

# Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 15, 2022

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## Attending from the council:

Susan Badger-Jones, special projects consultant  
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University  
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE  
Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media LLC  
Cheryl L. Roberts, African American Alliance for Homeownership  
Rebecca Descombs, Native American Youth and Family Center  
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE

## Attending from Energy Trust:

Tyrone Henry	Emily Estrada
Michael Colgrove	Dan Rubado
Emily Findley	Sloan Schang
Cheryle Easton	Hannah Cruz
Tracy Scott	Emma Clark
Adam Bartini	Alex Novie
Elaine Dado	Lenora Deslandes
Kate Wellington	Julianne Thacher
Kenji Spielman	Debbie Menashe
Themba Mutepfa	Amber Cole
Elizabeth Fox	Melanie Bissonnette
Megan Greenauer	Amanda Thompson
Steve Lacey	Lidia Garcia
Sue Fletcher	Amanda Zuniga
Ashley Bartels	Taylor Ford
Kirstin Pinit	Thad Roth
Bayoan Ware	
Wendy Gibson	

## Others attending:

Huong Tran	Ezell Watson, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Starlinda Morris	Lindsey Diercksen, LD Consulting
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission	Chris Smith, Energy 350
Vanessa Burchfield, Burch Energy Solutions	Shelly Beaulieu, Dragonfly Consulting
Kenny Warren, Elemental Energy	Josh Weissert, Energy 350

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## 1. Welcome and Group Reflection

Tyrone Henry, Energy Trust's diversity, equity and inclusion lead, convened the meeting at 9:03 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 a round of introductions and prompted each member to share their name and affiliation. Tyrone led a brief reflection focused on Native American Heritage Month where

members were invited to share their reactions to a video message from the first Native American Cabinet Secretary Deb Haaland.

A member shared their family's decision to cease acknowledging the Thanksgiving holiday in the traditional sense, instead honoring their own family ancestry (Shane Davis). Members were pleased that Native leadership is finally reflected in the US Department of the Interior. In Oregon, tribal communities in Energy Trust service area are often exceptionally able to mobilize toward a shift to clean energy due to a concentrated style of governance (Susan Badger-Jones). Group members discussed how Native American history is an integral part of our nation's history but has been minimized. Council members acknowledged this highlights the importance of offering and taking advantage of learning opportunities in the present day.

## **2. Review of Diversity Advisory Council purpose and charter**

### *Topic summary*

Mike Colgrove, Energy Trust executive director, presented an overview of the Diversity Advisory Council's purpose and the charter that guides its activity and coordination with Energy Trust. As the council's last meeting of 2022, this topic is intended to prompt reflection on council activity in the past year and begin thinking about what future opportunities council members may wish to take part in next year. Opportunities for the council to provide early input in 2023 include Energy Trust's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan, its 2024 budget and action plan and early development of its next five-year strategic plan. Each council member was invited to share impressions of their participation in 2022, how well council activity lived up to the requirements laid out in its charter and what Energy Trust should do more of in 2023.

### *Discussion*

A council member stated that despite ups and downs due to the lack of in-person connection opportunities due to the pandemic, the overall experience has been positive. There has been a positive trend toward increased awareness of Energy Trust in culturally specific media channels and communities, including Spanish-speaking communities. Advertising by trade allies call out Energy Trust as a trusted source of information and incentives. The member would like to continue supporting expansion of communication opportunities (Oswaldo Bernal).

A council member echoed that the inability for council members to gather in person has been a pain point. However, the move to virtual gatherings since the pandemic has enabled increased participation in ad hoc committee meetings, especially for members who are based in rural communities. Energy Trust should make an effort to facilitate some in-person gatherings for the council in 2023. Diversity, equity and inclusion is being reflected better in operational goals and activities, such as carveouts for non-metro projects within the Working Together Grants. A priority for 2023 should be to accelerate board diversity trainings, which have progressed too slowly (Susan Badger-Jones).

A member called out that there have been positive improvements during their membership in how Energy Trust approaches diversity work, its overall direction and the language it uses to speak about that work. However, opportunities for growth exist in educating communities, promoting access to resources and becoming more effective in getting others involved as partners. Participating in the Working Together Grants selection process uncovered gaps in holding applicants accountable in a meaningful way. Energy Trust should implement a more holistic approach to diversity, equity and inclusion rather than checking a box, and it should respond more quickly to the council's suggestions in order to do so. This holistic approach will be important to accelerate in 2023 because other entities are paying attention to what Energy Trust is doing (Terrance Harris).

A council member reported they had good opportunities to interact with staff in 2022. Energy Trust has turned a corner in recognizing that its programs have not been implemented evenly in the past, and it needs to find more creative ways to move forward and address past harm. Staff should continue to focus on examining its program distribution and usage and explore ways to course correct (Indika Sugathadasa).

A council member stated they have observed great strides over the course of their service, including more openness to engaging with the communities it serves. The member's son is one example of a younger community member who has become an energy assessor and home inspector in part due to exposure to Energy Trust's work, and he is excited about his role. Energy Trust should focus on its presence out in the world by directly engaging with communities and working to inspire community members. It should build momentum by increasing engagement with young people and create pathways that usher them into the energy space through tactics like internship programs. Energy Trust should also provide an example that inspires other entities to hold themselves accountable for the shared work of advancing clean energy (Cheryl Roberts).

A council member who is stepping off of the council stated they had fewer direct Energy Trust contributions in 2022 due to the demands of their job but shared some overall impressions about prevailing attitudes toward diversity, equity and inclusion. Compared with the initial surge of focus and attention on anti-Blackness in 2020, momentum has died down and equity hasn't been treated with the same urgency. Energy Trust should focus on continuing to center equity and amplify the efforts of others to do so. One way to do so is for Energy Trust to create a more robust and intentional orientation for new Diversity Advisory Council Members. Some new members have previous experience with the energy industry, while others may not. That's why it would be beneficial to provide enough context for all new members to be able to start off with a fundamental understanding of how the organization operates, enabling them to easily respond to presentations from staff (Shane Davis).

A member expressed appreciation for their opportunity to serve on the council and learn from other members, observing that the overall collaboration within the group helps break down barriers in communities. Energy Trust should work to overcome barriers to serving customers in gas-only service areas in rural communities. It could do so by increasing promotion of the gas measures that are available and increasing its presence at community events (Dolores Martinez).

A council member agreed with what other members shared regarding enhancing the onboarding process. They added that serving on the council has been a valuable learning experience, especially opportunities to work directly with Energy Trust staff.

#### *Next steps*

Energy Trust staff will begin thinking through improving the onboarding experience for new council members in 2023. Staff will also work with Tyrone Henry to begin offering interpretation support for Spanish language for all council meetings starting in 2023.

### **3. Recruiting for four vacancies on Diversity Advisory Council**

Tyrone Henry shared an update that Energy Trust will be recruiting four new members for the Diversity Advisory Council in 2023. Taking into account one member's departure, council membership stands at seven members, and the intended number of members is 11. Tyrone stated he has been having conversations with numerous potential new members already and

encouraged existing council members to share the opportunity with people in their network who have skills, experience or perspective that would add value. He shared that these prospective members were invited to attend the current meeting, and that some of them were present to observe.

#### *Discussion*

Members shared that they had potential new members in mind and would connect them with Tyrone shortly (Terrance Harris, Cheryl Roberts). Mike Colgrove provided a reminder of the council's representation requirements, which include geographic representation for areas outside Portland. Tyrone added that there is currently a gap in representation from Central and Southern Oregon, and connections with candidates from those areas would be appreciated.

#### *Next steps*

Diversity Advisory Council members are invited to connect any interested prospective candidates with Tyrone Henry by providing an email introduction.

### **4. 2023 DAC calendar and work plan**

#### *Topic summary*

Tyrone Henry reviewed the draft 2023 Diversity Advisory Council calendar outlining the scheduled meeting and engagement dates for the upcoming year. He invited input on whether the dates posed any difficulties for members to attend. Tyrone also introduced the idea of organizing a social engagement for the council to connect and get to know the new members who are selected to join in early 2023.

#### *Discussion*

Council members discussed their reactions to the proposed meeting dates and the timing of a social engagement. The council suggested hosting the social event to welcome new members in February, as soon as possible after they have joined (Cheryl Roberts, Susan Badger-Jones). Tyrone Henry proposed canceling the first scheduled meeting in January, as that date is very soon after the winter holidays and adding the social event as the council's first engagement of 2023.

Council members discussed whether any of the proposed meeting dates occurred on cultural holidays that would impact members, but no one present identified any conflicts. All members also confirmed the standard meeting time of Tuesday morning does not pose a conflict with their schedules.

The council proposed the idea of expanding training opportunities for council members, which could help them stay engaged as a group (Cheryl Roberts). Tyrone responded that he will use the results of a survey that council members completed about their interests to get ideas for trainings. Staff suggested that it may be valuable to invite groups from other organizations who are engaged in equity work to share their experiences (Mike Colgrove).

The council agreed that sharing experience with other diversity, equity and inclusion councils and groups would be valuable and could also help them make progress with Energy Trust's board of directors (Cheryl Roberts, Susan Badger-Jones). Members also expressed interest in learning about or observing staff working in the field or meeting with customers and communities (Oswaldo Bernal).

#### *Next steps*

Tyrone Henry will use this feedback to finalize the schedule and share with council members once complete. Tyrone will work with staff to explore opportunities to provide additional training for council members.

## **5. Acknowledgement of Outgoing Member**

### *Topic summary*

Tyrone Henry shared that council member Shane Davis will be stepping down from the council after this meeting. The departure was due to some changes that prevented enough bandwidth to fully participate in council activities.

### *Discussion*

Shane Davis shared that his service on the council has been a great opportunity to learn and expand while supporting Energy Trust's mission. Highlights included his work with Energy Trust's human resources group to improve equity in its hiring practices, and his participation on hiring panels to increase the diversity of Energy Trust's staff. Shane added the reason for his departure is due to the increased time demand of his job that is limiting his bandwidth to fully participate in council activities.

Members shared appreciation for Shane's participation, with many sharing their intention to stay connected with him outside the council.

### *Next steps*

None.

## **6. Announcements**

Council members and other attendees shared information on upcoming opportunities.

Oswaldo Bernal encouraged members to visit the city of Beaverton, which has recently expanded and added a new arts center and other new cultural opportunities.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. Diversity Advisory Council meetings will resume in 2023. <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.