Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes
March 9, 2021

Attending from the council:
Susan Badger-Jones, special projects consultant
Charity Fain, Community Energy Project
Dolores Martinez, EUVALCREE
Indika Sugathadasa, PDX Hive
Shane Davis, City of Portland
Cheryl Roberts, African American Alliance for Homeownership
Sherry Tran, Bend small business owner
Rebecca Descombes, Native American Youth and Family Center
Oswaldo Bernal, OBL Media

Attending from Energy Trust:
Michael Colgrove
Emily Findley
Cheryle Easton
Elizabeth Fox
Wendy Bredemeyer
Tyrone Henry
Debbie Goldberg Menashe
Ryan Crews
Hannah Cruz
Juliana Hairston
Kenji Spielman
Wendy Gibson
Julianne Thacher
Caryn Appler
Sue Fletcher
Shelly Carlton
Thad Roth
MacKenzie Kurtzner
Susan Jowaiszas
Kirstin Pinit
Karl Whinnery
Steve Lacey
Andy Grighun
Phil Degens
Ashley Bartels
Jay Ward
Matt Getchell
Dan Rubado
Amber Cole
Amanda Zuniga
Kathleen Belkhayat
Mana Haeri
Fred Gordon

Others attending:
Mark Kendall, Energy Trust board
Tina Brooks, Pacific Power
Anna Kim, Oregon Public Utility Commission
Ruchi Sadhir, Oregon Department of Energy
Frederick Randall II, Small Business Utility Advocates
Jenny Sorich, CLEAResult
Knowledge Murphy, Multnomah County
Heather Moline, NW Energy Coalition
Tina Schnell, ASK Energy
Shelly Beaulieu, TRC

1. Welcome, Agenda Review and Group Reflection
Tyrone Henry, Energy Trust’s diversity, equity and inclusion lead, convened the meeting at 10 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 Henry led the group in a reflection on a quote by Dr. Patricia Bath, the first African American woman to achieve a residency in ophthalmology and gain a medical patent. The quote addressed the limitations of majority thinking in the science community. Council members observed parallels between Dr. Bath’s own blindness and how majority thinking can blind groups of people. One member shared how the quote prompted thinking about how we measure value and success of people of color, and that the value of their lived experience is not seen as valuable compared with “expertise.”

2. Legislation and Policy Update

Topic summary
Staff presented an update on state legislative activity and the status of bills Energy Trust has been monitoring. Staff reviewed Oregon Public Utility Commission grant agreement language outlining the organization’s prohibition on lobbying. Staff make new legislators aware of these guidelines and reference the organization’s non-advocacy role whenever responding to requests for information on pending legislation. A bill proposing to modernize the public purpose charge, HB 3141, has received a hearing and now has a work session scheduled to consider amendments to the bill. Staff reviewed the status of other energy and equity-related bills that are moving forward.

Discussion
Council members expressed support for continued monitoring of a bill aimed at distributing reparations to Black Oregonians. Staff is open to feedback and guidance from the council on what bills Energy Trust should monitor or engage with that advance racial justice. The council said the potential impact of the bill on the Black community could be transformational, allowing Black individuals to purchase new appliances and become homeowners. One member asked for a status update on the Oregon Public Utility Commission moratorium on residential electricity disconnections that was slated to end in April (Rebecca Descombes). Staff shared the moratorium was extended to June, starting with 15-day notices to customers allowed June 15. The council suggested some of the demographic data that Energy Trust has begun to collect on underserved customers could be useful in considering what reparations ought to be if the bill were successful (Susan Badger-Jones).

Next steps
Staff will continue monitoring bills and provide information on request give an update at the next meeting of the Diversity Advisory Council.

3. Customer Insights Study Report Findings

Topic summary
Marketing staff presented results from the Customer Insights Study, which will be available in an upcoming report. The study included responses from participants and non-participants from 2013 to 2019. It revealed the method Energy Trust has been using for the past few years to gauge participation rates using census tract data does not accurately reflect the demographics of participants. As a result, work is underway to determine a more effective way to measure progress toward participation goals in the 2021 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operations Plan.

Discussion
Council members expressed support for the work to evaluate the census tract approach and that a majority of the organizational marketing budget go to increasing awareness among underserved customers. One council member who had reviewed the draft report stated there was a lot of valuable information and recommended council members review its executive summary (Susan Badger-Jones). A member said it can be challenging to collect survey
responses from the Hispanic community and offered to support efforts to do so (Oswaldo Bernal). Staff noted each survey respondent received $15.

Next steps
Staff will make the full study and presentation slides available to council members. The council is invited to provide additional input on ways to improve awareness in underserved communities and suggestions for how to effectively measure awareness.

4. Update on DAC Engagement Collaboration Pathways

Topic summary
Staff brought an update on a proposal from last month to create a more streamlined and effective system for council members to provide input on program and service design. Staff recognized the council’s perspective would be valuable on a wider variety of initiatives than just program offerings. As a result, the project scope has been broadened to include other entities at the organizational level. Collaborative engagements are expected to typically be short and conclude within a few weeks.

Discussion
No discussion.

Next steps
Staff is gathering additional feedback to create a selective interest survey to allow council members to identify categories of interest and create a profile allowing staff visibility on who to engage.

5. TRC Contracting Update

Topic summary
TRC staff provided an update on progress toward implementing its new contract managing the Existing Buildings program. TRC was selected last year as the program’s Program Management Contractor and took over the work in 2021. The contract features a requirement to spend at least 20% of the subcontracting budget with companies that meet diversity requirements in the first year and increase that by 2.5% each subsequent year. TRC staff is taking steps to promote a positive experience for these subcontractors by not marking up subcontract costs, implementing a faster payment process and ensuring right-size contracts to fit the business. The program is also introducing a new type of position, community-based liaisons (independent consultants who are leaders or influencers within a community) to provide insight on program strategies, offers and messaging.

Discussion
Council members asked if TRC has a history of engaging underserved markets. Staff stated the company has robust experience serving low-income multifamily customers and some experience reaching communities of color and Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity-certified businesses. The group discussed the need to slow down and be more intentional when working with new customer groups and community agencies. The council expressed support for the collaborative approach TRC described. Staff meets with community-based liaisons weekly and their feedback has already directly impacted programs.

Next steps
TRC will implement the Existing Buildings program in 2021 with the support of its advising and partner entities.
6. **Announcements**
Oregon Public Utility Commission staff briefly spoke about the Energy Trust 2021 diversity performance metrics set by the commission in February and previewed changes to the development process for 2022 metrics.

7. **Public Comment**
There was no public comment.

8. **Adjournment**
The meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m. The next council meeting will be a joint session with the Conservation Advisory Council and the Renewable Energy Advisory Council on April 14 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Zoom.