

Green Buildings Advisory Committee

Draft Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 19, 2024 | 9:00 AM

McKenna Conference Room (1st Floor), 560 Jefferson Blvd., Warwick, RI 02886
Members of the public were allowed to join remotely via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Mark Winslow, Ken Filarski, Chris Armstrong, Tim Carroll, Jim Cambio, Greg Miller, Joe da Silva, Justine Brown, Michael O'Brien Crayne, John Willumsen

Others in Attendance: Steven Chybowski, Eli Bossin, Eva Davet, , Brittany Becker, Amanda Barker, Emily Koo, Karen Bradbury, William Owen (virtual), Tasneem Osman (virtual)

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Chairman Filarski called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Office of Energy Resources Administrative Announcements

Mr. Chybowski shared that the updated Rules and Regulations are currently under review. He also shared updates on programming for municipalities and public entities. First, OER is accepting applications for the Lead by Example Clean Energy Awards for public sector energy projects. These nominations are due by March 29th, 2024. In addition, OER and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank will be offering a spring round for the Efficiency Buildings Fund program, which provides below market-rate interest loans for energy projects. Submissions for this program are open April 22nd 2024, and are due by May 10th, 2024.

3. Vote on February 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Winslow motioned to approve the February 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Committee Member Miller seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

4. Chair Announcements

Chairman Filarski distributed a USGBC State Market Brief that identified the number of LEED certified buildings in the state. He also summarized the idea of incorporating the Green Buildings Act requirements into the building codes, which Commissioner Cambio may touch on at the end of the meeting. Lastly, he also followed up with contacts posting a State Archives feasibility study to ensure that the study is appropriately capturing green building requirements.

5. Discussion on Communications and Outreach to Public Agencies

Mr. Chybowski asked the Committee for their thoughts and priorities for outreach to public agencies. Committee Member Cambio mentioned that one of the first things that needs to be established is who will lead or be responsible for outreach. Second, the Committee needs to identify the target audience, and the language to use.

Committee Members agree that the target audience should be identified first. Committee Member Brown mentioned that she can include a checklist for the Green Buildings Act at a DOA conference in 2-3 weeks to assist in outreach. Mr. Bossin added that he has developed a contact list for the that likely captures much of the target audience the Committee should try to reach.

6. Review of Proposed House Bill 7617, the Building Decarbonization Act of 2024

Mr. Chybowski led an overview of House Bill 7617 for the Committee's awareness as it proposes additional responsibilities for the Committee. The language in the House Bill discusses private sector building energy requirements, in addition to the public sector already covered by the Green Buildings Act. Another main addition in the House Bill 7617 is that all new construction must be electric. A question of why there was a need for this new legislation was posed, and the response was that this bill would expand the scope of the Green Buildings Act.

7. Discussion of the City of Providence Carbon-Neutral Building Ordinance

The Committee discussed the ordinance passed by the City of Providence mandating that all municipal buildings be carbon-neutral by 2040 and opportunities for pairing this effort with the Green Buildings Act.

Committee Member da Silva shared that from the education sector, Providence leads by example. He stated that three schools have been built recently, and he believes that Providence will be able to meet the goals stated in the building ordinance.

8. Updates and New Business from Committee Members

Committee Member Cambio suggested to adopt the Green Buildings Act as a part of the state building code to incorporate it as a mandatory regulation. Chairman Filarski expressed support for this idea and to bring it to the State Building Commission for consideration.

9. Public Comment

Amanda Barker, Green Energy Consumers Alliance

Ms. Barker joined the meeting to talk more about House Bill 7617, and offered more information on the purpose of the bill. She addressed the previous question regarding the difference between this law and the Green Buildings Act. She explained that this bill was not just an amendment to the Green Buildings Act statute as it includes more than just the public sector.

Emily Koo, Acadia Center

Ms. Koo added additional commentary regarding House Bill 7617. She noted that the phased approach in the proposed legislation was to show that public buildings are meeting the requirements first. She also commented that a large portion of the state does not currently have access to the distributed gas system, and in those regions, it can be more economical to build or switch to all-electric buildings.

10. Adjourn

Council Member da Silva motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 a.m. Committee Member Willumsen seconded. All in favor, none opposed, and the meeting was adjourned.