

**Minneapolis Clean Energy Partnership**  
**ENERGY VISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
CenterPoint Energy, 505 Nicollet Mall, Room 106  
Tuesday, February 18, 2020  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Q1 2020 Meeting Notes**

**Committee members present:** Chairs: Patty O’Keefe and Rebecca Olson. Members: Robert Blake (phone), Margaret Cherne-Hendrick, Timothy DenHerder-Thomas, Rick Dallmeyer, John Farrell, Leah Hiniker, Matt Kazinka, Mauricio Leon, Julie Samuelson, Jamez Staples, Elizabeth Turner, Ansha Zaman

**Guests:** Jenny Edwards, Marcus Mills, Lee Samelson

**Planning Team/staff present:** Sara Barrow, Becky Billings, Nikki Caicedo, Bridget Dockter, Robin Garwood, Patrick Hanlon, Kim Havey, Luke Hollenkamp, Bjorn Olson, Emma Schoppe, Al Swintek, Ethan Warner, Karlee Weinmann, Marsha Wagner

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Co-Chair Rebecca Olson called the meeting of the Energy Vision Advisory Committee (EVAC) to order.

**2. Review and Approval of Agenda and Q4 2019 Minutes**

Luke Hollenkamp requested that the agenda be amended to move reporting on three resolutions passed by the Minneapolis City Council in December (Item 7.b) to the end of EVAC 2019 Review (Item 4). He also requested an addition to Partner Updates (Agenda Item 7) to include an update on the City’s action on Inclusive Financing. There being no further changes to the agenda, it was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that the agenda for the meeting, as amended, be approved. Motion **CARRIED**. There being no changes or additions to the Q4 2019 minutes, it was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that the minutes from November 20, 2019 be approved. Motion **CARRIED**.

**3. Approve EVAC Letter to City of Minneapolis Re: Franchise Fee Allocations**

Rebecca Olson explained that an initial draft of the document was sent to EVAC members for their comments and suggestions. She distributed copies showing tracked changes of EVAC’s Recommendations to the Minneapolis Sustainability Office for Use of Franchise Fee Increase Funds in 2020. Edits included clarifications on the Green Cost Share Program in terms of demographics and sectors, regular updates, and Passive House Initiative. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** that the document, as edited, be approved and submitted to the Sustainability Office. Motion **CARRIED**.

**4. EVAC 2019 Review and 2020 Looking Ahead**

- a. Patty O’Keefe reported on EVAC activities during 2019, including:
  - Advised on and assisted in creating the Workforce Development assessment

- Wrote a letter of support to the City on passage of Residential Energy Disclosure Policies
- Regarding Franchise Fee funding, evaluated EVAC's role in engagement and provided feedback and suggestions on budget allocations
- Held the first EVAC orientation for new members
- Formed an Inclusive Financing Working Group that worked with CenterPoint Energy on its proposed program
- Held meetings to discuss developing metrics for equity and workforce goals
- Provided feedback on Xcel Energy's Time of Use pilot
- Provided feedback on CenterPoint Energy's Dashboard tool (ongoing)
- Provided feedback on the City's community engagement and implementation plan for the 100 percent renewable electricity blueprint

Luke thanked EVAC members for the time and effort they put in beyond attending quarterly EVAC meetings. While it is valuable for the City to see EVAC members at its quarterly and other meetings, many members are also partners on other programs. Patty added her thanks to the Planning Team for providing meeting coordination and scheduling along with their support.

- b. Kim Havey reported that the City has been pursuing an advanced energy standard (Stretch Code) in state legislation. As part of that effort it has received support from the Energy Foundation and has retained and is working with Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) and Fresh Energy on outreach and engagement around stakeholders. It anticipates moving forward in a coalition with many other organizations including the American Institute of Architects, the League of Minnesota Cities, and up to twenty other cities. At the Q4 2019 CEP Board meeting the following resolution was passed supporting an advanced building energy standard:

*The Partners will support the City of Minneapolis' legislative efforts to develop an advanced building energy performance standard with the following principles:*

- *Drives down carbon emissions in new buildings and major renovations to existing buildings*
- *Prioritizes energy efficiency before all other energy resources*
- *Uses the current energy code to calculate rebate amounts*
- *Uses the current energy code to calculate energy savings*
- *Is feasible and clear to implement*
- *Allows for flexible compliance through technology neutral solutions*
- *Allows for a flexible compliance path in procuring renewable energy*

Kim said that the City is incorporating all of these particular principles within the new proposed legislation, which is going to build off of the existing international energy code and create a pathway toward net zero energy buildings by 2036 for all Minnesota buildings (commercial, industrial, and residential four stories and higher). The bill, which is expected to be finalized and introduced by Representative Jamie Long (DFL) and

Senator David Senjem (R) within the next few weeks, needs to go through at least one committee hearing by March 13 to move forward.

- c. At its December 13 meeting the City Council approved three resolutions: declaring a climate emergency [[2019R-422](#)], establishing a social cost of carbon [[2019R-423](#)], and adopting a sustainable building policy for city-supported development [[2019R-424](#)].

## 5. EVAC Workforce Development Next Steps

Jamez Staples referenced and quoted from an article published by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. [[Link](#)] It contains case studies from among 37 cities that have adopted clean energy goals, specifically citing efforts in Chattanooga and Orlando. Jamez proposed getting the Workforce group back together to discuss and explore the possibilities for workforce development as it relates to clean energy. The following EVAC members expressed interest in participating: Margaret Cherne-Hendrick, Rick Dallmeyer, Ansha Zaman, Elizabeth Turner, Patty O’Keefe and Becky Olson.

An EVAC member asked if there are any Partnership activities underway on this topic, especially given the City’s intent to adopt the stretch code which will demand more work to meet code adoptions. He believes there are other parties besides the City, utilities and EVAC members that should be at the table. Patrick Hanlon said that training has been set up through Midwest Renewable Energy, pathways programs are being set up pursuant to recommendations made by EVAC, the Green Cost Share Program offers incentives and has talked to seven developers that are interested in hiring apprenticeship-level electricians, and there are pipelines through that program as well. He said once they get a classroom/small training space set up they are ready to roll with five to ten students per year, which would include a month’s worth of experience onsite. Jamez offered space that is available at 1200 Plymouth Avenue North; Patrick said they had looked at that space and were asked not to proceed.

In response to the question about Partnership activities, Al Swintek said that CenterPoint Energy has an internship program, an apprenticeship program, and is in conversations with the City’s CPED office. CenterPoint Energy is also participating in AchieveMpls, Step Up, and will be attending a career force event to be held on Lake Street and Chicago Avenue (February 19). At that event it will have available onsite phone center representatives, human resources staff, and construction and maintenance staff. Emma added that some of the vendors they are working with to develop CenterPoint Energy’s dashboard tool are women-owned businesses, and it is also thinking about workforce implications in its community engagement efforts.

Bridget Dockter said Xcel Energy also does internship programs, Step Up, Legacy Program for training programs, and the recently-completed larger effort with the report submitted to the Legislature on January 15 which is intended to look statewide at the next scope of jobs, i.e. traditional utility jobs such as linesman or IT or accounting.

EVAC member, Leah Hiniker, said Hennepin County has similar programs, and it is also utilizing the building operator training program through MCTC or Dunwoody. Hennepin County created a program for people coming directly out of school to get them experience and have them work their way up through that process. There are a lot of opportunities for partnering on

workforce development programs and Hennepin County is interested in participating. Mauricio Leon added that the Metropolitan Council has an Urban Scholars program for people of various backgrounds.

Patty said this is a helpful conversation. It will inform the work of the Workforce Development Group and who they invite to attend its meetings. It was suggested to partner with training facilities to ensure they are incorporating energy efficiency in their training. Kim referenced a study conducted by CEE in Saint Paul on operating buildings to its specifications which found that that alone can save up to ten percent of energy use. Having qualified operators is very important to the energy efficiency of the buildings.

## **6. Continue Discussion on CenterPoint Energy's Community Profile Dashboard**

Emma Schoppe introduced the continuation of the discussion from the Q4 2019 EVAC meeting, reminding everyone that the dashboard includes CenterPoint Energy's customer energy use and Conservation Improvement Program participation data, combined with census data to identify interesting characteristics across the City. The purpose of the dashboard is to inform engagement strategies to double participation in certain energy efficiency programs. [Details can be found in Work Plan Activity EE.1: Reduce Natural Gas Use for Residential Customers.]

Emma provided some updates since the last EVAC meeting, presented objectives for EVAC's discussion at this meeting, and described possible next steps. CenterPoint Energy has been deploying strategies that align with development and utilization of the dashboard in order to increase participation in residential programs:

- CenterPoint Energy is working with CEE and the City to pilot the Energy Advisor Service for the City's Truth in Sale of Housing (TISH) reports. CEE Energy Advisors will connect recent home buyers to resources, including utility rebates, that can help residents make home energy upgrades.
- CenterPoint Energy recently held a planning workshop where they engaged interested stakeholders in generating ideas for improving access to residential Conservation Improvement Programs.
- CenterPoint Energy was contacted by a representative from Prospect Park, which is working on its own neighborhood climate action plan. They want to do their own grassroots initiatives to encourage people to do Home Energy Squad visits or insulation projects, and they are looking to CenterPoint Energy for data to analyze trends and determine if their efforts are having an impact on energy efficiency programs.

Ethan Warner added that the short-term plan for the dashboard is to create a slide deck, with views of the dashboard data by census tract, which will be available by approximately the end of February. The data will be released once CenterPoint Energy has ensured that the detailed data is sufficiently aggregated and anonymized to protect customer privacy. When asked if the data will contain information showing how many people within the various census tracts are receiving energy assistance, Ethan responded that CenterPoint Energy does not have specific data about the level of assistance, but they can identify gas customers who have received energy assistance within the past five years.

Ethan reminded the group that this dashboard addresses data from CenterPoint Energy's system for buildings that are 1-to-4 units, whether single family owner-occupied or 1-to-4 rental units. It does not address 5-plus multi-family buildings. Since the December meeting the dashboard has been populated with real information. Quality assurance tests are currently being conducted but will be completed by the end of February. Ethan reviewed the dashboard, using the Elliot Park census tract, and highlighted major changes. EVAC members were invited to ask questions or offer feedback on how the dashboard could be improved.

- Why are the levels of the different lines where they are [relating to energy usage]? Why do the lines go down as you go from low- to high-energy. *It is based on different levels of dekatherms, depending on where you set the ranges for the bars, and is a percentage of the total locations.*
- Who is the intended audience for this dashboard? *The intended audience of the dashboard is for CenterPoint Energy to be able to quickly screen through census tracts and pull out information to inform policy discussions with stakeholders. It is not intended to be public-facing because there is a lot of information and it requires some level of expertise and experience with the dashboard to understand the quantiles and how to best use it. It is an internal tool to quickly relay certain data to a community and have external conversations.*
- Is "Squad conversion" live data? *They are checking it, but it should be correct. The Squad conversion rate is basically looking at whether they got a recommendation (e.g. insulation, new furnace, water heater) and did they do one recommendation within five years.*
- What is the concept of "community"? A community could be a neighborhood, but it could also be broader. Maybe use the term "census tract" or look at everything. *We expect discussions to happen as the neighborhood, city, or county level but census tract is the smallest geographic measure of 'community.'*
- Have you looked at DOE-led mapping of energy usage and costs? It might be helpful in how they presented their data and might give you some ideas on how to make the data more clear and more intuitive. *The dashboard development is looking at and analyzing different things and characteristics to help better inform how CenterPoint Energy delivers energy-efficiency programs. Analyzing the disparity in terms of the cost of energy for low-income residents is something that is on the radar for the deeper Minneapolis analysis for energy-efficiency potential.*
- How do you capture diversity in neighborhoods of small rental units and large apartment buildings? *The dashboard is only for 1-to-4 units. In CenterPoint Energy's system anything above four units per building would be considered a commercial building.*
- Is there a way to include on this tool what proportion of housing units in the census tract are being analyzed? *No, because you would have to know the differences between CenterPoint Energy's customer base and the building base in the census tract. This is not possible because the U.S. Census does not report information that would let the utility assess this.*

Emma introduced a map showing an example of the type of information and analysis the Dashboard can provide. data analysis on a community level.

EVAC members had questions and comments throughout the presentation, including the following:

- Dth/sqft numbers will be highly correlated with the size of the home. There might be a very highly-efficient mansion. *Most of the energy use is related to heating, which is fairly well-correlated with the space in the home.*
- The areas in south and southwest Minneapolis that have the stars dovetail with the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) sound mitigation program which offers fully-subsidized, ongoing insulation and other energy-saving efforts. *Excellent point.*
- It would be useful to see a map of the numbers by census tract that shows percent conversion of households that have participated in this insulation program, low income program, LIHEAP, to be able to see those things side-by-side. A percentage of square footage would be interesting, too. *We will pass this on to Illume, the dashboard developer, in terms of things they can be working on as they are doing a deeper analysis of the City.*
- Does Xcel Energy have similar data in regards to their programs? *Similar data, yes, but not a similar tool. This tool was developed to help CenterPoint Energy with a Partnership work plan item. Xcel Energy does have LIHEAP participants and they do annual reporting in different regulatory filings on participant counts within the low-income programs.*
- As a program implementer [CEE] this is so helpful because it enables assurance of achieving goals. This is a good resource to spend utility program dollars more effectively.
- This tool indicates the scale of our interventions is an order of magnitude or two smaller than what we need to be doing. We are nowhere near on pace to accomplishing all we need to do. If we actually think we are in a climate emergency then we have to dramatically change this situation. That requires thinking beyond business as usual or tweaks around the edges; it is reimagining the financial incentives, workforce and utility programs needed to do this.
- We need a MAC-style weatherization program for the entirety City of Minneapolis, and we needed it ten years ago.

Considering what can be done with this information today, Emma said that CenterPoint Energy is looking at the data and thinking about how it is marketing and implementing its programs. In terms of continuing this discussion, CenterPoint Energy will take EVAC's feedback, follow-up items and any additional ideas put forth by EVAC members and develop actions around this. EVAC can help determine the next steps with the dashboard. Luke said one of the first steps would be to pair census tract-wide energy information with square footage information. Ethan replied that this information will help with idea generation about things that can be improved. CenterPoint Energy understands the core goal of this effort is to double participation, specifically focusing on the Green Zones, but he would like to hear from EVAC on how we should be thinking about priorities and what this information is being used for. Several EVAC members offered suggestions for what they would like to see accomplished with this tool:

- How do we create comprehensive energy upgrades in 150,000 Minneapolis homes in the next ten years?
- The information you would need for that might be just to eliminate the already low-energy users.
- For the MAC-improvement areas, what is the differential in energy use for those homes versus other homes?
- Kim: Is there any information on the amount of money spent per house on average? *No. It's just the rebate amount, it's not the actual cost of the programs. Generally speaking, we assume per insulation project it is about \$2,000 depending on the scope of the project.*
- We have some of that information; we just need to scale it to the City.

- Kim: Can this information be applied to time-of-lease information on buildings below five units? Is it possible to estimate energy use cost per square foot for those units? We could provide that information to prospective renters or tenants. *Yes. CenterPoint Energy knows the cost of natural gas and the usage of customers, and it has a separate path forward for providing that information to prospective renters or tenants. However, there are data privacy considerations that are playing out within a docket currently at the PUC.*
- If heating is electrified, does that have less carbon emissions than using natural gas even with the opportunity cost of retrofitting versus just going electric? *That is a complicated question. Engineers at CenterPoint Energy have said that basically if you want to get residential homes to 80 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction or slightly beyond that you basically need electrification, or electrification with gas backup, and more advanced insulation than we currently have.*

Becky invited anyone with additional questions or comments to forward them to Emma.

## 7. Partner Updates

### a. Xcel Energy Time of Use [Flex Pricing] Pilot Update

Nikki Caicedo, Program Manager for the Flex Pricing Pilot at Xcel Energy, provided an update on what was formerly referred to as the Time of Use Pilot. The PUC directed Xcel Energy to determine a rate that accurately reflects the cost of energy throughout the day in an attempt to avoid the need for future power plants. Nikki reviewed the objectives of the pilot [Slide 3], identified the locations (including several neighborhoods in South Minneapolis), and described number of participants in several segments: general population, electric vehicle owners, smart thermostats, seniors, renters and low-income. Some of the participants selected for the program opted out, with an attrition rate in Minneapolis of almost four percent but a net attrition rate of 2.5 percent.

Most meters are in place, and two EVAC members are in the pilot. The rates will go live on April 20; the pilot will run for two years. Participants received a welcome packet describing the program in general. That was followed by meter installation, and a notification that more information would be provided about programs to help save energy. The goal is to educate control group participants about energy use and rates, not to influence their behavior on an individual basis. If they are reminded about the pilot it will be at community events or through community channels.

Nikki explained how the recommendations from EVAC are reflected in the pilot design. [Slide 7] On the community engagement strategy Xcel Energy contracted with CEE to help reach out to community organizations, increasing awareness of the pilot and educating people about benefits and environmental impact of using energy at different times of the day, where energy comes from, and what behavioral changes can be made. Jenny Edwards, Director of Planning and Engagement at CEE, said Megan Hoye and Katie Jones from CEE have been spearheading the community engagement strategy. Since last fall approximately 25 meetings have been held with potential partners. They hope to enlist the help of three to four community engagement partners who will host events and provide tabling, consult on targeted messages and materials (non-English), and coordinate broader engagement. They also plan to work with two media partners to

collaborate on multilingual content creation. Once contracts with these partners have been finalized community engagement will begin in February or March and continue into early 2021. Partners have been found for residents of Latino and Somali communities to ensure the message is reaching non-English speakers.

Comment: It would be interesting in the future to have EVAC weigh in on the time of use pilot that will be conducted on the commercial building side.

Q: How do you reach non-English speakers who will not come out for an event or otherwise know about this pilot?

A: Some of the prospective partners specifically work in audio-visual (radio, social media) and are using that to reach people. Online videos will be available in other languages besides English.

Comment: If you get a translation, have someone corroborate it to make sure it is translated correctly.

Response: We work with a translation vendor and part of their contract will be to ensure content is correct.

Jenny invited those with ideas for other types of outreach and engagement to contact her.

**b. Inclusive Financing**

Kim said the City still plans to intervene in CenterPoint Energy's rate case on inclusive financing, working with Dr. Holmes Hummel to draft a tariff for introduction into the rate case. Legal support will be provided by the City's legal team with outside legal counsel if necessary. The rate case is expected to move forward in early spring of 2021.

**c. On-Bill Loan Repayment Program**

Emma reported that CenterPoint Energy's EZ Pay program will have a soft rollout in the summer of 2020, with a full rollout hopefully by fall 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

*This constitutes my understanding of items discussed and decisions reached.  
If there are any omissions or discrepancies, please notify the author in writing.*

Submitted by:

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