

Combined Advisory Council Meeting Notes

Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)
Diversity Advisory Council (DAC)
Renewable Energy Advisory Council (RAC)

October 21, 2022

Attending from the councils:

Susan Badger Jones, special projects consultant (DAC)
Terrance Harris, Drexel University (DAC)
Kheoshi Owens, Empress Rules (DAC)
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE (DAC)
Jeff Bissonnette, NW Energy Coalition (CAC)
Tyler Pepple, Alliance of Western Energy Consumers (CAC)
Andy Cameron, Oregon Department of Energy (CAC)
Monica Cowlshaw, Cascade Natural Gas (CAC)
Kari Greer, Pacific Power (CAC)
Emily Moore, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (for Becky Walker, CAC)
Tina Jayaweera, Northwest Power and Conservation Council (CAC)
Jake Wise, Portland General Electric (CAC)
Lisa McGarity, Avista (CAC)
Kerry Meade, Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (CAC)

Margaret Lewis, Bonneville Power Administration
Laney Ralph, NW Natural (CAC)
Christy Splitt, Oregon Department of Energy (RAC)
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission (CAC, RAC)
Raphaela Hsu-Flanders, Bonneville Environmental Foundation (RAC)
Tess Jordan, Portland General Electric (RAC)
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (RAC)
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Power (RAC)
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress (RAC)
Josh Peterson, Solar Monitoring Lab, University of Oregon (RAC)
Brikky King, Umpqua Bank (RAC)
Amy Schlusser, Oregon Department of Energy (RAC)
Keith Kueny, Farmers Conservation Alliance (RAC)

Attending from Energy Trust

Hannah Cruz
Melanie Bissonnette
Alina Lambert
Elaine Dado
Laura Schaefer
Michael Colgrove
Lidia Garcia
Matt Getchell
Kenji Spielman
Joshua Reed
Joe Gambino
Paul Fredrickson
Amanda Potter
Greg Stokes

Shelly Carlton
Kate Wellington
Dave Moldal
Cody Kleinsmith
Kesean Coleman
Thad Roth
Sarah Castor
Alex Novie
Tyrone Henry
Sue Fletcher
Emma Clark
Julianne Thacher
Elizabeth Fox
Kathleen Belkhat

Marshall Johnson
Megan Greenauer
Kyle Petrocine
Taylor Ford
Amber Cole
Susan Jowaiszas
Amanda Zuniga

Betsy Kauffman
Jay Ward
Ian Bogley
Ryan Cook
Steve Lacey
Bayo Ware

Others attending:

Angie Thomson, Meeting Facilitator,
Thomson Strategic Consulting
Peter Therkelsen, Energy Trust Board
Alexia Kelly, Energy Trust Board
Henry Lorenzen, Energy Trust Board
Christina Medina, Pacific Power

Dylan D'Souza, Northwest Power and
Conservation Council
Ross Ferguson, ICF
Huong Tran, Mindful Healing
Ezell Watson, Oregon Public Utility
Commission
Louis Bartlett, ICF

1. Welcome

Angie Thomson, consultant at Thomson Strategic Consulting, convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom and in-person. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available on Energy Trust's website at www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/. Thomson established meeting norms and foundations of engagement: challenge the idea, not the person; take space and make space; listen actively and participate constructively; and impact outweighs intent. Advisory councils added centering race in conversations, expecting and accepting non-closure, being willing to do things differently and being open minded.

2. Draft Organizational Goals Presentation and Discussion

Topic summary

Michael Colgrove, executive director at Energy Trust, presented the draft 2023 Organizational Goals. Colgrove shared the feedback that shaped the understanding of market dynamics and how staff incorporated that feedback into the draft budget. The feedback led to the customization of programs to meet the specific needs of customers the organization has underserved in the past, including small businesses, Black and Indigenous communities, communities of color, people experiencing low incomes and rural communities. Colgrove also highlighted the draft 2023-2024 Action Plan and demonstrated how staff incorporated council feedback into action plans.

Discussion

Council members asked how dialogue starts with community-based organizations regarding how Energy Trust's programs can be of use to them (Brikky King). Staff emphasized the myriad of ways engagement takes place, starting with initial conversations and information sharing with outreach staff. Additionally, Energy Trust's Working Together Grants have proven useful in establishing new relationships with some organizations and further developing others. Energy Trust's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lead, Tyrone Henry; Residential staff; energy programs director, Tracy Scott; and the Communities and New Initiatives Sector provide other points of entry (Michael Colgrove). Staff mentioned collaborations with ethnic chambers, National Association of Minority Contractors, LatinoBuilt and Professional Business Development Group.

Council members asked for specific practices Energy Trust has in place to prevent future harm (Huong Tran). Staff stated that even as the organization continues to diversify its staff and partnerships, it will not be possible to prevent future harm. Instead, it will focus on healing after recognizing and addressing harm caused.

Council members asked about accountability measures (Terrance Harris). Staff replied that accountability measures can be found in the DEI Plan and that the DEI Committee is planning four community engagements to receive feedback on the metrics, after which they will be finalized (Michael Colgrove). In addition, the Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) is defining an inaugural set of equity performance measures for Energy Trust by year-end that the organization will be responsive to.

Council members recognized the positive strides in equity that the organization has made over the last few years, particularly in reaching communities it has historically underserved. Members then asked for plans to diversify the staff (Kheoshi Owens). Staff replied that annual goals highlight new activities exclusively. Energy Trust has taken multiple steps to improve the diversity of its staff, such as by having a DAC member on all hiring panels, expanding outreach for recruitment and better balancing credentials with skills and experience (Michael Colgrove).

Council members asked if there were methods to track outreach success (Raphaela Hsu Flanders). Staff replied that the metrics, which the DEI Committee is developing, will be published in the DEI Plan (Michael Colgrove).

Council members applauded the feedback implementation and the important technical assistance role that Energy Trust plays. Members continued, expressing the pressing need for deep, tailored financial assistance to serve different communities across the state and the desire to see this outlined in the budget (Alexia Kelly). Staff cited regulations regarding the use of ratepayer funds restricts Energy Trust's efforts to certain objectives. However, the Innovation and Development Team will enhance Energy Trust's ability to support new objectives and collaborate more deeply with other organizations to achieve aligned goals (Michael Colgrove). Staff further stated the collaborative efforts with utility partners and the Contracting Alliance for Diversity and Equity will create new opportunities (Tyrone Henry).

Council members asked if Energy Trust is working on developing measures or strategies with benefits that go directly to renters instead of property owners (Jaimes Valdez). Staff stated that this challenge is long standing and pervasive across the country and Energy Trust is in conversation with the OPUC regarding ways to provide benefit to renters. Options are installing equipment at little or no cost to the property owner and establishing laws that require efficient appliances in all multifamily buildings. However, some of these options may lead to increased rents (Michael Colgrove). Council members noted that Oregon State Senate Bill 1536 directs the Oregon Department of Energy to provide up to 60% of costs for heat pumps for renters (Christy Splitt).

Council members asked how targets for average annual megawatts compare to previous years (Jaimes Valdez). Staff directed members to the budget materials. Draft savings goals for 2023 are on par with 2022 goals because economic conditions are expected to remain the same. Demand for many clean energy upgrades continues to exceed the availability of equipment and installers (Michael Colgrove).

Council members asked how the DEI Plan relates to the strategic plan, stressing the importance of explicitly including DEI in the strategic plan or instead creating a DEI Strategic Plan (Kheoshi Owens, Terrance Harris). Others thought that the strategic and operational plans are different and should remain separate; however, the role of DEI in the strategic plan should be further explained. Additionally, council members thought that, given the volatile environment in which Energy Trust operates, it should consider a 3-year strategic plan instead of a 5-year strategic plan (Jeff Bissonnette). Staff stated that the strategic plan captures organizational vision and is on a five-year cycle, and the DEI Plan is a “living document” that will be continually updated. While a commitment to DEI is mentioned in the strategic plan, staff will review how it is represented (Michael Colgrove).

Staff reviewed the next steps in the budget process, inviting council members to provide comments until October 25. Their feedback will be shared with the Board Finance and Audit Committee and reflected in the final proposed budget. Council liaisons may provide an update on the status of the budget during the November advisory council meetings if substantial changes are recommended (Michael Colgrove).

Council members commented on missing the full presentation on the entire budget, stating that it is inadequate to provide feedback at this stage without the full budget and after the public comment period closed. Additionally, council members stressed the importance of increased collaboration with community members and organizations.

Lastly, staff recognized Kheoshi Owens for her service as a founding DAC member who was instrumental in developing the Council. Energy Trust will continue to work with her in other capacities. Michael Colgrove and Betsy Kauffman, renewables sector lead, both expressed appreciation for how she personally helped them grow.

Next steps

Organizational goals will be published in the final proposed 2023 budget and action plan presented to the board of directors for approval on December 16. Process and timing feedback will be shared internally to inform next year’s budget and action plan schedule.

3. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m. The next meetings are November 15 for the Diversity Advisory Council and November 16 for the Renewable Energy Advisory Council and Conservation Advisory Council.