

High Performance Green Building Policy Meeting

Tues, Jan 29th 4:00 – 6:00pm
1900 SW Fourth, Room 2500A

Presentations by:

Commissioners Saltzman and Leonard
Susan Anderson, Director, OSD
Paul Scarlett, Director, BDS
Lori Graham, BDS,
Peter Hurley, OSD

Alanna Hein, Facilitator

Summary and Q&A Session

Combined notes from
Valerie Garrett, OSD, Ross Turkus, BDS and Debbie Cleek, BDS

A G E N D A

Meeting Goals:

1. To create a common understanding of the City's Green Building Goals.
2. To provide an orientation to the process and associated timelines

Proposed Outcomes:

1. Attendees become familiar with the goals, process and timelines
2. Answer questions about the process and how to participation

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| Welcome and Goals for this meeting | Commissioners Leonard and Saltzman | 4:00 |
| Agenda Review and Groundrules | Alanna Hein, Facilitator | |
| Overview: Why we are doing this How we are doing this? What we are doing? How the High Performance Green Building Policy and the Local Amendment fit together | Directors Anderson and Scarlett | |
| Local Amendment Process | Lori Graham, Bureau of Development Services | |
| High Performance Green Building Policy Process | Peter Hurley, Office of Sustainable Development | |
| Answer questions about the goals, process and timelines and how to participate | Alanna Hein, Facilitator | 5:10 |

Meeting summary: Debbie Cleek, BDS

Commissioners Leonard and Saltzman began the meeting by talking about why they believe that expanding green building in the City is important for both the economy and the environment. Bureau Directors Paul Scarlett (BDS) and Susan Anderson (OSD) described what each bureau has already done to promote sustainable building practices in the city. In March 2007, City Council directed OSD to develop options for improving building performance across the city, and in November 2007, Council adopted a goal of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, the primary cause of global warming, by 80% by 2050. The Bureau Directors described how BDS and OSD will be working together to ensure that Council's goals will be met.

Lori Graham with BDS described the possibility of creating a Local Amendment to the State Building Code, which would be focused on making green building elements a requirement for permit approval. This spring a Technical Advisory Group will be formed, representing a wide variety of interests, to determine what elements should be included in the amendment. The recommendations of the group would then be forwarded on to the City Council and the State's Building Codes Division for adoption. Lori encouraged anyone who would be interested in being involved in the Technical Advisory Group to contact her.

Peter Hurley with OSD gave a presentation on the High Performance Green Building Policy (HPGBP) that the City has been working on developing. More information about the policy can be found on OSD's website. Peter described the next phase of public involvement that will include assembling a committee of stakeholders representing the building industry to help answer questions that will be used to form the policy. In addition, OSD will be posting policy questions on their web site to allow the entire city to help answer them.

Question and Answer Session

Q1: Bob Hastings, Trimet

How is the transit system addressed in the Policy, taking into account Trimet's improvements and expansion? LEED is weak on transportation issues.

A: Peter Hurley

The Policy is looking at how green building can improve transportation in terms of how we come to and leave a building. ASHRAE 189 includes more significant transportation options that could be incorporated in the policy. The Portland Office of Transportation has programs.

Q2: Cindy Bethell, PDC

Are more than one item/amendment included to address water conservation and management? Low-flow fixtures, etc...

A: Lori Graham

The building code is different from a legislative amendment. Will look at all items (construction, plumbing, mechanical) that go into a building. Consider all these in a local amendment process.

Comment: Jeff Fish, Homebuilder

Homebuilders are interested in this proposal. Concerned about affordability for the entry level customer. Stick frame construction is different from a building constructed in the Pearl. Carbon increases when homeowners move outside the urban area and then commute in for their work. Another builder has done investigations of wall assemblies. Moisture issues with thermal break walls. Look at the science of these new techniques. Homebuilders are known as slow to change. We need proof that new systems work. Housing available for the blue-collar jobs that are created by the policy. Concern over number of housing plans that will have to be changed. One local builder had hundreds of stock plans they build from.

Q3: Brenna Bell, Tryon Life Community Farm

No mention of increased density. Encourage smaller spaces and sharing resources. State and local level requirements for graywater are not in sync. Look at homeownership structure.

A: Lori Graham

Graywater is regulated by DEQ. There are opportunities to work with DEQ in the future, but not on the table now. This is on the radar for the future.

Commissioner Leonard

Reality with density is that people think it is a good idea, but don't like houses too close to theirs for infill development. Reality and ideals clash. Density affects the perception of livability. As a practical matter we have to be careful how we approach it. The City's Smart Building Design competition grew out of the Concordia Neighborhood Association meeting about infill development.

Has concerns about the "carbon tax". High entry level home price limits the blue-collar working class family. It penalizes those who have, and use, less. Think about impacting first time home buyers. PPS has lost 20% of its students to the suburbs.

Q4: Diana Bjornskov, PECl

How will the existing buildings baseline be determined?

A: Peter Hurley

We plan on having this discussion after addressing new construction. It is one of the most basic issues.

Comment: Mary Vogel, PlanGreen

Return to the density question. Cites "Driving to Green Buildings" article. Encourage group to take this to heart. Create policies to encourage people to share housing. Boston is four times as dense as Portland, Washington, DC is 2.5 times as dense, New York is 7.1 times as dense. Density impacts our carbon footprint.

Q5: Bruce Dobbs, NW Natural, and OR Structures Board

Why have two separate policy tracks? Why not go through the state? Having different policies in different cities is too confusing for design professionals. Where is this funding coming from? Could this be cheaper to implement at the state level? Oregon code is already one of the most aggressive in the country.

A: Commissioner Leonard

Harder to implement policy at the state level, knows from personal experience from having served on the legislature. Cleaner and easier to do at the local level. Same argument from the petroleum industry, now 5% of all diesel contains biodiesel. The petroleum industry figured it out and adjusted as needed – we can too. Does not support the "carbon tax" as it is proposed.

Lori Graham

There is an opportunity here with a lot of interest from neighboring jurisdictions. Proposed legislation in the last state session (?). We have to start with something. At a minimum we can begin these conversations, get to a local amendment, and then go to the state level.

Bruce Dobbs

NW Natural is anxious to be a part of the process. The bureaus are going about this the right way by having an involved public process and soliciting input.

Comment: Rob Bennett, Clinton Climate Initiative, William J. Clinton Foundation

The feebate is clever, it offers incentives and rewards; it is a good way to go about this. SDC – treat as a feebate and create a package. This is an “impact fee” (development impact). Restructure the SDC program alongside the policy feebate. SDC’s can be decreased as the building becomes more efficient, reflecting a lesser demand on the “system”. The energy efficiency upgrades discussed add about \$5,000 - \$7,000 for an increase of 20-30% efficiency plus cost savings. That is not much to add to a conventional 30 year mortgage. The city is going about this the right way. The city can take a more proactive approach via this process. Material costs cause construction costs to increase, not energy measures.

Q6: Joe Esmond, IBEW Electrical Workers Union

What are green collar jobs? What do you mean when you talk about greening the workforce?

A: Peter Hurley

Green collar jobs include a wide range of jobs in addition to professional design and engineering jobs. Trades like green plumbers, solar panel technicians, building raters. A diverse and local workforce here in the city.

Joe Esmond

We have these trades trained now. Electricians are currently working on solar installations, light rail, tram. Electricians are all for job creation.

Peter Hurley

We also want to ensure there is demand for these workers.

Susan Anderson

We call these “green jobs” now, but they have been around for years. Green jobs equal money staying in the community that is not subsidizing fossil fuels and energy production. We have local labor doing weatherization – Over the years, the city’s Multi-family Weatherization Program has weatherized close to 50,000 units. This money is kept circulating in our community. These numbers need to get in front of people for economic growth purposes.

Q7: Steve Heiteen, Remodeling contractor

One segment of population pays for rebates that another sector benefits from. Has this been looked at? Why not have the whole city have a stake in this?

A: Commissioner Saltzman

We don’t know what an “all pay” situation would look like. Financial incentives now, SDC credits to come later.

Q8: Stephen Aiguier, Green Hammer Construction

Started a construction company few years ago here in Portland. Works on LEED home projects. Clients pay a lot to go through the building code appeal process because technologies or strategies are not in the code. Marketing – set the standard for LEED Gold and Platinum. Appeals are three or four go-arounds for these projects. The state is the hang up and “drags projects through the mud.” These are the type of homes the policy is advocating to build. Permit appeal costs are a lot higher than \$5,000 - \$7,000 for the projects he has worked on. It’s hard to assess costs. Can’t do many of these upgrades without running into walls in the process. This is very frustrating and costly for clients and contractors.

A: Peter Hurley

Clearly there are code and process barriers now. The Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) produced a green building report with a recommendation for an “alternative technology review.” This step would move these issues through the permitting process more quickly. It is a significant step forward. The policy has to work, we do not want it if it does not.

Hank McDonald, BDS

BDS has a robust appeals program where they try to work with contractors. Currently, we are on the brink of the next important evolutionary step in building construction. This impacts on the local, national and global levels. Code does not even address these issues at this time – it is not a barrier. Working with universities to analyze building materials and move forward in this evolutionary process.

Q9: Tom Skarr, Pacific Western Homes

Two-thirds of the buildings that will exist in 2030, exist today. Attack energy efficiency of buildings on the ground today. On April 1 the new state energy code will be raised to current Earth Advantage/Energy Star levels. Then EA/ES will elevate even higher. Why isn't the new code enough? Target existing building owners to truly make a dent on the carbon footprint. Don't wait two – six years from now. Challenge leaders to make this happen. Focusing on new construction will lead to driving out buyers who cannot afford new construction now. Go after existing buildings and density now. We have to challenge elected leaders and embrace density. If new construction is too expensive workers can't afford it to buy it, then we have accomplished nothing. Don't rely on new construction.

A: Peter Hurley

New construction and existing buildings will both be addressed. The goal of the Policy is to **stop** digging the hole with non-performance. New construction in Portland is economical and performs better. Have to address both. Policy must be thoughtful, considerate and actually work. We are raising the bar.

Comment: Jeff Fish, Homebuilder

New housing determines the price of existing housing. Separate new and existing construction. Existing homes get a “windfall profit” use this for energy code. Don't separate – look at together.

Q10: Derek Lindlin

Financing green projects as in carbon trading. Could the city create investment programs where investors could purchase energy savings? Blue collar homeowners then do not have the burden.

A: Susan Anderson

Helped create the Climate Trust. Carbon trading has an informal market now based on the value of carbon emissions. We have to prove these interactions wouldn't happen if they got incentives anyway. Incentives and rebates take this away. Perhaps big industry could pay for the carbon savings in homes.

Closing.