

**Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Notes**  
February 15, 2023

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**Attending from the council:**

Andy Cameron, Oregon Department of Energy  
Lisa McGarity, Avista  
Charity Fain, Community Energy Project  
Noemi Ortiz, Cascade Natural Gas  
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission

Laney Ralph, NW Natural  
Jake Wise, Portland General Electric  
Kari Greer, Pacific Power  
Becky Walker, NEEA  
Kerry Meade, NEEC

**Attending from Energy Trust:**

Hannah Cruz  
Elizabeth Fox  
Elaine Dado  
Tom Beverly  
Tyrone Henry  
Cameron Starr  
Marshall Johnson  
Tracy Scott  
Laura Schaefer  
Themba Mutepefa  
Kirstin Pinit  
Natalia Ojeda  
Ashley Bartels  
Cody Kleinsmith  
Fred Gordon  
Alex Novie  
Thad Roth  
Juliette Poff  
Sue Fletcher  
Amanda Zuniga

Lidia Garcia  
Julianne Thacher  
Amanda Potter  
Amanda Thompson  
Shelly Carlton  
Spencer Moersfelder  
Isaiah Kamrar  
Megan Greenauer  
Oliver Kesting  
Sloan Schang  
Michael Colgrove  
Amber Cole  
Jackie Goss  
Lizzie Rubado  
Andi Nix  
Abby Spegman  
Kate Wellington  
Lori Lull  
Steve Lacy

**Others attending:**

Peter Therkelsen, Energy Trust board  
Brooke Landon, CLEAResult  
Monica Cowlshaw, Cascade Natural Gas  
Candice Norton, Resource Innovations  
Tiffany Purn, Skilldemand  
Chad Ihrig, Google

Guillermo Castillo, Small Business Utility Advocates  
Brian Lynch, AESC  
Jenny Sorich, CLEAResult  
John Molnar, Rogers Machinery

**1. Welcome and Announcements**

Hannah Cruz, senior stakeholder relations and policy manager, convened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available at [www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/conservation-advisory-council-meetings](http://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/conservation-advisory-council-meetings).

**2. Council Membership Changes**

*Topic summary*

Hannah Cruz introduced two new Conservation Advisory Council members: Charity Fain, Community Energy Project (CEP), and Noemi Ortiz, Cascade Natural Gas.

Charity Fain added that she is the executive director of CEP. She is interested in joining at this time after working with Energy Trust in a variety of ways, including cooling workshops, low-income weatherization and community education. CEP also works on various Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) efforts. Charity pointed out that there is great opportunity coming via changes in the energy efficiency market and with new vision at the OPUC and Energy Trust, as well as new federal funding. CEP wants to make sure these opportunities are available to all communities and that transitions don't leave people behind.

Noemi Ortiz added that she is Energy Efficiency Programs Manager at Cascade Natural Gas. Noemi has worked with nonprofits for the last 15 years and oversaw the weatherization department housing and shelter program at Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic for 10 years. Noemi wants to continue the conversation about how she, as an individual, and how organizations can contribute to better serve underserved communities.

Hannah Cruz concluded by explaining that council members are approved by the board Nominating and Governance committee. Laney Ralph, NW Natural, has participated as a council member and was recently approved by the committee.

Monica Cowlshaw, Cascade Natural Gas, is stepping down as a council member. The council expressed its appreciation for her insights and efforts over the last year.

The Conservation Advisory Council now has 15 members. It can have up to 18, although it traditionally has been fewer than that. Energy Trust will continue to look for individuals with customer and community connections, along with more diverse perspectives to join the council.

#### *Discussion*

None

#### *Next Steps*

None

### **3. How We'll Work Together**

#### *Topic Summary*

The Conservation Advisory Council operating principles were last reviewed and approved in 2019. They set the ground rules for how often the council meets, the meeting format, notes and materials. They work with the council's board-approved charter, which includes what types of topics are brought to the Conservation Advisory Council and the council's role. Community agreements are also under review by the Renewable Energy Advisory Council and Diversity Advisory Council. They set the tone for the group experience, including communications and participation in meetings, and are the agreed upon ways in which we'll behave and hold each other accountable as we conduct our work together.

See slides in the [meeting packet](#) for details and redlined edits to the operating agreements and recommended additions.

#### *Discussion*

In reviewing the operating principles, council members stated that the changes proposed by staff were acceptable, logical and necessary (Andy Cameron, Kerry Meade, Becky Walker). The council approved the redlined version of the operating principles.

In discussing community agreements, council members shared their experiences working with diverse groups and in some cases, utilizing community agreements in other areas of their work. Staff thanked the council for starting the conversation.

*Next steps*

Staff will update the operating principles with the redlined changes approved by the council and will distribute the principles via email to the council.

Council members were asked to think about ways the council can work together more effectively, as outlined in the slides, in advance of the April meeting, when the discussion on community agreements will continue.

#### **4. Board Review of the Role of Conservation Advisory Council, Renewable Energy Advisory Council and Diversity Advisory Council**

*Topic Summary*

Energy Trust's board of directors is reviewing the role of its three advisory councils, including the Conservation Advisory Council. Peter Therkelsen, Energy Trust board member, provided an overview of the discussion at the most recent board meeting on February 8, 2023.

The Renewable Energy Advisory Council and Conservation Advisory Council were formed as advisory bodies for the board on program design, technologies, budgeting and strategic planning. Peter noted that the operating principles the council just approved still hold. The Conservation Advisory Council has purpose and value and will remain in place. The conversation is around the relationship with the board and staff, how we can better make use of council member voices, and provide value to members in terms of time well-spent.

*Discussion*

None.

*Next Steps*

The board is continuing its early discussion on the role of the councils, and as more information is available, it will be brought to the Conservation Advisory Council.

#### **5. 2023 Work Plan on Conservation Advisory Council Agenda Topics**

*Topic Summary*

Hannah Cruz reviewed the 2023 Work Plan of upcoming topics and presentations that will be brought to the Conservation Advisory Council over the year. The work plan is flexible and kept updated in real-time, some topics may move in timing or be removed altogether while different topics are added.

See [the Conservation Advisory Council spreadsheet](#) covered during the meeting.

*Discussion*

Council members asked about second quarter core functions and asked for more information about the topic on non-energy benefits attributed to certain measures that reduce the likelihood of a utility customer going into arrears (Jake Wise). Staff stated that the idea is that if efficiency reduces cost to customers with high energy burdens, there are quantifiable benefits to the utility in terms of reduced disconnection costs and complications that come with unpaid debt. Energy Trust assessed this last year, and the benefits appeared small initially. Staff is reviewing with updated data.

*Next Steps*

Ideas and feedback on meeting agendas and the 2023 work plan are welcome from council members at any time.

## **6. Organizational Updates**

### *Topic Summary*

Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, introduced Lizzie Rubado as director of Energy Trust's new Innovation and Development team. The new team will help cultivate new relationships, new potential funding sources and new or innovative ways to support staff now in core mission work. The new team is focused on federal funding and collaboration through 2023. They hope to turn to other partnership work after 2023.

Alex Novie is the communities and new initiatives sector lead, focused on energy program development, disaster recovery, resilience and other cross-program efforts. This new team is working to support communities and cross program initiatives including, community engagement and equity, utility strategy and support, and measure development and pilots. The communities and new initiatives team will serve as a hub and provide strategic direction across programs, moving away from a sector focus and introducing coordination across sectors. The Conservation Advisory Council is a key way to vet cross-program strategic discussions. The new sector will have strong collaboration with the evaluations and planning team.

Tracy Scott provided an update on preliminary 2022 results. Results are based on the best available data at this time and will be finalized for the annual report due to the OPUC and board of directors in April. Results reflect the challenges of 2022. Energy Trust met 92% of electric savings goal, 82% of gas savings goal and 145% of renewable generation goals. Improved forecasting efforts have shown where the organization is headed far earlier in the year.

The [Conservation Advisory Council meeting packet](#) shows specific targets and achievements.

### *Discussion*

A council member shared that having worked with Lizzie Rubado on the Community Solar proposal and Alex Novie on other projects, Energy Trust picked great people to fill these roles (Charity Fain).

### *Next Steps*

Final results and narrative on how those results were achieved will be in the 2022 Annual Report, published April 14, 2023.

## **7. Equity Metrics**

### *Topic Summary*

Alex Novie presented an update on development of the inaugural set of equity metrics being established by the OPUC for Energy Trust expenditure of Oregon ratepayer funds. Over the course of 2022 and pursuant to House Bill 3141 (passed in 2021), the OPUC developed equity metrics with a community engagement lens. The commission approved the metrics in December 2022, and the work and public engagement so far this year is on developing the targets and activities for each metric. Alex reviewed with the council the proposed targets and activities for each metric. Public comment is open on the targets and activities through docket UM 1158 and the final materials submitted to the commission for consideration at its regular public meeting on March 7.

See the [meeting packet](#) for details.

### *Discussion*

Council members asked if the metrics were built into the 2023 budget and action plan, since they are coming after it was approved (Lisa McGarity). Energy Trust and OPUC staff responded that proposed targets are not found in the budget as written. It will rely on activities Energy Trust had planned in the budget and more focus on diversity, equity and inclusion activities. Large costs outside the planned budget are not expected (Alex Novie and Anna Kim).

#### *Next Steps*

Conservation Advisory Council will be asked to weigh in on potential new activities to address equity metrics, such as the no-cost and low-cost offers to be developed.

### **8. Landlord Provided Cooling Spaces Program**

#### *Topic Summary*

Themba Mutepefa, program manager, provided an update on the Landlord Provided Cooling Spaces program provided through Senate Bill 1536. This legislation was passed in response to the heatwave of 2021 and ensures tenant access to cooling through the funding of multiple programs, including Energy Trust's.

Few apartments and rental properties currently include cooling systems. Priority communities under this program are tribes, those experiencing low incomes, seniors, people with disabilities and rural areas. The program provides technical assistance on cooling equipment selection and sizing, plus equipment and installation rebates. The program is handled in coordination with the Oregon Department of Energy.

The [meeting packet](#) includes details.

#### *Discussion*

None

#### *Next Steps*

None

### **9. Federal Funding**

#### *Topic Summary*

Lizzie Rubado, director of innovation and development, facilitated a session about available and soon-to-be-available federal funding for clean energy and greenhouse gas emissions reducing investments in home, businesses and communities.

#### *Discussion*

Energy Trust is coordinating with Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) on how Inflation Reduction Act rebate funding can be best utilized. Federal tax credits are now available for residential customers and businesses, so information sharing for customers has been an area of focus. Another focus area is reassuring the general public that the tax credits will continue for a number of years.

ODOE is working on several federal funding streams with homes are at the top of the list. It is currently in an request for proposals phase for grid resilience. ODOE is working with several other states and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) on building code development. It is partnering with Earth Advantage building performance standards. There is also some workforce development for energy auditors. "Buy American" requirements are a part of most of the work.

Community Energy Project is writing a proposal for Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program funding for community engagement and thinking about community-based organization partnerships as the federal Justice 40 initiative is included in all the federal funding.

The council is encouraged to think about how community groups can help with any federal proposals council members may be pursuing. Strong partners are needed that can help implement and write the proposals to be successful as part of Grid Forward. The reality is that incentives alone don't serve low-income communities. It is unclear how are community-based organizations are going to access funds to continue offering no-cost offers. Customers experiencing low-income don't have money to make purchases upfront and wait for rebates. Deferred maintenance is a barrier, particularly roofs (Charity Fain). A council member added that Avista offers electric service in Washington and is doing energy audits for tribes and community-based organizations, along with helping them with proposals for competitive opportunities (Lisa McGarity). Community Energy Project is being asked to write community engagement plans (Charity Fain).

#### *Next Steps*

Lizzie Rubado extended an open invitation to think through this information and follow up with comments. This will be a topic of conversation for some time to come.

#### **10. Public comment**

There was no additional public comment.

#### **11. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m. Meeting materials are available [online](#). The next meeting of the council is Wednesday, April 19, 2023.