The Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee working group BERDO met remotely via Zoom at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, March 5th, 2024.

The following members and staff were present: Brian Hebeisen (chair), Silas Fyler (Energy Manager), Pat Rathbone, Jocelyn Tager.

Others present: Susan Ladue, Mike Albano
The meeting started with a quorum at 5:30 with Brian Hebeisen presiding.

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1) Announcements

Unanimous approval of the minutes for 2/22/24, 2/23/24, 2/29/24 and 3/1/24 meeting minutes

2) BERDO Outstanding Questions

1) When there is a transfer of ownership of a building, should we require verification of data for the first year?

Is this because usage patterns might change? If so, should it be the first full year of ownership? Even then, may not make sense if they are moving in or doing renovations. What are the scenario(s) you are thinking of?

1. to help educate the new owner
2. to verify the previous owner's data was valid as a sort of new baseline

agreed to verification on transfer of ownership at the end of the year in which the building was sold
 - added language (highlighted) for approval

2) Do we want to have another verification done when more than x% (50% ?) change in building (additions / renovations / reductions) in size? How will this affect their reduction in GHG percentages from baseline? Can the owner slowly remove parts of the building to meet the reduction goals. IE should the baseline reduction goal be a GHG reduction % or a GHG by sqft %? If a building falls below the 20,000 once it is part of the reporting group does that mean it is removed from the requirement?

1)any significant change in size of a covered bldg (due to renovation etc) would be avaluated by the dept for the necessity of a new baseline
2) no bldg shall be removed from the list of covered bldgs without approval of a submitted hardship plan by the review board
 - added language (highlighted) for approval

3) For the definition of "Approved Verification Body" we need to change from verification of GHG to verification of energy and covered property characteristics for reported data.

Sounds good. Let's discuss tonight - agreed to this
- changed it

4) Do we need the definition of "Affordable Housing"? Not really used anywhere.

I'm happy to take it out. Let's discuss tonight - agreed to remove -
- removed it

5) Do we need an energy performance score for both data reporting and End of Year Report? What happens if we stop using portfolio manager?

Can you explain more? We agreed to revised language
- I entered it

6) Do we need to define "Accelerated Compliance period" in definitions? Think buildings > 100,000 sqft.

Maybe? Leave this for a later editing session

7) Do we need the definition of "Qualified Benchmarker" Not really used anywhere.

Seems redundant to "QUALIFICATIONS OF BENCHMARKERS". I suggest we remove it. agreed to this
- I will do this

8) Under section "Purpose" we need to change years 2035 to 2036
Done

9) Definition of "Municipal Property" we need to change to owned and managed. - e.g. boys and girls club, Wayside
Done

10) Utilities have a certain percentage of renewable energy as defined by DPU. This includes class 2 renewables. Do these count in our GHG usage / reductions? Or do we only count the Class 1 RECs? Note that Utility Class 1 RECs do not meet the non-bio exclusion. Can all covered properties claim this? Those on WEC can they claim the wind recs (I would guess not)? Is it mandatory to declare utility RECs you purchased in baseline years?

That's not one question lol
Wouldn't the emissions factor supplied by DOER for the massachusetts grid automatically factor in those class 2 recs? So we would have to subtract them back out if we didn't allow them?
I would ask Cambridge and Boston how they handle class 2 RECs from utilities (do other retail electricity providers fall under this also?). I'm on the fence about this. We should also discuss w the WG. If we decide to allow we could add a section 26.d: "In addition, Class 2 RECs provided as part of the standard utility offering will also satisfy(?) the definition of Renewable Electricity.
I would recommend that the TX wind RECs not be allowed since unlike the class 2 RECs there is an easy option to opt up to the premium WEC product.
What would happen if they don't report utility RECs in baseline years? You mean they claim the zero emissions for that electricity but don't say where it came from?

discuss more – leave for next meeting

11) Review Board Makeup --- What happens if we cannot get 3 residences on the board in the future? We would be preventing building owners from submitting hardship and deferment plans if the board does not have a quorum. Can we state the makeup as a little more nebulous? Something like: " with a desired makeup of a majority of Watertown residents and a majority of scientists, climate experts, and equity advocates. "

Isn't a quorum just a majority of the current members? That is the way we treated WE3C. So if there were only 3 members a quorum would be 2. That said, maybe it would be desirable to give discretion just because a small committee would not be good. On the other hand, do we think getting the 3 residents would be that hard? Maybe put something about exceptions that the dept can have? Silas will confirm whether a quorum is the members assigned to the committee at that time or the max number possible - discuss more – leave till next meeting

12) When we speak of Condos should we include Cooperatives? Do they have the same compliance timeline?

how many of these are there? - agreed to redefine condo to mean condo and coop
after meeting I changed this to add coop wherever it said condo since it didn't work well to redefine condo
- get approval of highlighted changes at next meeting

13) What issues do we have with Condo Conversions? Does this affect the compliance timeline and or the baselines when we convert more than 75% of the building?

can you explain the scenario and how likely you think it is? agreed doesn't matter since same timelines
- no change

14) Under Enforcement, what is the point of #4?

Dunno. It came from Cambridge and seemed reasonable to evaluate how the buildings had been doing. Not sure it's useful to call this out separately from the overall plan review that will be done (and also not at the same time - after 3 not 5 years?).

- agreed to remove if ernesta and jolly are ok with that at next meeting

15) Under Emission Requirements # 3 "New Covered Properties" -- net zero GHG emissions by 2035?

I think this came from Cambridge also (at least the 2035 date did). The idea was that the BERDO is to allow existing buildings to slowly retrofit. New buildings should be being built to NZ standards but we're still allowing a little extra time.
- agreed to keep this date

- Discussion PPA's outside of Massachusetts discussion from previous meeting. Decided that we should not require PPA's in Massachusetts.
- Discussion on REC's are retired. Decided Silas would research for a potential method. Silas will also research sqft definition as it related to EUI.
- Discussion of regulations and how they apply to emission factors
- Discussion of buildings over 100,000 sqft and their timeline compliance periods. Discussed the speed of these reductions as well as start date for the reductions. Decided that reduction amount speed is aggressive but likely doable. Decided to delay compliance periods 1,2,3 for these buildings by one year.

3) Move to adjourn at 7:00 pm
All approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Silas Fyler