



MINUTES

November 14, 2013

6:00 PM

Martha Canfield Library - Arlington

Present: William Deveneau (Bennington), Peter Luca (Sunderland), Orland Campbell (Manchester Village), Paul Myers (Peru), Suzy dePeyster (Sandgate), Judy Boehlert (Sandgate), Bill Pennebaker (Shaftsbury), John LaVecchia (Dorset), Keith Squires (Arlington), Meg Cottam (Glastenbury), Rick Kelley (Manchester), Bruce Lierman (Transportation Interest), Jim Sullivan (BCRC), Jim Henderson (BCRC), Jim Hand (Dorset), Tyler Yandow (Dorset), Nelson Brownell (Pownal), Representative Bill Botzow (Pownal), Rob Costantino (Shaftsbury), Li Ling Young (EV), Brad deBoer (EV), Andrew Tarnas-Raskin (Bennington resident)

I. Approval of Minutes of September Meeting

Motion (Boehlert): Approve as submitted. Second (Cottam)
Passed unanimously.

II. Vermont's Building Energy Codes - Li Ling Young, Efficiency Vermont

Young noted that EV usually helps people and businesses who are wanting to do some improvements. The energy codes lead to a slightly different role - assisting people and municipalities understanding mandatory codes and procedures.

Young distributed binders to everyone in attendance. The binder provides information about Act 89 and the energy codes and also includes a DVD with the presentation, handbook, forms, and additional information. The Energy Code Assistance Center is available to support towns at any time.

Young discussed some details and requirements of Act 89:

Public Service Department wrote the Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) and Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBES).

Residential and commercial building energy codes both are self-certifying with the builders. Local governments have to provide RBES and CBES information about the codes when a zoning or building permit is applied for. For RBES, towns can provide electronic version or a link to the code online. Towns don't have to give the CBES out - it is expected that the designer/architect will have the commercial code.

For municipalities that issue certificates of occupancy, local official must see the self-certification regarding energy code compliance prior to issuing the CO. Requirement to see the documentation of compliance appears during real estate transactions, too.

State is developing a "stretch code" that includes more stringent energy conservation requirements; it is something towns can adopt if they want. It is likely that the stretch code ultimately will become the standard code.

The RBES and CBES are not particularly stringent – they establish minimum standards that will lead to long-term energy and money savings and improves quality of housing over the long-term by mandating efficiency improvements during initial construction, when it is most cost-effective to do the work.

Codes cover virtually all new construction including additions and major renovations (not remodeling). They apply to seasonal homes, not hunting camps. If all energy is provided from renewable sources, do not have to meet codes.

Mobile homes are regulated at the federal level and not subject to state regulation. Modular homes have to be built to meet the standards of the state in which they will be installed.

Young then described minimum building standards and documentation and reporting (certificate) procedures. RBES covers: insulation, air sealing, mechanical ventilation, combustion safety, heating and cooling equipment, efficient lighting, vapor barriers, duct insulation and leakage, pipe insulation, etc.

For CBES, both design and construction must comply with the code. The builder is required to construct as per the code compliant design. EV will do plan reviews for commercial (and residential) projects for free; need to enroll with EV for this assistance. EV also provides financial incentives for energy-efficient construction.

CBES covers building envelope, mechanical systems, lighting and electrical power. CBES certificate has sign-offs for both the architect and the builder.

Contact information for Energy Code Assistance Center: 855-887-0673.

Additional free assistance and support is available for above-code construction (bronze, silver, and gold levels).

There also are programs for above-code commercial construction; for above-code assistance: 802-921-5990 x7762 (residential), x7662 (commercial).

III. Energy Facility Siting and Local and Regional Energy Planning

Jim Sullivan gave an overview of the work and recommendations of the Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission that was established by the governor to review the current Public Service Board (Section 248 or Certificate of Public Good) process used to review (among other things) new energy generation projects. He noted that the Commission's recommendations, as well as subsequent legislative proposals, call for a significantly expanded role for municipal and regional plans and planning in the process. The additional emphasis on planning is in response to the recent proliferation in the number of new projects being proposed (mostly renewable energy projects) and their potential impacts on natural, scenic, historic resources and on people and neighborhoods. A key question is how much oversight and approval will the Public Service Department exercise over the planning process through preparation of a statewide "roadmap" that establishes some type of guidance for regional planning commissions and/or a PSD approval process for regional plans. In any event, regional planning commissions are expected to be asked to do additional work in this area and, very likely, in planning for thermal energy efficiency and transportation efficiency.

Respectfully submitted,
James D. Sullivan