Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes
September 14, 2021

Attending from the council:
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
Terrance Harris, Oregon State University

Attending from Energy Trust:
Emily Findley
Elaine Dado
Cheryle Easton
Elizabeth Fox
Michael Colgrove
Marshall Johnson
Emily Estrada
Eric Braddock
Debbie Menashe
Abby Spegman
Adam Bartini
Amanda Sales
Amanda Potter
Amanda Thompson
Alex Novie
Tracy Scott
Tyrone Henry
Betsy Kauffman
Greg Stokes
Albert Stanfield
Mayra Aparicio

Cameron Starr
Jessica Kramer
Melanie Bissonnette
Hannah Cruz
Kenji Spielman
Julianne Thacher
Mackenzie Kurnter
Andy Grighun
Emma Clark
Shelly Carlton
Thad Roth
Steve Lacey
Kirstin Pinit
Ashley Bartels
Jay Ward
Amber Cole
Sletsy Dlamini
Ian Pagatpatan
Sue Fletcher
Amanda Zuniga

Others attending:
Mark Kendall, Energy Trust board
Elee Jen, Energy Trust board
Jessica Arnold, Cascade Energy
Luis Morales, Energy 350
Chris Smith, Energy 350
Kwasi Boateng, Burch Energy
Eric Jordan, Burch Energy
David Burchfield, Burch Energy
Alder Miller, CLEAResult
Elena Clements, Skill Demand Energy

Juan Carlos Blacker, Juan Carlos Blacker Consulting
Jocelyn Brink, CLEAResult
Renwick Paige, Energy Infrastructure Partners
Martin Lott, Energy Infrastructure Partners
Summer Fowler, Ecoreal Solutions
Angela Smith, Minority Construction Group
Tina Brooks, Pacificorp
Knowledge Murphry, Multnomah County
Aaron Frechette, Cascade Energy
1. Welcome, Agenda Review and Group Reflection

Tyrone Henry, Energy Trust’s diversity, equity and inclusion lead, convened the meeting at 9:01 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 the council in an activity that invited members to share historical inventions or discoveries that created a lasting impact early in their lives. Council members shared responses that included the moon landing, CD players, DVDs and laser discs, computer technology and digital cameras.

2. Legislation and Policy Update

**Topic summary**

Hannah Cruz, Energy Trust senior communications manager, presented an update on state legislative activity, anticipated impacts from bills recently passed into law and highlights from House Bill 3141, which modernized and extended the public purpose charge that underpins Energy Trust’s funding. The previous mandate for Energy Trust to acquire cost-effective energy efficiency was removed from the public purpose charge and transitioned into Oregon Public Utility Commission’s standard ratemaking process. The public purpose charge will continue to include funding for renewable energy programs and incentives, and now allows Energy Trust to invest in new technologies that support reliability, resilience and the incorporation of renewable energy into the grid. The bill also includes a new directive to invest 25% of renewable energy public purpose charge funds in projects and activities that benefit low- and moderate-income customers. Oregon Public Utility Commission will create an implementation timeline and roadmap for these changes and will be setting new equity metrics for the utility customer funds Energy Trust invests through a public process by the end of 2022. Staff reviewed other new clean energy legislation that may inform or impact Energy Trust’s work including laws that allocate funds for residential home repairs and wildfire rebuilding.

**Discussion**

The council asked if HB 3141 will provide more or less funding for Energy Trust as a result of its increased flexibility. The bill is not expected to impact annual funding levels, and energy efficiency will still be funded based on the annual cost-effectiveness level identified by staff in coordination with each utility. Cost-effective energy efficiency funding has and will continue to fluctuate year to year. Renewable energy program funding through the public purpose charge is a set percentage annually and is not expected to differ significantly from current funding levels.

**Next steps**

Staff will continue providing updates to the council as new legislation is implemented, and to inform members of public engagement opportunities.

3. Preview of Draft 2022 Budget and Action plan

**Topic summary**

Staff presented a preview of Energy Trust’s draft 2022 budget and two-year action plan. Staff reviewed the budget schedule and engagement opportunities, then Tyrone Henry shared
activity highlights from the DEI action plan. Other action plan highlights include trade ally network activities, staff recruitment and board membership, community-led approaches, and policy services.

Discussion
An attendee asked if the Diversity Day events included in the DEI action plan are open to non-staff (Renwick Paige). Staff responded they are open to others beyond staff. Council members asked for more details about activities to increase hiring and retention of diverse staff, urging Energy Trust to be intentional about providing resources and support for new staff of color and to be proactive about checking in with them. This is especially important given the shift to remote work (Shane Davis). The council discussed how retention strategies connect to the larger idea of new Black staff who have moved to Oregon from other states. Council members identified opportunities to connect new staff to a community presence outside of work and organize affinity groups to help them acclimate to an overall environment with a significantly lower concentration of non-white peers than in their former communities (Terrance Harris).

Next steps
Council members are encouraged to participate in the budget process by providing a public comment, or by attending a public budget workshop on October 13, 2021.

4. Industry and Agriculture Upcoming Request for Proposal
Topic summary
Staff presented on an upcoming request for proposal (RFP) for program delivery contractors to implement Energy Trust's Production Efficiency program for industrial and agricultural customers. Staff reviewed context about how the program is currently managed and what changes are being implemented in this upcoming solicitation. New considerations include consolidating into fewer implementation contracts and increasing the diversity of the implementation team, including encouraging Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) certified firms to bid as a prime contractor or as part of a team. Staff reviewed implementer qualifications, proposal requirements and the overall engagement schedule.

Discussion
Committee members asked specific examples of the custom component to better visualize what the projects and deliverables entail. Staff also clarified the COBID certification requirement included in the RFP and stated the implementer is not required to be based in Oregon. Committee members asked about what kind of firms have responded to this RFP in the past, and why the candidate pool has not been more diverse historically (Oswaldo Bernal). Staff stated that to encourage greater diversity among bidders, this RFP requires an increased percentage of diverse subcontractors to be used by the prime implementer, and we expect to see improvement over time. Tyrone Henry acknowledged that Energy Trust has not historically done a good job with its outreach to potential RFP respondents, but is now increasing the amount of outreach and allotting more time to that process.

One attendee shared that she and her husband have a minority- and women-owned firm and have experience in bidding for federal contracts that have allocations for minority- and women-owned firms (Elee Jen). Teaming is important as a strategy to get minority owned firms into more projects. The committee suggested Energy Trust host a workshop to support networking among minority firms and minority- and women-owned businesses who are interested in teaming.

Next steps
The request for proposal will move ahead based on the schedule shared by staff, and committee members are invited to suggest potential applicants for Energy Trust to include in its outreach efforts.

5. 2020 Customer Insights Study - Input on Goals and Objectives

*Topic summary*
Staff presented outcomes from a customer insights study that is conducted every two years, sharing updates on the process and objectives. The study seeks to collect feedback from a representative sample of participants and non-participants, including both residential renters and owners. Oversampling ensures adequate representation from minority and rural customers. Staff shared takeaways from the 2020 study including: there is overall low awareness of Energy Trust; affordability and comfort are key drivers for customers to make energy upgrades; and census tracts are not a good proxy for measuring equity, resulting in Energy Trust moving away from this approach. The next customer insights study will have a larger internal group included in its development. Staff will be finalizing goals for the next study and releasing a request for proposal for an implementer later this year.

*Discussion*
No discussion.

*Next steps*
Updates will be shared with the council once goals are finalized and a contractor is selected to implement the study.

8. Announcements
Tyrone Henry invited council members to Energy Trust’s annual budget workshop event on October 13. Staff explained what the workshop would cover, explaining that it is an opportunity for advisory council members, board members and the public to learn about decision points and priorities that informed budget development. Workshop attendees can also attend topical learning sessions and speak directly with staff about individual action plans. The council provided input on the structure of the learning sessions, indicating a preference for the ability to select topics of interest rather than attending every available session.

9. Public Comment
There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m. The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Zoom.