

Residential Building Energy Labeling Working Group
Meeting Notes
11/14/19

Attendees: Craig Peltier (VHCB), Lauren Grimley (VGS), Leslie Badger (VEIC), Chris Gordon (VEIC), Richard Faesy (Energy Futures Group), Tom Lyle (BED), Paul Zabriskie (Capstone, Vermont Community Action Partnership Representative), Martha Lange (VAR, Century 21), Melanie Paskevich (Neighborworks), Josh Larose (OEO), Malcolm Gray (Building Performance Professionals Association Representative), Tim Yandow (CVOEO), Diana Chase (Montpelier), Mike Russom (BED), Keith Levenson (PSD), Kelly Launder (PSD)

Review of the Act 62 charge for the Working Group

- Discussed requirements for items that the Working Group will advise the Commissioner on and what needs to be included in the report due January, 2021.
- Multifamily is included in Commercial Building Energy Labeling Working Group (CBELWG).
 - Owner-occupied vs. rental might be a better dividing line (Paul)
 - What about mixed use buildings? (Tom)
 - Need to discuss further about where the dividing line is or whether it's just addressed in the CBELWG.
 - CBELWG is charged with developing forms in respect to aggregating and reporting energy usage data.

Selection of Co-chairs

- Chris Gordon and Richard Faesy volunteered (Leslie Badger also nominated by Paul Z.) **Approved by voice vote.** (Richard Faesy abstained)
 - Role of co-chairs is to facilitate meetings, help develop agendas. (Kelly Launder)
 - Department staff will take meeting minutes, post meeting dates/times, agenda's and minutes on PSD webpage, and draft the Legislative report. (Kelly Launder)

Overview of the existing VT Home Energy Profile, HELIX database, and Montpelier labeling ordinance

- Home Energy Profile (HEP) and HELIX Database presentation (Leslie Badger)
 - Piloted 2015-17, subsidized by DOE - \$200 rebate made assessment no cost to customer.
 - Used data from DOE tool to populate HEP
 - Resource intensive for EVT.
 - Homeowners were most interested in benchmarking section on backside of HEP.
 - Once cost share went away, interest plummeted.
 - Home Energy Labeling Info Exchange HELIX has an API link to MLS. Managed by NEEP. 'Clearly Energy' provides energy cost estimates.
 - Next step is to create an end to end solution w/in HELIX to support an Energy labeling ordinance (like Montpelier).
 - New idea is to use HELIX. Get Home performance data into HELIX.
 - New version of report has achievements and action steps. The only "score" is energy \$/yr.
 - Kelly Launder: why did you choose cost rather than energy use for score? Leslie Badger/CG: easiest for homeowners/buyers to understand. To convert to energy we can include \$/unit fuel assumptions.
 - Josh LaRose: seems like we're moving away from National to regional.
 - Chris Gordon: need to address what assessor qualifications are. This label puts responsibility for inputs on homeowner.

- Craig Peltier: is energy usage broken out into heating cooling hot water appliances? Ans: HEP doesn't but it is avail on HELIX.
- Leslie Badger: For the new HEP the audience is / designed for a homeowner - understandable. Homeowners also have option to vary occupancy.
- Martha Lange: This won't work for Estate sales, foreclosures... etc. Foreclosures: resident/owner is not available. Presented as time-of-sale label that would be directed by realtors. Realtors don't want the liability, restriction on marketability. Why at time of sale? Why not all existing homes? Maybe start with the older homes first. Sellers could manipulate the numbers to make homes look better. If we do this we will need to verify. Would rather have homeowner fill in actual costs for energy. Have this in the SPIR including other maintenance costs like plowing and water. Would like to see a standard form that says what the home energy costs are and how many people live there. Propose utility disclosure that uses real numbers (actual usage) shouldn't be required though because can't get it for every house. (estates, foreclosures)
- Many people using this are first time home-buyers so it needs to be simple. (Martha Lange)
 - Leslie Badger: HEP normalizes energy use so can compare.
 - Martha Lange: If someone is home searching, SPIR info will reflect the same year's energy use, doesn't need to be normalized.
 - Others (Malcolm Gray, Richard Faesy): This allows apples to apples comparison between homes, is an asset rating so normalizes the data for weather, etc.
 - Martha Lange: she will point out differences to folks, like if there are more people or an elderly person living in a home that might impact energy use.
 - Kelly Launder: But if you have four different homes of a similar size and one has ten people living there, and one has an elderly person that keeps the heat at 75, and one has two people living there and one has one person, what do you do with that information, how do you know what house would cost the least for energy? May not pick the home that is kept at 75 because it looks like the highest usage, but may really be the most efficient.
 - Martha Lange: maybe provide both. Still having trouble with time of sale requirement.
 - Kelly Launder: see the goal as setting up the foundation/tool and a consistent label/score for municipalities and efficiency programs to use should they choose. Focus shouldn't be on whether it should be mandatory or voluntary. That isn't something that was posed in the Legislation, although could comment on it, but probably wouldn't have consensus.
- Montpelier Energy Labeling Ordinance: Richard Faesy and Diana Chase:
 - Montpelier ordinance requires energy info be provided when a property is listed. They have gotten City approval, voters' approval and legislative approval. Drafting language now. Hoping ordinance will be in place by early 2020. Pilot will run until Jan. 2021.
 - Richard Faesy: The program will likely use HELIX with "energy estimator." Model ordinance was from Portland OR.
 - Why was this pilot only Residential vs. Commercial? Richard Faesy: it was based on limitations of the tool.
 - Diana Chase: ordinance requires all buildings, Res and CI to comply, but are starting with Residential.
 - Martha Lange: should start slow, maybe voluntary for first couple of years?
 - Richard Faesy: Portland started by not enforcing the ordinance, but that made later compliance/enforcement difficult. It wasn't taken seriously.

- Paul Zabriske: Don't want perfect to be the enemy of good. There are challenges and complexity, but that's not a reason to tap the brakes.
- Richard Faesy: How can real estate professionals position themselves to help their clients? Would like to share the experience of Portland & others.
- Martha Lange: compromise is to have normalized energy report but really would like to include the actual usage disclosure.
- Setting ongoing meeting schedule:
 - Report due Jan 2021, finish committee work and start report by end of Sept. 2020. **Agreed to have at least monthly meetings.**
 - Proposed 1-3 pm on 2nd Thursday of the month, except for December. **PSD will send out a doodle poll to set December meeting.**
 - Invite all to IMT presentation and if possible record it for future use.
- Other business, including others to invite to attend meetings
 - Richard Faesy: Important to have a lender on the committee, suggested Simeon Chapin from VSECU. **PSD will reach out to invite.**
 - Malcolm Gray: invite fuel dealers? **PSD will reach out to invite.**
 - Craig Peltier: invite appraisers, home inspectors? Jeff Gephardt? Amy McLellan. **Chris Gordon will reach out to Green Home Alliance and Home inspectors that participated in HES pilot**
- **Next meeting: Get ready for beta testing, label design, discuss work plan and subcommittees.**