

Energy Efficiency & Housing Advisory Panel Meeting 7 | January 12th, 2021

Attendance

Attendees:

- RuthAnne Visnauskas, Commissioner, New York State Homes and Community Renewal (Chair)
- Janet Joseph, Senior Vice President, Strategy and Market Development, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
- Peggie Neville, Deputy Director of Clean Energy, Department of Public Service
- Gina Bocra, Chief Sustainability Officer, New York City Department of Buildings
- Dan Egan, Senior Vice President, Energy and Sustainability, Vornado Realty Trust
- Bret Garwood, Chief Executive Officer, Home Leasing, LLC
- Jin Jin Huang, Executive Director, Safari Energy, LLC
- Clarke Gocker, Director of Policy and Strategy, PUSH Buffalo
- Jamal Lewis, Senior Policy and Technical Assistance Specialist, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative
- Sadie McKeown, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, The Community Preservation Corporation
- Bill Nowak, Executive Director, New York Geothermal Energy Organization
- Molly (Dee) Ramasamy, Head of Deep Carbon Reduction, Jaros, Baum and Bolles
- Daphany Rose Sanchez, Executive Director, Kinetic Communities Consulting

Not in Attendance:

- Kyle Bragg, President, 32BJ SEIU
- Elizabeth Jacobs, Acting Executive Director, Akwesasne Housing Authority
- Laura Vulaj, Senior Vice President and Director, Sustainability, SL Green Realty Corp.

Meeting Notes

Meeting Agenda and Near-Term Updates (RuthAnne Visnauskas and Melina Stratos, NYSHCR)

- RuthAnne Visnauskas and Melina Stratos provided an overview of the meeting agenda, key next steps for the panel, proposed topics for January Working Group sessions, and details regarding the upcoming Climate Action Council Meeting (January 19th) and cross-panel session with the Agriculture and Forestry Advisory Panel (January 26th). See slides 2-5 for additional details.

Background and Prep for the Jan 22nd Working Session (Toby Berkman, CBI)

- Toby Berkman of CBI provided an overview of the goals for the 1/22 working session, the preparatory work for staff and panelists, and a rough agenda for the meeting before soliciting feedback from panel members. See slides 6-13 for additional details.

Discussion:

- **Clarke Gocker:** Is it the original charge of this Advisory Panel to deliver a shortlist of priority recommendations or a broader set of recommendations? It seems that the process may be open to a broader notion of recommendations. Additionally, another path the panel could consider taking is brainstorming tradeoffs between recommendations related to timeline, cost, impact on disadvantaged communities, etc.

- **Vanessa Ulmer:** In regard to the question of a shorter list versus a broader set of recommendations, the current understanding is that the CAC would find a prioritized list helpful and the panel can provide additional material that captures other recommendations, potentially within an appendix. The staff working group has also identified a set of recommendations considered “no regrets” recommendations that staff anticipate panel members will be supportive of, but that wouldn’t require a focal call to change the current process or programmatic framework. In summary, part of the charge is to work towards a shortlist, and there is an opportunity to capture other recommendations. Second point on capturing criteria is important and staff have taken a first cut and will share later in the meeting.
- **Toby Berkman:** There has been an effort to identify the criteria that should be weighed when considering recommendations. Recommendations will be evaluated and prioritized against these criteria. When evaluating and prioritizing, it will be against those criteria and the recommendations/packages that rise to the top will be based on group’s deliberations that best advance the named criteria. Our conversation on the 22nd will be focused on what the pluses and minuses are for specific recommendations.
- **Bret Garwood:** Prioritization is the wrong word in some ways. We have to identify the recommendations that need to happen to achieve our goal. Additionally, as we deliberate, we have to talk about how the recommendations interact. Some are quite interdependent (e.g., if we have a mandate on eliminating gas furnaces, we need to then have a financing mechanism for the upgrades). Wouldn’t want to advance a recommendation without a critical dependency also being included.
 - **Toby Berkman:** That’s absolutely right. The goal is to both evaluate recommendations, and to be talking in terms of packages for this reason.
- **Jin Jin Huang:** Excited about this approach and believes the Panel has been thoughtful in thinking about the recommendations. It is a good point to hone in on how to make these digestible, actionable items. Going to look at this from the perspective of what are the most actionable recommendations and what are the leading steps. Hopes that through this exercise we can come up with a roadmap of how we can tackle all we’ve considered in the past few months in a staged process and get to what we’re trying to achieve.
- **Bill Nowak:** Agrees that the process being outlined sounds promising in terms of getting us to a more informed set of recommendations. One question: this meeting was originally going to be a supplement to the data that was originally presented. Still interested in seeing that information and curious when that will come into play from ongoing analyses.
 - **Janet Joseph:** The manner in which the costs and benefits are assessed will be described in the next CAC meeting under the integration analysis agenda item. These meetings are recorded for those who can’t attend on the 19th.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Adds that the updated carbon accounting work is ongoing; this work is expected to be completed within the month of January. If this isn’t covered in the integration analysis discussion, Vanessa will be sure to respond to the group on the timeline for this. With respect to buildings specifically, there are definitely still pieces of the puzzle that we want to vet directly with this group. One interdependency we’ve been grappling is that cost can get expensive depending how deep you go on shell, but there’s a balance between investment in building shell and grid impacts from electrification. This work is ongoing and staff are actively trying to see what pieces of this can come to this group before the integration analysis, or is this an integration analysis question.

- **Janet Joseph:** Wanted to get back to the proposed workstreams that have been laid out here and thinking about this in terms of three buckets. The first bucket being the prioritized/must-do list. This group needs to get as close as we can to what these core set of policies need to be from the standpoint of mapping out the work that needs to happen. The notion that we would provide additional info whether supplemental or minority positions as a second bucket also makes sense. There will be a lot of good ideas that don't resonate with everyone that we want to figure out how to capture in recommendations to the council. However, a flag on the third bucket of "no-regrets" recommendations. This term has been used for decades and we have all fallen victim to not making progress on these all too often. If we're going to use that term, would like to ask that we understand the mechanism of implementation. If it is interdependent with or a prerequisite for something another recommendation, it should be flagged as such. Lastly, in regard to the recommendations workbook tool, would like to make sure somewhere in here we have a means to assess or characterize the ease of implementation. Thinks this approach is useful and will be helpful.
- **Jamal Lewis:** Agree with what others have said in terms of having a list of prioritized or must haves. Would like to know how we are planning to weight the impact on disadvantaged communities. Can imagine a scenario where the must-have actions have varying levels of impact for disadvantaged communities. How are we planning to incorporate that mandate as well?
 - **Toby Berkman:** Impacts on disadvantaged communities (DACs) is one of the criteria you're being asked to consider. There are three levels at which the group should consider DAC impacts. First, when evaluating each recommendation on its own merits in the prioritization exercise, DAC impacts is one of the key criteria to be considered in allocating votes. Second, in the prioritization exercise and during the Jan 22nd discussion, might also consider that a recommendation should get a vote not because it is among the most impactful on its own, but because it is essential to address the DAC impacts of other high-priority recommendations. And third, on Jan 22nd, in addition to reviewing and discussing the individual merits of each recommendation, we will also be taking a step back and looking at the overall package recommendations to ensure it meets our most important criteria, including DAC impacts.
 - **Janet Joseph:** I believe it is incumbent on this group to identify what we need to do to mitigate impacts on disadvantaged communities, and preferably identify how we can maximize benefits. If we identify a policy recommendation, such as requiring that space heating and water heating be replaced with non-fossil systems and we believe this could exacerbate disinvestment of buildings or delay of replacement, it is incumbent on us to propose how to mitigate impact on disadvantaged communities and disinvestment in buildings. It's incumbent on this group to flag potential adverse impacts and figure out what needs to be done to mitigate the impact on DACs.
 - **Clarke Gocker:** Agrees with Janet. PUSH Buffalo advanced this aspect of the legislation. Cannot say enough that racial/economic equity is a cornerstone to this and cannot play second fiddle to pursuit of climate goals alone. Need to hold these on equal plane when thinking about recommendations and shouldn't advance something that doesn't have positive impacts on DACs.

Policy Options Document and Recommendations Workbook (Vanessa Ulmer and John Lee, NYSERDA)

- Vanessa Ulmer provided an overview of the revised Policy Options document. See slides 15-18 for additional details.
- John Lee provides an overview of the Recommendations Workbook. See slides 19-20 for additional details.

Clarifying Questions:

- **Daphany Sanchez:** In response to the recommendations shown on the slide, including a recommendation for the building code to require electrification readiness and on-site renewable energy in new construction, notes that when prioritizing recommendations, it is necessary to be mindful about unfunded mandates and the impacts on disadvantaged communities.
 - **John Lee:** The snapshot you see here is only looking at a few rows and additional rows in the workbook address financial incentives, workforce development, etc. There is also a specific line item for direct cash incentives for disadvantaged communities for electrification projects. To the extent that recommendations are interrelated, his recommendation would be to put a check (vote) in both. If there is a mandate without recommendation for funding, this is something that can be noted in the notes column.
 - **Janet Joseph:** Adds clarity that if a code recommendation also requires incentives for disadvantaged communities, you would identify both of them as a priority and flag the interdependency in the comment column.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Notes that this is an initial polling exercise, so nothing is getting eliminated. It is the start of the discussion.
- **Dan Egan:** To clarify, the no-regrets list contains the indisputable priorities we know we should be elevating that need not be subject to prioritization because they're clear priorities?
 - **John Lee:** Yes
 - **Dan Egan Follow Up:** To further clarify, another subset of the recommendations is not found on this spreadsheet because they are already in the works (e.g., the stretch code)? If so, it could be helpful to see that list of recommendations that are already taken care of.
 - **John Lee:** Good suggestion and this can be provided.
- **Jin Jin Huang:** Are virtual stickers our initials? Also, when selecting a no regrets recommendation, are we following the same convention to note that?
 - **John Lee:** Notes they can use any kind of mark as a virtual sticker. For the no regrets list, they aren't necessarily voting so much as ensuring it adequately captures what ought to be in this bucket.
- **Janet Joseph:** Responding to the No Regrets list, she doesn't think establishing a carbon fee should be in this category without discussion or discourse.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Clarifies that this is meant to be framed as: if the state establishes a carbon fee on electricity, it needs an aligned fee on fuels burned in buildings.
 - **John Lee:** Adds in that the No Regrets tab does not mean the discussion has been closed. It's more a point of departure for further discussion.
- **Gina Bocra:** Adds it would be helpful to have the list of recommendations that don't show up on the list because they're already covered.
- **Bill Nowak:** Appreciates Vanessa's clarification regarding the carbon fee recommendation on the No Regrets tab. He does think this would be important to include under voting because it would be a way to provide funding for the economic justice concerns. To have funded mandates, we needed funding sources. This is a priority for him.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Notes that this is something to flag on the No Regrets tab. If there is something on that tab they disagree with, definitely flag that. Also, if there is something on the no regrets tab that needs to be scaled up, flag this as well.

- **Daphany Sanchez:** Are there descriptions of what “no regrets” means within the workbook. Wants to ensure she has a clear understanding when she comes back to this.
 - **John Lee:** Staff will add in additional guidance before sharing.
- Deadline for initial priority votes is Tuesday, Jan 19th

Discussion

- **Janet Joseph:** On the workforce topic, it’s useful how workforce needs have been connected to specific action, but want to make sure we address what actually needs to happen to address a workforce shortage. That’s not jumping out at her as she looks at the tool. Perhaps staff can speak to what they see as next steps.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** You’ll note that what’s in these columns is not quite pro/con, but good things/challenges. It’s not yet saying what we need to do as an enabling initiative. For this stage, would suggest a comparable approach to what Toby suggested for DACs. We’ve got workforce needs here as a criteria, and when we talk in our discussion and think about packages/prerequisites, we keep workforce front and center. One nuance is that more of the workforce recommendations live on the no-regrets tab. A lot of workforce development work is already happening, but if we need to meaningfully scale up, we’ll want to communicate that.
 - **Janet Joseph:** Sounds like there is a necessary phase 2 analysis for both DACs and workforce that might need to follow after identifying a smaller sub-set of recommendations that we want to move forward.
- **Jamal Lewis:** What would this phase 2 analysis include?
 - **Janet Joseph:** We are flagging issues here, but will need to get into what we’re doing to mitigate issues. She sees this as a flagging of issues here, and phase 2 is a clarification of the solutions. Want to make sure this makes it into the core set of recommendations.
 - **Jamal Lewis:** This clarification is helpful. Taking away that at this stage, each Panelist’s choosing of the 8 priority recommendations will be chosen independently of the solutions for workforce and disadvantaged communities.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Your choosing of the 8 will be more based on your expertise than these columns, but wanted to at least start to populate these impacts for key criteria.
 - **Janet Joseph:** Would agree with how Jamal characterized it but as we iterate and develop a package, that package has to consider workforce development and DAC issues.
- **Daphany Sanchez:** Can resiliency and affordability can be included within qualitative impacts?
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Asked for clarification as to what Daphany means by affordability. For resiliency, we can think about this as a staff, but have gone back and forth on keeping resiliency as a column vs just recognizing some are resiliency recs. When it was included as a column, found it challenging to fill out with much differentiation.
 - **Daphany Sanchez:** Regarding resiliency, when requiring buildings to electrify, are we considering flood resiliency at the same time and including clauses within the code that emphasize resiliency? Each could be mindful of resiliency as a qualitative impact, so we aren’t spending funding when there’s another eminent issue that exists for that property. In terms of affordability, being mindful of affordability impacts – are we sacrificing affordability for the sake of efficiency. Take codes for example: homeowners who can’t afford required appliance upgrades might be in violation and face foreclosure, leading to further displacement and gentrification. Studies have shown that when there are new LEED buildings constructed, it can lead to rent increases in the surrounding community.

- **Jamal Lewis:** Appreciates how these examples have specific jobs that are impacted and thinks that is really important because so many industries will be impacted. Specifically calling out the jobs is important. Asks for clarification that renters are included within the disadvantaged communities column. A question for the group, assume renters are a part of DACs tab but wanted to clarify that.
 - **Vanessa Ulmer:** Yes, DACs is not limited to homeowners; it would be those renting in a community as well.

Next Steps and Reminders (Janet Joseph, NYSERDA)

- Janet provides an overview of key next steps and reminders for the panel. See slide 22 for additional details.

Q&A and Chat

- *Jodi Smits Anderson:* I hate the "no-regrets" label. There is a huge amount of regret in not doing anything (or enough), and we never label that.
- *Daphany Sanchez:* Can resiliency and affordability be included within the qualitative impacts?
- *William Gregg:* Could the "Cost of Carbon", or basically the environmental cost of doing nothing, also be considered in assessing impacts "high, medium, or low?"