

Joint Advisory Council Meeting Notes

January 10, 2024

Attending from the councils:

Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University
Jonathan Belmont, Bonneville Power Administration
Ryan Harvey, Pacific Power
Kari Greer, Pacific Power
Les Perkins, Farmers Irrigation District
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX HIVE
Lisa McGarity, Avista
Noemi Ortiz, Cascade Natural Gas
Susan Badger-Jones, special projects consultant
April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress
Mark Rehly, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Charity Fain, Community Energy Project
Andy Cameron, Oregon Department of Energy
Brikky King, Fairway Mortgage

Joe Abraham, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Kerry Meade, Northwest Energy Efficiency Council
Angela Crowley Koch, Oregon Solar + Storage Industry Association
Laney Ralph, Northwest Natural
Josh Peterson, University of Oregon
Martin Campos-Davis
Jeff Bissonnette, NW Energy Coalition
Alan Beane, GeoGrade Constructors LLC
Jaimes Valdez, Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund
Jake Wise, Portland General Electric
Rhea Standing Rock, Sunlight Solar
Christopher Banks, Urban League of Portland
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE

Attending from Energy Trust:

Michael Colgrove
Emily Findley
Bayo Ware
Janelle St. Pierre
Marshall Johnson
Greg Stokes

Themba Mutepefa
Julianne Thacher
Kate Wellington
Betsy Kauffman
Danielle Rhodes

Others attending:

Henry Lorenzen, Energy Trust board
Peter Therkelsen, Energy Trust board
Lauren Rosenstein, Oregon Department of Energy

Ezell Watson, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Aaron Glade, 1961 consulting
Holly Valkama, 1961 consulting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Amber Cole, director of communications and customer service, convened the meeting at 1:03 p.m. and welcomed council members. 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/>.

Board member Henry Lorenzen thanked the participants for their time and expertise in informing early thinking about Energy Trust's next strategic plan. Facilitator Holly Valkama reviewed the agenda and reviewed meeting norms to guide the workshop.

2. Strategic planning content and engagement schedule

Topic summary

Amber Cole provided an overview of the major elements of the strategic planning process. The first part of the year will be focused on board learning, engagement and discussion, capturing input from stakeholders, including advisory councils, and developing a draft plan. Starting in August, the draft plan will be presented to the board of directors and the public for input. Once the plan is finalized, the board will review and adopt it in December. Through the development process, the board and staff will work to build out components like scenario planning, strengths and capabilities, unique role of value, vision and purpose, areas of focus and signposts.

Discussion

A council member asked how determining Energy Trust's unique role of value will impact its vision and purpose (Jonathan Belmont). Holly Valkama replied that envisioning the unique role of value will not necessarily impact the vision and purpose, but it is an easier way into the conversation to get the board thinking more specifically about the boundaries of Energy Trust's work.

3. Strategic planning input and discussion

Topic summary

Advisory council members were asked to discuss four key questions in breakout groups. After a 20-minute discussion for each question, the group collectively reported takeaways from their small group conversations.

Discussion

What large trends (economic, environmental, political, regulatory, etc.) are likely to have a significant impact on how your organization (and/or Energy Trust) operates over the next 6 years? Ex. Climate change, demographic change, decarbonization

What do you think are the most likely factors shaping the future? In other words, what will the world look like in 2030?

- More renewable energy generation will change the energy landscape as they are better developed.
- Supply-line issues
- Reaching underserved communities
- Workforce development and ensuring communities that haven't been able to take advantage of workforce opportunities can do so now
- The deluge of funding coming down the pipeline and getting those dollars out the door equitably
- Regulatory issues
- Cost of upgrading energy systems and how that will impact utility customer rates
- Looking beyond least-cost resource efficiency and hammering out the harder stuff now that the low hanging fruit has been picked
- Health and safety concerns
- Digital divide as homes become "smarter"
- Prices in commercial real estate
- Vacancies in cities
- Decarbonization of the economy will intensify
- Bottlenecks in getting resources to lower income communities
- Optimism and hope for a cleaner, more rational and calm world
- More clean energy resources added to the grid
- Enhanced resiliency for individuals and communities
- Electrification and ensuing system constraints

- More electric vehicle infrastructure coming online
- Time constraints in preparing utility systems for electrification
- Increased need for collaboration between organizations and entities trying to solve big problems
- Growing need to provide good, reliable information on clean energy solutions to combat rampant misinformation
- Demand response

How do you see your customers/communities (meaning constituents or members) changing over the next 6 years? What do you think their main needs/desires/priorities/challenges are going to be? What are some of the strategies you've adopted in your organization, or are considering, to address these priorities/challenges?

- Moving more toward an inclusive, equitable group
- Tribal groups and rural communities being brought into clean energy conversations and co-developing solutions
- Building capacity with Oregon Department of Energy's community navigator program
- Education and bringing people along in the clean energy transition
- Collecting and using data for community betterment
- Many customers are already impacted by energy shutoffs, which can be a wake-up call for some groups. Frontline communities have been facing these challenges for some time now and there is opportunity to better serve them with solutions.
- Better understanding of customer needs through engagement will be critical
- Streamlining information-sharing processes between Energy Trust and utility partners
- Load increase from data centers and semiconductors
- Addressing split cost challenge with renters who can't take advantage of capital upgrades with creative solutions
- Investments in health and safety and retaining housing stability as a core value
- Population growth in Oregon as younger people choose to settle there for a livable future
- Importance of community input in decision-making about infrastructure
- Ensuring customers don't get left behind in the shift to digital forms of communication
- Consumer protection and ensuring high-quality installations in light of new funding coming in
- Need for grid modernization due to electrification and increasing population density
- More energy planning in rural communities that may lead to adoption of microgrids, micro hydro and renewable energy
- Demographic trends and increased tension from the urban/rural divide
- Challenges from infrastructure loss in workforce development—for instance, community college programs being shut down because they relied on the presence of certain instructors who are retiring

How can Energy Trust work with others – utilities, government, customers, communities (e.g., community-based organizations) - to optimize everyone's participation in this important work?

- Energy Trust thinking intentionally and critically about which opportunities are the best fit for taking the lead versus being in a support role
- Thinking about building a pipeline for all the jobs that will be needed across community-based organizations and other entities
- Helping people go to trade schools and keeping opportunities and resources local
- Taking advantage of existing networks through partnerships with community action agencies and Oregon Housing and Community Services
- Working with partners early to design programs and share information

- Support the market in identifying bad actors who may be spreading misinformation
- Holistic engagement with communities to avoid double-tapping and asking the same questions multiple times
- Ensuring energy efficiency is integrated with demand response programs
- Defining Energy Trust's brand and stance in addressing disaster events and show it is truly invested
- Being more present in communities, maintain awareness of the potential of an "echo chamber" when the same people are always in the room and encourage new voices
- Leveraging community partnerships to bring new people into the energy workforce

Given the world we may be operating in, what's possible because Energy Trust exists? In other words, what unique value does Energy Trust provide (or could it provide) — distinct from other organizations? (Don't constrain your thinking based on past roles or practices, and feel free to be bold. The opportunities could be in partnership with other organizations and stakeholders, or in a sole lead role.)

- Maintaining a robust network of trade ally contractors
- Weaving together funding sources in a reliable way
- Good track record with financial audits
- Trusted third-party information resource
- One-stop shop for acquiring energy efficiency for investor-owned utilities, including gas and electric
- Capacity to evolve beyond energy efficiency program administration
- Ability to tailor messaging to different audiences and languages
- Stable funding source
- Historically high customer satisfaction across programs
- Deep expertise in delivering incentive programs
- Recognition as a thought leader

4. Conclusion

Topic summary

Amber Cole shared next steps for strategic planning. A summary of the meeting notes will be prepared and provided to Energy Trust's board prior to its January 24 meeting along with summaries from other outreach.

Discussion

No discussion.

Next steps

A written summary of the input shared in this meeting will be provided to Energy Trust's board prior to its January meeting and made publicly available online.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next advisory council meetings will take place in February and [details will be posted on Energy Trust's website.](#)