

BOARD OF SELECTMEN & SEWER COMMISSIONERS'
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Francis Faulkner Hearing Room 204

February 1, 2010

7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Knibbe, Selectmen Rosenzweig and Gowning, Town Manager Steve Ledoux, Green Advisory Board Members Catherine Crosby-Chair, Christopher Schaffner, Eric Hudson, Thomas Michelman, Mary Smith, Terry Lindgren and Dennis Loria, Recording Secretary Maryjane Kenney

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Stretch Energy Code

The first task that the Green Advisory Board was asked to take on was to develop a plan to improve Acton's energy efficiency. The Green Advisory board has recommended that Acton become a 'Green Community' as defined by the Massachusetts Green Communities Act. Green Communities will be eligible for state grants that will provide up to \$10 million annually to fund programs such as efficiency initiatives, renewable energy projects and innovative programs.

One step to becoming a Green Community is to adopt the stretch energy code. If Acton adopts the stretch code, we will improve the efficiency of Acton's building stock over time thereby reducing utility bills for Acton homeowners and businesses, and reducing unnecessary consumption of fossil fuels.

Acton's Annual Town Meeting (which will begin on April 6th) will ultimately decide whether or not we will adopt the stretch code. Tonight's meeting is intended to explain the stretch code and explore how it would impact various types of development in town. We are very lucky to have a panel of experts in the field who were willing to come and speak to us tonight.

Ian Finlayson – Introduction to the Stretch Code

Ian is Manager of Buildings and Climate Programs at the Department of Energy Resources in Ma. He works on climate plans for 2020 and 2050 and clean energy initiatives; developing implementation of the stretch building code, building labeling and benchmarking pilots.

Ian presented a quick overview and reasons the town would adopt this code.

- The building code is changing and there are incentives and rebates available
- Adapting the Home Energy Rating Service (HERS) code enables the town to get a performance rating of energy savings on new buildings of at least 20% for climate zone 5
- It requires a certified HERS inspector to rate homes with a Thermal Bypass Inspection Checklist
- On existing buildings (additions/renovations) energy savings can be rated in two ways
 1. Performance Path
 2. Prescriptive Path

The reason to test performance is because code compliance is not where one would think it is.

Cost of Stretch Code

An example from cost modeling is on a 2,672 sq. ft. three bedroom home with \$8100.00 spent on energy improvements the annual cash flow saving is \$837.00. (This does not include HERS rater, \$500-\$1200, savings from rebates \$1250 or Federal Tax Credits \$4000.) Having your home rated has shown to be a selling point in the marketplace. Additionally the Commercial Stretch Code and LEED energy model are fully compatible.

Currently free training is available to code officials and \$30. to others interested. Public Safety Website has the entire code available on line under Energy Conservation Appendix 120AA. Adaption of the Stretch offer Green Community Criteria for incentives.

For further information: Dept of Public Safety Mike Guigli 617-826-5215

Dept of Energy Resources Ian Finlayson 617-626-4910 Or Energy & Environment Marc Breslow 617-626-1105

Paul Eldrenkamp - Founder and Owner of Bygg Meister, Inc. a 27 year old residential remodeling company based in Newton spoke next. He served on the Board of NE Sustainable Energy Association and Chair of the residential working group of Governor Patrick's Zero Net Energy Building Task Force. He is involved in energy efficient HERS construction in Townsend and has for less than \$150 per sq ft. built with an index rating of -4.

He took the audience through several case studies showing successful outcomes of quality control testing that can yield saving for little money in energy efficient building. HERS rating index actually helps clients leverage remodeling dollars. Many contractors have used the stretch for good business stewardship of building construction.

Jonathan Kantar - of SAGE Builders is a residential developer in Newton presented a slide show to communicate that builders, designers and communities need to build Better homes. He specializes in sustainable renovations and additions. He is a member of the Governor's Zero Net Energy Buildings Advisory council.

The Stretch Code with a HERS rating seals the deal in assuring you are that you are getting what you think you have paid for. Construction with out testing it is a huge problem; Gaps in installation without testing are a huge problem. His presentation showed actually testing in progress. His point of view is energy compliant buildings are easily doable and testing just becomes a good habit.

Markus Springer - has worked in commercial development for twenty years as an architect for corporate, commercial, infrastructure and academic clients. He is currently the Director of Architecture in the Urban Studio at Sasaki Associates in Watertown, MA. Mr. Springer is a LEED accredited Professional and a member of Governor Patrick's Zero Net Energy Task Force, he served on Mayor Menino's Climate Action Committee, he is Chair of the USGBC Mass Chapter Advocacy Committee, and serves on the Boston Society of Architecture's Legislative Affairs Committee. He worked on drafting the language for the Green Communities Act passed in 2007 and the Green Building Excise Tax Credit.

He spoke to the US consumption of energy use and efficiencies in the commercial realm. What is the impact of buildings in the US on raw materials, co2 emission, electricity consumption, total energy consumption and water consumption and total waste output? We would like to be carbon neutral by 2030. We would need to be 60% better by this year and 90% better by 2025 to achieve this goal. That will not happen. If you change the use of an old building you will trigger the stretch code unless they are part of the exception list: those would be supermarkets, warehouses, laboratories, and special use buildings with a variance granted by appeal to the BBRs. Another exception is Historical Buildings.

The greatest energy use tested falls in the following categories:

- Building Envelope
- Heating and cooling system
- Lighting use sensors and dimmers

Commercial compliance must be met in these areas; the building envelope, the building mechanical systems, the water heating system, the electrical power and lighting system, and advanced prescriptive options.

In showing examples of buildings Mr. Springer stated that for very little cost one can achieve approximately 34% savings. Currently there are many incentives out there.

Mark Price - is a Sustainability Specialist with Steve Winter Associates; he provides consulting for sustainable design, construction green building rating system implementation and high performance building technology research. He provides guidance to owners, builders, architects, and developers of residential construction. He produces verification and certification in the EPA's Energy Star Homes Program.

Mr. Price talked about actual testing and how it works, how the ratings work, and what its scope is. He focused on the fact that the builders that have started to adapt to the HERS rating feel it is a positive selling point. There are currently 30-50 HERS raters in Massachusetts.

Citizens' Comments

Charlie Kadlec, this code is not ready if doesn't deal with air ventilation. He asked if there is a requirement for testing before the walls up. Yes, Nstar requires the rater to be on site to run the installation test. Mr. Kadlec feels

that owner behavior is most important and other wise he feels there will be very little difference in energy usage. Michael B. from Rosendale asked if there have been studies done to rate consistency in testing. Mr. Price stated that there is less than .5% difference; the protocol is rigorous and well controlled. NStar is required to do validation on their programs.

Theo Powell from Westford, had questions regarding utility incentives? If Acton adopts the stretch code are the incentives still available since then it becomes base mandated. In several California case studies it says the utility has to treat the entire state the same. The city of Boston who has been a lead in compliancy Friday passed that utilities cannot withhold incentives.

Pam Harting-Barrat, what happens to radon, ventilation control is a large part of the testing? The reply was in June they are introducing mechanical ventilation code to the code for testing of radon and mold etc. (other public health issues). The Stretch Code is a baby step and it is not going to seal your home completely.

A citizen from 16 Orchard Drive asked if you own an older home can one get an evaluation. Yes, HERS rating started with the mortgage industry and you can get a rating. What is the enforcement, is there any thought to that. Not at this point, but as testing moves across the state with free training and long term you are giving that house a rating; enforcement will come.

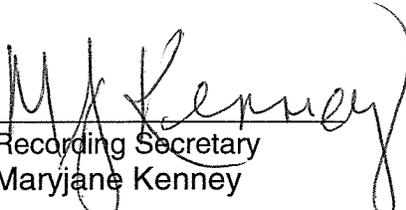
Paul Gaboury of 12 Assabet Crossing stated that the Building inspectors could do the same thing-- is this complementary or overlap/competition? Mr. Price replied that using town building inspectors to monitor the stretch code would not be cost effective. Sometimes in these budget times they cannot even leave to get training. Basically it is a sharing of that job. The HERS rater would be doing additional tests that inspectors do not have time to do now. Right now Mr. Gaboury has a premium as an NStar energy builder. Now he is competing and paying for the HERS test/compliance. He also deals with increased permit fees and then another layer of compliance. We also hire architects to design LEEDS certified buildings.

Belle Choate of Newtown Road asked if the raters are certified who governs them. National Residential ???

Selectman Rosenzweig asked if different insulation is rated as efficient or less efficient. Mr. Price replied each has to be rated in the wall system. All can be used if installed correctly.

Donna Miller Windsor Ave. Would this apply to the large buildings that are in town such as the schools? Schools will be judged by Mass School Building Authority. But if new construction would apply renovation would fall under the Base program. You get extra money for your school to meet those requirements.

Chairman Knibbe asked about the impact upon selling your home. It does not have any affect, there is some discussion for the future to rate your home and if you have an HERS rating you can list it as such. In Europe it is a requirement.


Recording Secretary
Maryjane Kenney


Lauren Rosenzweig, Clerk


Date