

Vermont Sustainability Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes—September 22, 2021

Jacob Policzer calls to order meeting at 12:02 pm.

Attendees

Sub-Committee Members:

- Billy Coster
- Stephanie Smith

Cannabis Control Board:

- Kyle Harris

NACB:

- Jacob Policzer
- Tom Nolasco
- Gina Kranwinkel

Technical Expert Guests:

Jill O'Connor

Barry Murphy

Kelly Launder

4 Members of public

Minutes recorded by Meggan Hau.

Jacob Policzer entertains a motion to approve the minutes for the September 16 meeting. Stephanie Smith moves to approve. Tom Nolasco seconds. All vote in favor of approving.

The subcommittee Moderator Jacob Policzer moves to discuss the shared discussion guide circulated. Indoor cultivation lighting, greenhouses, and energy incentives were among the topics discussed. The technical expert guests answered questions posed around the recommendations from PSD Act 164.

Notable comment(s):

*Jill O'Connor- Regarding incentives to set threshold of rebates for lighting fixtures - We will incentivize LED products. We are looking at anything above 1.9 PPE qualification on LED products when rebating them, going up to a more efficient light. We are using metal halide lights as standard practice level. Look at this on a PPFD equivalent.

*Jacob Policzer- Are there customizable rebate programs to offset load or capacity from HVAC system and how that might interact for overall savings program?

*Jill O'Connor- We see huge cooling reduction opportunities. Not so much with heating, but a cool reduction that benefits with the LED. For indoor grows, our goal is to energy model these and look at whole building, lights, any other equipment they will be putting in the space. We run energy models. Basing incentives on overall heating, lighting, everything together.

*Kyle Harris- I imagine greenhouses are in varying degrees of up to 'code' here, I'm wondering how much work it might be for some small cultivators to get their greenhouse up to these codes?

*Stephanie Smith- Currently greenhouses are not required to meet those codes. What point and time do these standards come into play, generally? Permitting trigger? Occupation trigger? Who ensures these standards are being met? What entity is doing that? Sounds like the above and beyond is measured by the Efficiency Vermont entity.

*Jacob Policzer- in the recommendations they do have Energy Auditing. When applying, how do you comply with this standard before they get a license? Recommended to have self-reporting framework and a third-party audit once they are established.

*Barry Murphy- Commercial building is self-reporting. When we deal with applications, they sign an affidavit that they meet requirements. Once structure is completed, they fill out a certificate and provide evidence. There will be form or affidavit devised for whatever CCB decides they have to meet. Buildings Codes- Dept of Fire safety, occupancy requirements, generally not specific inspection around energy components. People that do inspection with Dep of Fire Safety are not experts for Energy Efficiency. You cannot verify until building is done. Requirement that an architect or engineer sign affidavit and builder also signs an affidavit.

*Jacob Policzer- Asks about the development of the Greenhouse requirements- U-factor 0.7

*Barry Murphy- .7 u-factor we took from within International Code for 2021 and include .7 for walls and I believe .5 for ceilings. We didn't think that was practical. We thought .7 is attainable as the more industry standard.

*Jill O'Connor- We are encouraging growers to use double poly. We also encourage getting thermal curtains to help keep in heat and block light going out. Issues on Dark Sky component will be town by town. If someone is looking at growing overnight in gable style-glass style greenhouse, we tell them to reach out to town to check requirements.

*Billy Coster- I agree with Jill, those issues can be regulated town by town. There are rarely impacts on wildlife habitat.

*Stephanie Smith- From Farming/Ag perspective, excess light that is emitted from greenhouse related to cannabis is NOT regulated from the town. This would be new regulations that towns need to consider.

*Barry Murphy- Low energy building exceptions- Space conditioning is defined as purposes of heating or cooling a space.

*Jill O'Connor- We have a lot of people that are reaching out over the years with variety of ideas around converting spaces to grow spaces. There will be greenhouses coming up, and people are asking what will be required.

*Stephanie Smith- Is there a way to have more of a prescription recommendation and information on how to set up people for success?

*Jill O'Connor- Right now it's more case by case, as growing is so unique (lettuce to tulips to cannabis) the space needs are so different. I'm hoping to get good baseline information.

*Billy Coster- Regarding renewables and requiring 0.5 Watts/sq ft, complicated question. Certainly, encouraging folks to take advantage of programs to self-generate their energy is a positive thing. I get wary of requirements. I think at small scale, there will be opportunity there, but larger self-generation is a pretty dynamic place. Encouraging it where it makes sense, but mandating may be a step too far. But we could craft it smartly if that's what people want to do.

*Barry Murphy- Option- install renewable energy system. We have a value of what per square foot for that generation. Not saying they have to install it, but if you choose to, this is the minimum amount of solar we'd want you to install.

*Jill O'Connor- This also applies for anyone going into an already existing building. How would that affect them?

*Barry Murphy- When moving into a space, they need to bring building to code standard. There are numerous options (solar is one). If building cannot support solar, then that won't apply.

*Barry Murphy- Burden for bringing things up to code is on the renter not landlord typically.

*Jill O'Connor- We will point out where a code will be, we say discuss with your landlord. Let us know where to send the check at the end for the rebates.

*Barry Murphy- Modeling should be first thing before they take too many steps down for applying for permits and construction.

*Billy Coster- I defer to the experts. Apologize to have to leave (1 ET).

*Barry Murphy- CCB could implement equipment efficiency standards, but that is not within the scope of Commercial Building and Energy codes.

*Jill O'Connor- interest with Energy Efficient VT to include incentives – We would love to get more data. We would love to see more building automated control systems.

*Jacob Policzer- Probably 3 or 4 monitoring programs that will link with smart meters (energy, water usage).

*Barry Murphy- Our consultant developed many different codes and standards, and this is what they recommended for HVAC and dehumidification system.

*Stephanie Smith- Review conditional use requirements and zoning code Chapter 117, it talks about conditional uses.

*Barry Murphy- We will revisit standards to see what needs to be updated.

*Kelly Launder- New code update, we could consider and need to think about it, to include the specific cannabis code language or not. With the statute limitations, I'm not sure if they would be comfortable with editing that. We need to look further before making a decision.

*Kelly Launder- We are happy to answer anything in writing. We also have MBI on contract through end of the year, we can pull them in.

Jacob Policzer opens the floor for public comment. Kyle Harris notes there are no public comments

Next steps:

Tom Nolasco- in C&E tomorrow, discuss town regulations for lighting pollution.

Jacob Policzer- Bring in regulations to share around Dark Sky (light pollution).

Kyle Harris- Connect David Scherr with Kelly Launder

Following last thoughts, Jacob Policzer entertains a motion to adjourn. Meeting is adjourned at 1:42 pm.

Next Sustainability Subcommittee meeting is Monday, September 27 at 12 ET.