

Residential Building Energy Labeling Working Group
Meeting Notes
10/15/20

Attendees: Leslie Badger (EVT); Kelly Launder (PSD); Chris Gordon (EVT); Richard Faesy (EFG); Keith Levenson (PSD); Tom Lyle (BED); Mike Russom (BED); Craig Peltier (VHCB); Karen Horne (VGS); Chris West (Home Builders Assn.); Martha Lange (BHHS Vermont Realty Group); Peter Tucker (Vermont Realtors Assn); Paul Zabriskie (Capstone); Amy McClellan (Milne-Allen Appraisal Co.); Malcolm Gray (Montpelier Construction); Tim Yandow (CVOEO).

- **Review/approve meeting minutes**
 - Richard F. moved to approve the meeting minutes from September, Malcolm seconded. Approved by voice vote. Paul Z. abstained as he wasn't present at the September meeting.

- **Review proposed recommendation on mandatory building disclosure**
 - Richard's Proposed Recommendation:
In the interest of a) consumer protection to provide consistent and transparent energy information to buyers and renters, b) making energy use visible to enable better decisions and c) encouraging energy reduction to meet our climate goals, the Residential (and Commercial?) Building Energy Labeling Working Group(s) recommend(s):
 1. *The Vermont Legislature establish a statewide time-of-listing requirement that all buildings disclosure either a) the Vermont Home Energy Profile (for residential buildings) or b) ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager benchmarking information (for non-residential buildings) when offered for sale or rent; and*
 2. *The Vermont Legislature enact a statewide charter change for all municipalities that would allow cities and towns to pass local time-of-listing energy disclosure ordinances referencing the Vermont Home Energy Profile and/or ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager benchmarking information.*
 - Currently municipalities need leg approval to change their charters. This is a backup if there is no statewide statute.
 - Kelly L: need to strike the mention of commercial group - Res group should not be voting on CBELWG issues
 - Richard F: will dissenting opinions be reflected in the report? Kelly L: we agreed early on that, yes.
 - Tom L: BED wants to slow the process down. Fine with voluntary. Mandatory is another matter
 - Vote on Richard's proposal?
 - Craig P: why not just present both positions without the vote?
 - Paul Z: need to answer the most predictable questions that might come up.
 - Tim Y: can subcommittees come up with pros and cons?
 - Richard F: I would be in agreement with that.
 - Kelly L: worried about the time and effort it would take to include this in the report.
 - Richard F: this could be a standalone section. How is Comm group dealing with this?
 - Craig P: sounds like we are not going to come to consensus on mandatory v. voluntary in Comm. Group. We're going to include opinions on both sides.
 - Richard F: maybe add a "what if" on mandatory program - what are the considerations.
 - Paul Z: have to address it. What does it mean if it's mandatory?

- Chris G: I think a separate section is a value add.
- Peter T: to change and add info on mandatory is a big change. VAR feels that a mandatory time of sale program is not good public policy.
- Martha L: This language makes it sound as though sellers do not already provide buyers energy usage information and they do. When at all possible, we Realtors gather as much ACTUAL usage information as we can get and disclose it to all potential buyers. The following properties will either never have energy/usage information or it will be incomplete: Estates, Foreclosures, Multi-family IF renters pay their own utilities
- Martha L: Suggested disclosures (Profile and Portfolio) should be given as an option for another way to disclose energy usage other than actual seller provided figures.
- Karen H: Need to make clear that budgets in report are based on a voluntary program. Mandatory would be much more costly.

Draft Legislative Report:

- **Review and discuss recommendations** (Subcommittee leads)
Label & Tool recommendations (Chris G)

Label and Reporting Subcommittee Recommendations

- Leverage NEEP’s Energy Estimator labeling framework for use in Vermont
 - Accommodates inputs from public data, homeowner/professional inputs (including billing information), or existing energy data found in HELIX database
 - Does not require an in-person home visit from a contractor, and can raise awareness of energy upgrade opportunities
- Key components of the label should include:
 - Home characteristics (address, age, sq. ft)
 - Estimated energy use and relative home efficiency
 - Estimated energy cost
 - Breakout of total energy use (ex. electricity, heating fuel)
 - Energy highlights and features
 - Next steps to lower energy costs
 - Resources for assisting homeowners with energy improvements

- EEU's will not be inputting energy usage data. Only the homeowner will do that.
- Tom L: concerned with costs to EEU of standing up HELIX etc. Small shop, limited funds. (comments in report draft) [Is this the recommendation? Use EEC/DSS funds for a labeling program?]
- Karen H: VGS concurs with what Tom said.
- Kelly L: This is a valid concern and should be reflected in the report.

Scores and Reporting recommendations (Leslie B)

- Energy Estimator is to generate E use estimate for homes that don't have actual usage.
- Reporting requirements
 - Tom L: is this going to be an additional reporting requirement? We are already doing too much.

- Karen H: already reporting w/x tallies to PSD. Hope we can streamline this to not make it redundant. TL: not much efficiency in reporting same data six times.
- Leslie B: Public access to data is recommended as long as it's asset based.
 - Kelly L: is the cost of enabling public access in the budget. RF: could be part of the energy dashboard and map. (Impact group report) \$20k

Assessor Subcommittee (Paul Z)

- Training will be required for all. Will vary depending if credential is building science based
- Need accountability - recommend presenting name of auditor / verifier on label. Exception for WAPs.
- QA: no detailed recommendation. Voluntary prog will likely not need QA. Mandatory will. Possibly including certifications for assessors.
- Richard F: asterisk on listing of professionals. The language "may need additional training on building science" is a bit wishy washy.
 - Paul Z: if voluntary, bar is lower, but for mandatory it seems there would need to be minimum amount of training.
 - Richard F: be explicit about that. Consensus of group?
- Tom L: budget comes from where? Kelly L: except for existing HELIX agreement with EEU's, legislature will have to figure that out.
- Paul Z: we have a climate crisis and no funding source to address it.
- Tom L: Homeowner verified may not be the right phrase.
 - Tim Yandow (in chat): Would "Home Owner Provided" make more sense than "Home Owner Verified?" Seems clearly in lieu of Tom's concern.
- Paul Z: why doesn't this have traction/momentum after 10 yrs and 3 reports? May need to say why this hasn't had the impact we expected.

Next Steps:

Send any additional comments to subcommittee chairs and or co-chairs, and Kelly. Also send thoughts on length and format of report.

Richard will draft a pros and cons section and send to group for consideration.

Kelly will revise draft report and send back out to group for review prior to the next meeting.