

Green Buildings Advisory Committee

Tuesday, June 21, 2022 | 9:00 – 10:00 AM

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

Draft Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present

Dr. Carrie Gill, Chair	Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources
Commissioner Jim Cambio	Rhode Island Building Code Commission
Dr. Joseph da Silva	Rhode Island Department of Education

Other Attendees Present

John Balfe	Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
Steven Chybowski	Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources
Christopher McWhite	Town of Smithfield
Bill Nash	International Code Council
Michael O'Brien Crayne	Rhode Island Energy
Rachel Pinnons	CLEAResult
Cornelia Wu	Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships

1. Call to order

Chairperson Gill called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. noting that there is not a quorum and that votes will not be held.

2. Announcements from the Chair

Chairperson Gill noted that she will post draft meeting minutes from the May meeting to the Secretary of State's website and vote that the Committee will plan to vote on them at the next meeting in July. The Green Schools addendum was added to the 2021 Annual Report and posted, and we received four proposals to the Green Buildings Advisory Committee (GBAC) study request for Proposals (RFP). The four attendees present will meet next week to review the proposals. Last week, three *2021 Act on Climate* sharing sessions were held on the thermal (heating) sector. An Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) meeting will be held on June 23rd in Warren as a hybrid meeting. You can learn more at <http://climatechange.ri.gov/aoc/>.

3. Voting on previous meeting minutes

- a. May 2022

Item will be held for the July meeting agenda.

4. 2021 Annual Report Addendum: State Permit Data

- a. Presentation and discussion

Chairperson Gill summarized the State Permit Data presentation from the May meeting and confirmed that we can include the State building permit project certification form as an attachment to the 2021 Annual Report addendum.

Committee Member Cambio explained that we may want to amend the language on the project certification form or create a Green Buildings Act-specific form for project managers to complete to better collect the data that we need. This form may consist of more questions to help the GBAC identify whether a project needs to comply with the Green Buildings Act (GBA). He noted that there currently is not a mechanism in place to return applications if they are not in compliance. The Committee would also need to work with other state building agencies and educate them on these new steps and initiatives.

Committee Members discussed opportunities for presenting and incorporating these process changes.

b. Public comment

None.

c. Vote on adoption of State Permit Data Addendum to the 2021 Annual Report

Vote held until July meeting.

5. Act on Climate – Buildings Sharing Session

Chairperson Gill explained that buildings are an integrated source of greenhouse gas emissions and a public sharing session dedicated to the topic would be beneficial for the State's climate efforts. The session could be hosted as a workshop and have a panel provide introductory descriptions of various building considerations. We would then have a significant amount of time dedicated to questions. This session would be scheduled for 90 minutes. For the panel, the plan is to first have a presenter, such as an architect, present on a larger framing such as how buildings contribute to climate change and how buildings need to change to be resilient to climate change. Then, there could be four panelists to share different perspectives on buildings such as the role of building codes, the work conducted at schools and State facilities, and current developments in housing and affordable housing. This sharing session is currently being proposed for Wednesday, Aug 24th from 1 – 2:30 p.m.

Chairperson Gill noted that this session would be conducted virtually and that there could be the option for breakout rooms for additional discussion.

Mr. McWhite asked if there would be a place for a youth voice at this workshop and suggested potentially adding a student representative or teacher to the panel of speakers.

Mr. O'Brien Crayne added that this could also be a good opportunity to let the utility present on the incentives and benefits that they offer related to buildings.

Chairperson Gill responded that on July 12th, there will be a workshop to meet the heads of all three of the distribution utilities in the State. This could be another opportunity to highlight utility programs related to buildings.

Once the meeting date is finalized, it will be posted on climatechange.ri.gov and the Secretary of State's website.

6. School Reimbursement for Net-Zero Design

Chairperson Gill noted that the outline on this agenda item will be shared as a meeting material after this meeting.

Committee Member da Silva presented on the School Building Authority's (SBA) reimbursement process for energy-efficient school projects. The program is broken down into four stages. The first stage is for the school districts to identify their needs. In Stage two, the SBA and other stakeholders collaborate on solutions identified in Stage one. In Stage three, projects are approved and moved into their next steps. This is where any schematic design and construction design reviews happen. A Northeast Collaborative for High Performance Schools (NE-CHPS) affidavit is required at this stage which must be signed by the architect and the school superintendent and include an attached checklist of prerequisites. This results in every project being well above building code. Any project over \$500,000 is required to comply. The SBA reviews projects three times before a project goes to bid to make sure requirements are met.

Once a project is completed, reimbursement is provided from the housing aid fund. It is called the housing aid fund in reference to schoolhouses. This reimbursement ranges from 30-98% based on a community's wealth. They have mechanisms set up where invoices can be paid within a day of approval.

When the program started, the SBA was approving approximately \$65 million per year and they are now approving over \$500 million per year.

Committee Member da Silva asked how this committee can help the SBA achieve carbon neutral schools by 2030?

Committee Member Cambio commented that Dr. da Silva should come to the Building Code Commission meetings and that the plan review component is missing from the general building code process. Is there a world where we have a single compliance path for State and public buildings?

Committee Member da Silva added that this has been so successful because money is tied to the requirements.

Chairpersons Gill summarized her takeaways including that the Green Buildings Act study can review the SBA for best practices and that this work extends beyond energy and also covers health and safety requirements for buildings.

7. Other updates from Committee Members, if any

None.

8. Public comment

Mr. McWhite commented that whenever a local municipality is involved with a school project, the sooner you can bring planning departments and code departments the better so that they can start bringing in the necessary checklists and know what to look for. He asked that local officials are included earlier and often.

Committee Member da Silva commented that contact with local government officials is a requirement early in their reimbursement process. Maybe in the future we could have presentations on LEED, Green Globes, and NE-CHPS to compare standards among the GBAC.

9. Adjourn

Chairperson Gill adjourned the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

DRAFT