

Minutes, 8-3-08

Energy Star Used as Energy Code

Some states and towns are looking at code upgrades to address energy costs and climate action planning. It just makes sense on many levels.

Guest presenters Richard Faesy, Kevin Harrison, Dave Beaulieu, and Mike Dewein will present "Lessons learned" Communities where Energy Star was established as the Local Energy Code." Speakers will discuss successful initiatives in which communities established ENERGY STAR certification as the minimum code requirement. You will learn how communities decided to seek ENERGY STAR as code and the process they followed to legally require ENERGY STAR.

Richard Faesy, VEIC. The Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships – www.neep.org is pushing the concept of moving the national building code 30% higher than it is now. The issue will be proposed at the IECC meeting in MN in September (www.iccsafe.org).

NEEP has an informal appendix process (www.neep.org/newsletter/1Q2008/codes.html) and the model code being considered by the MA Board of Building Standards. The appendix outlines what would be included in future code updates, to avoid surprising builders in coming years. NJ – push to move state to higher efficiency goals, 20% by 2020. Move new construction up to higher level. CA – has been doing this for awhile. Title 24 has some of the higher levels. ENERGY STAR – 15% higher than code. NEEP has resources to help.

Mike Dewein, BCAP – Some movement to go even further – Zero Energy by 2030 – Mazria effort. Much discussion of reality of energy codes – compliance is very poor. Would be doing better if better compliance. Standard code enforcement infrastructure – not willing or able to improve compliance. Been promoting Energy Raters as another compliance method. Other places that have worked – Austin, San Francisco, Colorado.

Less interest at state level in adopting 30%. More interest in compliance options. Much interest all over country. Fort Collins – working on upgrading. Would help improve business opportunities for raters. Another approach – looking at energy raters and other energy groups to help market ENERGY STAR programs.

Kevin Harrison, LIPA, and David Beaulieu, CSG. Long Island's move to go Energy Star code started on political front. Brookhaven Town Council drafted a resolution. Other towns looking at what was done. Babylon also. Adopted ENERGY STAR as energy code. Worked with utility and Long Island Builders Association. Had to provide robust HERS infrastructure to support it. Need to identify key market players. Town motivated to get support from all stakeholders, including code officials. 10 out of 13 townships have adopted this. Soon all will be involved. Did intensive rater training. Have 30 raters. Builder Association wanted phase-in. Had interim requirements. Modified builder option package. Done in 2006 – 2007. Production numbers are done.

Liz – How many raters needed for how much housing? David – Depends on geography. Have 20 -80 rule. Out of 100, only 20 are producing. Probably don't need 33 raters now. Were doing 4500 homes per year. Rough guess – 2000 homes would require 15 raters. Liz – How much resistance from builders? David – Not much. Builders recognized enthusiasm from towns. Beginning of green buzz. Wanted to be part of policy making.

Fraser – How much would energy savings be driver. All towns who do this rely on raters, so no burden on code officials. Provide paper documentation, so township doesn't have to do

more. Get report. NY State & AEC came up with software that would meet state compliance.

Q – Fee paid by builder to rater? A – Yes? Q – Any plans to do study against baseline homes. David – Long Island Power will be analyzing results. Have baseline

Mike – Are towns comfortable working with raters? Any klinkers?

David – LIPA offering incentives to towns to adopt. Have had trainings for code officials. No real issues with rater fees. Fraser – More interaction between builder and code officials to ensure compliance.

Fraser – four tiers of incentives through LIPA. 87 - \$2,000. 89 - \$3,000. Any higher - \$10,000. Southampton looking at changes to deal with solar. Tie HERS score to size of home. Larger home needs higher rating.

David – One challenge is trying to keep the promotions the same from town to town. Southampton – not sure if their new standards will be adopted by rest.

Peggy – MA – utilities came up with three-tier strategy for adopting more stringent codes. Decided to go for highest Tier for one town. Center for Ecological Technology - a provider in Western MA. Trying to get builders to follow standards – ducts & cooling load calculations, both of which are required by ENERGY STAR certification. More demand for greener homes, held 3 trainings for building industry, reaching over 200 attendees. Invited building inspectors. Building inspectors have had no formal training on energy code. Rough estimate - for 10,000 homes – if ducts were sealed with mastic as code requires, would save 9,000,000 lbs CO2. CET hired by JMC to work on one town, and assist them creating a bylaw requiring a higher code, then petitioning Board of Building Standards to allow the town to exceed state building code. Two towns have joined Cities for Climate Protection: Northampton and Lenox. Lenox is considering an interim two-tier system – one for ENERGY STAR (\$500 rebate for permit), and one for LEED or NAHB (up to \$1,500 rebate for permit fee). Northampton CET will work with City's energy officer to work on the ordinance for residential and possibly incentives for commercial code too. Arlington – also must pass in LEED checklist to show items were considered. CET also meeting with the w. Mass HBA's Green Building Committee that is looking at promoting different Green Building certifications: Energy Star, LEED, NAHB, Earth Advantage.

Another area mentioned – charging more for permit for non ENERGY STAR homes and less for ES homes.

Mike – working with Lake Placid on a higher code for both residential and commercial. BCAP website has information on what is happening. (www.bcap-energy.org) Look at Colorado, California, Austin – new Green Code.

Mike – would be good to get some case studies prepared. Will be developing some Toolkits for jurisdictions to refer to. Also need to get code infrastructure more comfortable with this. Current HERS rating is accepted in many states for code compliance. RESNET has criteria on what software aligns with code compliance. Performance approach to compliance has always been available, but not used.

Is there other software that can link Ratings and code compliance? – Energy Gauge does, not just for Florida.

Greenburgh in Westchester County already started to require E-Star code in 2004, supposedly to curtail homebuilding.

Liz – Philadelphia is looking at this, but there is concern that this will dampen homestarts.

Mike – No evidence to support this.

Liz – In PA, current energy code is not enforced. Code officials not trained, and don't care. Homebuyer could have legal right to sue local municipality for failure to enforce the code. Liz thinks this would be big wake-up call.

Richard – Going to ES standard should not affect home buying. Existing home energy mortgages already on books to enable purchasing an energy efficient home, so should be considered.

Liz – Threat of suit better than actual execution. Homebuyers don't know there is a risk. If local entities don't enforce, falls back to state.

David – Energy codes dumped on Code officials. Didn't ask for them. May be happy to have someone else take responsibility. Already have precedence for third-party electrical inspections.

Peggy – In MA, building inspectors were enthusiastic about ENERGY STAR standards.

Liz – Most code officials not inspecting till end.

Find public interest group threaten law suit and same time come up with proposal to offer energy code by third party raters.

Fraser - Issue of green keeps coming up. Need to be clear that ENERGY STAR home is not necessarily part of green path. Michael Blasnik presentation– energy savings in new homes outweighing green?