley	Cameron Starr
Elaine Dado	Jessica Kramer
Cheryle Easton	Melanie Bissonnette
Elizabeth Fox	Hannah Cruz
Michael Colgrove	Kenji Spielman
Marshall Johnson	Julianne Thacher
Emily Estrada	Mackenzie Kurtner
Eric Braddock	Andy Grighun
Debbie Menashe	Emma Clark
Abby Spegman	Shelly Carlton
Adam Bartini	Thad Roth
Amanda Sales	Steve Lacey
Amanda Potter	Kirstin Pinit
Amanda Thompson	Ashley Bartels
Alex Novie	Jay Ward
Tracy Scott	Amber Cole
Tyrone Henry	Sletsy Dlamini
Betsy Kauffman	Ian Pagatpatan
Greg Stokes	Sue Fletcher
Albert Stanfield	Amanda Zuniga
Mayra Aparicio	

Others attending:

Mark Kendall, Energy Trust board	Juan Carlos Blacker, Juan Carlos Blacker Consulting
Elee Jen, Energy Trust board	Jocelyn Brink, CLEARResult
Jessica Arnold, Cascade Energy	Renwick Paige, Energy Infrastructure Partners
Luis Morales, Energy 350	Martin Lott, Energy Infrastructure Partners
Chris Smith, Energy 350	Summer Fowler, Ecoreal Solutions
Kwasi Boateng, Burch Energy	Angela Smith, Minority Construction Group
Eric Jordan, Burch Energy	Tina Brooks, Pacificorp
David Burchfield, Burch Energy	Knowledge Murphy, Multnomah County
Alder Miller, CLEARResult	Aaron Frechette, Cascade Energy
Elena Clements, Skill Demand Energy	

Rob Morton, Cascade Energy
Jenny Sorich, CLEAResult
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility
Commission

Beth Glynn, Cascade Energy
Lindsey Dierksen, LD Consulting
Ross Finney, RHT

1. Welcome, Agenda Review and Group Reflection

Tyrone Henry, Energy Trust's diversity, equity and inclusion lead, convened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available at Energy Trust's website at <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Tyrone led the council in an activity that invited members to share historical inventions or discoveries that created a lasting impact early in their lives. Council members shared responses that included the moon landing, CD players, DVDs and laser discs, computer technology and digital cameras.

2. Legislation and Policy Update

Topic summary

Hannah Cruz, Energy Trust senior communications manager, presented an update on state legislative activity, anticipated impacts from bills recently passed into law and highlights from House Bill 3141, which modernized and extended the public purpose charge that underpins Energy Trust's funding. The previous mandate for Energy Trust to acquire cost-effective energy efficiency was removed from the public purpose charge and transitioned into Oregon Public Utility Commission's standard ratemaking process. The public purpose charge will continue to include funding for renewable energy programs and incentives, and now allows Energy Trust to invest in new technologies that support reliability, resilience and the incorporation of renewable energy into the grid. The bill also includes a new directive to invest 25% of renewable energy public purpose charge funds in projects and activities that benefit low- and moderate-income customers. Oregon Public Utility Commission will create an implementation timeline and roadmap for these changes and will be setting new equity metrics for the utility customer funds Energy Trust invests through a public process by the end of 2022. Staff reviewed other new clean energy legislation that may inform or impact Energy Trust's work including laws that allocate funds for residential home repairs and wildfire rebuilding.

Discussion

The council asked if HB 3141 will provide more or less funding for Energy Trust as a result of its increased flexibility. The bill is not expected to impact annual funding levels, and energy efficiency will still be funded based on the annual cost-effectiveness level identified by staff in coordination with each utility. Cost-effective energy efficiency funding has and will continue to fluctuate year to year. Renewable energy program funding through the public purpose charge is a set percentage annually and is not expected to differ significantly from current funding levels.

Next steps

Staff will continue providing updates to the council as new legislation is implemented, and to inform members of public engagement opportunities.

3. Preview of Draft 2022 Budget and Action plan

Topic summary

Staff presented a preview of Energy Trust's draft 2022 budget and two-year action plan. Staff reviewed the budget schedule and engagement opportunities, then Tyrone Henry shared

activity highlights from the DEI action plan. Other action plan highlights include trade ally network activities, staff recruitment and board membership, community-led approaches, and policy services.

Discussion

An attendee asked if the Diversity Day events included in the DEI action plan are open to non-staff (Renwick Paige). Staff responded they are open to others beyond staff. Council members asked for more detail about activities to increase hiring and retention of diverse staff, urging Energy Trust to be intentional about providing resources and support for new staff of color and to be proactive about checking in with them. This is especially important given the shift to remote work (Shane Davis). The council discussed how retention strategies connect to the larger idea of new Black staff who have moved to Oregon from other states. Council members identified opportunities to connect new staff to a community presence outside of work and organize affinity groups to help them acclimate to an overall environment with a significantly lower concentration of non-white peers than in their former communities (Terrance Harris).

Next steps

Council members are encouraged to participate in the budget process by providing a public comment, or by attending a public budget workshop on October 13, 2021.

4. Industry and Agriculture Upcoming Request for Proposal

Topic summary

Staff presented on an upcoming request for proposal (RFP) for program delivery contractors to implement Energy Trust's Production Efficiency program for industrial and agricultural customers. Staff reviewed context about how the program is currently managed and what changes are being implemented in this upcoming solicitation. New considerations include consolidating into fewer implementation contracts and increasing the diversity of the implementation team, including encouraging Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) certified firms to bid as a prime contractor or as part of a team. Staff reviewed implementer qualifications, proposal requirements and the overall engagement schedule.

Discussion

Committee members asked specific examples of the custom component to better visualize what the projects and deliverables entailed. Staff also clarified the COBID certification requirement included in the RFP and stated the implementer is not required to be based in Oregon. Committee members asked about what kind of firms have responded to this RFP in the past, and why the candidate pool has not been more diverse historically (Oswaldo Bernal). Staff stated that to encourage greater diversity among bidders, this RFP requires an increased percentage of diverse subcontractors to be used by the prime implementer, and we expect to see improvement over time. Tyrone Henry acknowledged that Energy Trust has not historically done a good job with its outreach to potential RFP respondents, but is now increasing the amount of outreach and allotting more time to that process.

One attendee shared that she and her husband have a minority- and women-owned firm and have experience in bidding for federal contracts that have allocations for minority- and women-owned firms (Elee Jen). Teaming is important as a strategy to get minority owned firms into more projects. The committee suggested Energy Trust host a workshop to support networking among minority firms and minority- and women-owned businesses who are interested in teaming.

Next steps

The request for proposal will move ahead based on the schedule shared by staff, and committee members are invited to suggest potential applicants for Energy Trust to include in its outreach efforts.

5. 2020 Customer Insights Study - Input on Goals and Objectives

Topic summary

Staff presented outcomes from a customer insights study that is conducted every two years, sharing updates on the process and objectives. The study seeks to collect feedback from a representative sample of participations and non-participants, including both residential renters and owners. Oversampling ensures adequate representation from minority and rural customers. Staff shared takeaways from the 2020 study including: there is overall low awareness of Energy Trust; affordability and comfort are key drivers for customers to make energy upgrades; and census tracts are not a good proxy for measuring equity, resulting in Energy Trust moving away from this approach. The next customer insights study will have a larger internal group included in its development. Staff will be finalizing goals for the next study and releasing a request for proposal for an implementer later this year.

Discussion

No discussion.

Next steps

Updates will be shared with the council once goals are finalized and a contractor is selected to implement the study.

8. Announcements

Tyrone Henry invited council members to Energy Trust's annual budget workshop event on October 13. Staff explained what the workshop would cover, explaining that it is an opportunity for advisory council members, board members and the public to learn about decision points and priorities that informed budget development. Workshop attendees can also attend topical learning sessions and speak directly with staff about individual action plans. The council provided input on the structure of the learning sessions, indicating a preference for the ability to select topics of interest rather than attending every available session.

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m. The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Zoom.