

Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes

January 17, 2023

Attending from the council:

Susan Badger-Jones, special projects consultant
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE
Rebecca Descombs, Native American Youth and Family Center
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE
Joni McSpadden, Oregon Native American Chamber
Neil Lee, LEEKA Architecture and Planning

Attending from Energy Trust:

Tyrone Henry	Bayoan Ware
Michael Colgrove	Sloan Schang
Emily Findley	Hannah Cruz
Elaine Dado	Emma Clark
Juliette Poff	Mana Haeri
Abby Spegman	Susan Jowaiszas
Sletsy Dlamini	Debbie Menashe
Amanda Potter	Lidia Garcia
Kate Wellington	Amanda Zuniga
Kenji Spielman	Taylor Ford
Themba Mutepefa	Alexis Brunelle
Steve Lacey	Emilio Ramirez
Sue Fletcher	Cody Kleinsmith
Ashley Bartels	Thad Roth
Mayra Aparicio	Lizzie Rubado
Kirstin Pinit	

Others attending:

Huong Tran	Renata Anderson, Skill Demand
Melissa Cribbins, Energy Trust Board	Carlos Banks, Skill Demand
Henry Lorenzen, Energy Trust Board	Ryan Rasmussen, Skill Demand
Ruchi Sadhir, Oregon Department of Energy	Guillermo Castillo, Utility Advocates
Ryan Robison, Skill Demand	Vanessa Burchfield, Burch Energy Solutions
Angel Swanson, Skill Demand	Lindsey Diercksen, LD Consulting
Tiffany Purn, Skill Demand	Chris Smith, Energy 350
	Alder Miller, CLEARResult

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 on Energy Trust's website at <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.

Tyrone led a reflection about the work of Valerie Thomas, a Black NASA physicist who invented the technology used in 3-D movies. Members discussed how this example is one countless

accomplishment that have gone unnoticed due to attribution to Black women, and how Black History Month is an opportunity to recognize these hidden figures. Tyrone Henry mentioned several more examples of such inventions, including IV bags and gas masks.

2. New staff and council member introductions

Topic summary

Tyrone Henry led introductions between existing council members and two new Energy Trust staff positions whose work is relevant to the Diversity Advisory Council, followed by new members who were recently selected to serve on the council.

First, Lizzie Rubado was recently named director of innovation and development, a new executive leadership role intended to support new funding opportunities. The innovation and development group will centralize the development function and foster innovation across the organization, which will help Energy Trust serve more customers and provide more comprehensive energy solutions. The role was briefly discussed, as well as ways the council may be engaged in 2023.

Tyrone Henry next introduced Alex Novie (not present), who has a new role leading cross-sector customer engagement as the communities and new initiatives sector lead. This work will include pilots, emerging technology and workforce development.

Next, Tyrone introduced three incoming council members:

Neil Lee leads architectural firm LEEKA Architecture and Planning, which works with Energy Trust as a design ally. As a Portland-born Chinese American, Neil is involved with many organizations that serve the local Chinese community. He has previously participated in Energy Trust diversity-focused events and board trainings as a panelist.

Joni McSpadden works with Oregon Native American Chamber to foster tribal partnerships throughout the state and create educational programming for small businesses. A member of the Cherokee Nation, Joni serves as a tribal elder and culture keeper and creates traditional pottery. Joni also has a grant-writing business.

Will Young (not present) serves as Community Impact Director with Community Action of Jackson County in Medford working with high school students.

Discussion

The council asked to expand on any early innovation work that the council should be aware of (Susan Badger-Jones). Lizzie Rubado stated the group is currently working on assessing the landscape of available funding opportunities, including those driven by new legislation, and evaluating which ones fit with Energy Trust's organizational priorities. While the group is not actively pursuing opportunities in the immediate future, they are having conversations with new potential partners and will keep the council updated as things progress.

Energy Trust board member Henry Lorenzen asked what types of opportunities the group expects to be available. Lizzie Rubado responded they do not have specific examples yet but will be assessing in relation to Energy Trust's high-level mission and focus on opportunities to reduce the most high-level barriers for customer participation. For example, opportunities to mitigate cost barrier for low-income customers or ways to address additional maintenance needed before an energy measure can be installed may be considered.

Henry Lorenzen asked for an example of a partnership the group is exploring. Lizzie Rubado stated they are talking with Oregon Housing and Community Services and Oregon Department of Energy about ways to pair Inflation Reduction Act funding with Energy Trust incentives, but they are very early conversations. They do not expect to begin implementing any activities sooner than eight months or more. Federal funding opportunities are in the concepting stage, and funding awards are further out with no known dates.

Staff added that Energy Trust staff are cultivating relationships that could lead to collaboration with agencies like Oregon Native American Chamber (Tyrone Henry). Relationship-building is happening across the organization, but it takes time to build trust.

Next steps

Lizzie Rubado will bring Innovation and Development updates to the council as needed.

3. Energy Trust board training update

Energy Trust board members Melissa Cribbins and Henry Lorenzen provided an update on diversity trainings Energy Trust's board is participating in. Two training sessions occurred in late 2022, both facilitated by Tyrone Henry, to provide time for the board to come together for open and honest conversations.

Melissa Cribbins introduced herself, sharing that she has served on Energy Trust's board for eight years and is the current chair of its ad hoc diversity, equity and inclusion committee. She shared her perspective on the recent trainings, which prompted the board to reflect on the power of labels to influence how people see themselves and shape their worldviews. Labels given to a person by others can be very powerful but do not necessarily reflect reality. Melissa shared that the ad hoc committee has identified a plan to continue trainings in 2023, including opportunities for the board to get out in the community. The board looks forward to working more with the Diversity Advisory Council this year.

Henry Lorenzen introduced himself as a board member of almost six years, who lives in Pendleton, Oregon. His previous experience includes practicing law, engineering and dry land wheat farming, and service on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council representing rural cooperatives, which provided first-hand experience of the challenges to implementing clean energy in rural areas. Henry expressed appreciation for Tyrone Henry's work with the board, which is helping foster closer relationships with fellow members. He stated he is heartened by people's willingness to share vulnerable memories and experiences.

Henry shared that the trainings have helped him shift perspective on energy efficiency as primarily a least-cost tool for utilities that keeps costs lower for ratepayers. The energy efficiency measures Energy Trust supports provide much more direct value to those who can afford to invest in them. However, that leaves a number of customers behind and there is a need to create an appropriate balance.

Tyrone Henry expressed gratitude for the board's engagement in the recent trainings. He stated board members have also proactively attended Diversity First Thursday events, and he is hopeful that the relationship with the board will continue to deepen.

Discussion

A council member who serves on the board's diversity, equity and inclusion ad hoc committee expressed appreciation for the recent trainings. They had been discouraged by the slow

progress to develop training opportunities, but the events hit the mark in a profound way. Many board members have expressed positive feedback on the trainings (Susan Badger-Jones).

A board member added that even though some training activities were uncomfortable, the important thing is to create an environment that feels safe (Melissa Cribbins). The trainings provided a sense of safety and shared learning that allowed participants to authentically connect and grow.

Next steps

The board's ad hoc diversity, equity and inclusion committee will continue developing trainings and outreach opportunities for members in 2023. Tyrone Henry invited the council to contribute ideas for board members to engage with community members and organizations.

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. Ideas were invited on activities or topics for 2023, such as a social mixer to get to know newer council members.

Discussion

The council expressed interest in the idea of regular social engagements to help build community. Council members also suggested attending community events and identifying opportunities to volunteer (Terrance Harris). A member suggested combining a social event with onboarding activities for new members (Susan Badger-Jones). The council discussed its interest in learning about event opportunities Energy Trust is participating in, especially those that members could join.

One council member suggested that they could consider adding a youth diversity member. It is important to start engaging people when they are younger to foster interest in joining committees and getting involved (Rebecca Descombs). Another member agreed, stating youth is our future, and we need people following behind for our efforts to be sustainable (Neil Lee).

Next steps

Tyrone Henry will use this feedback to finalize the schedule and share with council members once complete. Council members will be contacted to schedule a social event in first quarter.

5. Announcements

Council members and other attendees shared information on upcoming opportunities.

Tyrone Henry and Neil Lee invited members to attend a Chinese New Year celebration on January 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Oregon convention center. Energy Trust will have a booth at this event, staffed by Tyrone Henry and board member Elee Jen. Indika Sugathadasa suggested that council members and Energy Trust staff should be proactive in sharing activities that members can attend.

Tyrone Henry provided a reminder that February is Black History Month.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m. The next Diversity Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, 2023. <https://www.energytrust.org/about/public-meetings/diversity-advisory-council-meetings/>.