

Intergovernmental Green Building Group (IGBG) Meeting
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

March 13, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon

Draft Meeting Highlights

**“Promoting cooperation on green building issues in the
Metropolitan Washington region”**

In attendance:

Joan Kelsch (Arlington), Committee Chair*
Stella Tarnay (Arlington)
MonaCheri McCoy (District of Columbia)
Michael Negussie (District of Columbia)
Barry Weise (District of Columbia)
Dawn Dhavale (Fairfax County)
Tom Mawson, USGBC
William Marsh, (Loudoun County)
Cameron Duncan (Prince George’s County)
Brett Kaplan (GWU)
Cliff Majersik (Institute for Market Transformation)
Erica Bannerman (Alexandria)
Alem Zewoldai (Alexandria)
George Nichols (MWCOG)
Beth Clark (Charles County)
Leah Boggs (MWCOG)
Rich Romer (Montgomery County)
Jay Wilson (Wiencek and Associates Architects)
Laura Dely, (Open Door Housing Fund)
Mark Williamson (Sagatov Associates)
Lou Sagatov Associates
David Cooperman, (GreenHome)
Dale Medearis (NVRC)

1. Call to Order

Joan Kelsch welcomed attendees. George Nichols asked that members update the information on the Regional Green Building Policies and Programs Overview.

2. Update on Greening the Codes – Cliff Majersik

National Update

The International Code Council (ICC) met in Palm Springs, CA recently for code committee meetings. A package of changes that would require more insulation, better windows, appropriate sizing of HVAC equipment, sealing, etc was proposed to ICC and much of it was approved. IGBG had endorsed the 30%

improvement in energy codes. The proposal's supporters were very pleased with the outcome. Mayors across the country supported the proposal, as did many other organizations.

Next Step - bring proposed changes to the national ICC meeting in Minnesota in September 2008 where the group will vote on the improved energy components. Amendments adopted at this meeting will be reflected in the ICC 2009 codes.

Cliff recommended that IGBG members keep local government administrators and code officials informed about the proposed code changes, particularly as they relate to energy efficiency. He suggested that jurisdictions officially endorse these proposals. Additional information is available at the Alliance to Save Energy website (click on the "30% Solution"). Local governments should send representatives to the ICC meeting in Minnesota to support the changes. The changes would reduce utility bills and make housing more affordable.

Local Updates

District of Columbia

The green building advisory council has recommended a package of greening amendments to the Mayor. This will go to the Council this month. The DC package is available at www.imt.org/codes. It is likely that this package will pass and will require 30% improvement in energy efficiency across all building types. Also covers water efficiency. (NAHB did study on toilet efficiency). Cliff noted that all these changes will save money on long-term utility bills. DC will also require cool roofs (flat roof) or green roofs and ventilation fans in bathrooms and kitchens vented to the outside. The package is not as aggressive as LEED, but it does incorporate the proposed ASHRAE 189.1 LEED is available to push buildings to be even greener.

Montgomery County

Considering similar changes to their code; other Maryland jurisdictions can also adopt these changes.

Virginia

Changes of the code are done at the State level.

Cliff noted that the Cool Capital Challenge and encouraged all jurisdictions to join.

3. Discussion with Green Home Builders:

Lou Sagatov of Sagatov Associates builds mostly in Arlington and uses Green Home Choice (Earthcraft) and Energy Star as the backbone for their projects. There is also a new Energy Star program that focuses on indoor air quality. Lou is also involved with the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA) which is the local NAHB chapter (he chairs the green committee), and thus has been involved with the NAHB guidelines and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) process. The ICC is a major stakeholder in this NAHB process.

NAHB is in the final comment stage for their ANSI accreditation. May is the target date. He expects that in 5-10 years green practices will be common practice required by code.

Sagatov Associates will use the NAHB guidelines and they may drop GHC. (he felt that his basic construction practices complied with Green Home Choice and he didn't have to change much in order to get GHC approved). NAHB doesn't incorporate Energy Star the same way that GHC does. The third party verification process for NAHB is still being debated.

Inspections are the biggest challenge in Arlington's program. Inspectors may not understand the program or may not know about some of the new technologies. Energy Star has changed over time and it is difficult to track what has to be done on each project. It is also a challenge to coordinate the whole team and the different ratings. The HERS raters (verifiers) aren't always clear on what is required as well. Education is the key – subcontractors, inspectors, HERS raters, etc.

Counties have limited resources to train staff and builders. The plan review process is also more complicated because new things are being proposed and inspectors aren't always up to speed. There are issues with inspector knowledge and there are consistency issues.

It takes much more time to do things to ensure energy efficiency. Duct sealing, mastic application, insulation, etc. takes several days whereas without the green requirements, these installations can be done in a day.

Eric Coffman asked if anyone is doing charettes with inspectors and builders to work through some of the complex issues. Arlington has done some training. But the culture change is difficult and getting inspectors interested is a challenge. Training is a critical component.

Cliff Majersik and Tom Mawson reported that commercial buildings with Energy Star ratings are renting at \$7 more per square foot than non-Energy Star buildings and they have higher occupancy rates. LEED buildings sell for 65% more than comparable buildings.

Jay Wilson is an architect (Wiencek and Associates). His firm specializes in multifamily housing, particularly affordable housing projects, and they are currently working on a project in southeast DC. Single family green building rating systems are difficult to apply to these building types. And LEED is difficult to apply to smaller multi-family. They are using Enterprise's Green Communities and LEED-NC for the Southeast DC project and will use the project as a test case for both rating systems.

Jay emphasized that they have to educate the client so they know what they are getting. There is an increased first cost for green but the life cycle cost savings makes up for that fairly quickly (less than 10 years). His firm does a lot of renovation and some criteria don't work well (such as separately metering units). He reported that improving indoor air quality does increase the cost somewhat.

However, low VOC paint, hard surface flooring, sturdier carpet don't add a lot of cost.

Lou reported that EPA has different strategies for improving indoor air quality. They are looking at special fresh air dampers and ERVs that provide better air exchange.

Lou mentioned that some builders are afraid that they will be criticized for not going far enough – the ecoterrorism cases in Washington State are of concern. NVBIA is planning a green building Expo this summer to educate consumers and trades people.

Lou noted that all green building programs are similar in many ways. He can't comment on NAHB's program until it is done. He will be promoting NAHB in the region. Third party verification must be a part of this. The ANSI process is transparent and we can check the website to see where it is going.

4. Discussion of Green Home Research

Brett Kaplan is preparing an assessment of the green home rating systems for a MBA project and for IGBG's use. He is meeting with representatives from each green building rating system. (Energy Star is not considered.) He has developed a scoring system and has rated each program, giving a numerical score for a variety of parameters (the scoring is subjective, but helps to compare the programs). LEED is for designer homes (high-end). EarthCraft is more mainstream. He also noted that NAHB is developing a program that will be applied nationwide (across a wide range of climate zones). EarthCraft is an example of a more locally-focused program.

Issues for IGBG:

Train building inspectors through COG for green buildings. May need to consider doing training by state. Cost for training – perhaps a tuition reimbursement program through COG. This would require funding.

Greening of existing buildings/homes needs to be considered. Most places in the DC region are built out so existing homes is a huge component. Montgomery County is discussing a required energy audit at point of sale for homes. They may also require energy use disclosure on each home at time of sale.

IGBG will review Brett's report, consider the timing of the issuance of NAHB's guidelines, and develop an approach for making recommendations for greening residential buildings (new and existing) in the region.

5. Roundtable:

- Naomi Friedman reported on a conference for regional councils in the US and Europe. Dale Medearis from Northern Virginia Regional Commission is coordinating the conference.
- Stella Tarnay is leaving Arlington County and will be the new green building coordinator in DC.

- Green DC week is April 21-26. Leah Boggs is helping to coordinate tours for that week.
- The Energy Advisory Committee is meeting March 20 and IGBG members are encouraged to attend.
- Tom Mawson of USGBC-NCR reported that there are several workshops and trainings in the region. A LEED-EB workshop is offered on March 18. The Chapter meeting is on March 25. The LEED-CI study group meets April 8. Another LEED-NC study group begins in June. LEED-CI training is scheduled for April 10.
- Fairfax County has had some new projects that would fall under the new green building policy. They are also working on green building incentives.
- Montgomery County council is considering seven bills related to global warming. They will share their report with IGBG.
- Naomi Friedman went to the National Smart Growth Conference. Environmental themes pervaded the conference. IGBG may want to look at how green building relates to growth.

6. Next meeting – The April meeting will be rescheduled due to current conflicts.