

BUILDING PERFORMANCE LAB

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Robert E. Paaswell, Director, CUNY Institute for Urban Systems
Michael Bobker, Director, Building Performance Lab

Newman Hall, 137 E. 22nd St., Room 315
New York, NY 10010
www.cunyurbansystems.org

Summary of NYC Building Performance Stakeholder Consortium Meeting of April 10, 2009

Our Spring Consortium meeting showed a continuing high level of interest in our on-going topics and also in a new one. Update presentations elicited spirited response and discussion as did consideration of how our local industry might position itself to take advantage of federal stimulus funding.

Web-based resources: Nora Sherman of the Lab reported back on the first Advisory Panel meeting for the NYC Building Performance Website (a joint project with the Newman Real Estate Institute that is supported by EPA Region 2). The panel was convened from members of the Stakeholder Consortium. Her suggestion that the website would focus on NYC legal compliance with respect to emerging energy requirements, especially for the office market, was met with positive comments and nods from all around the room.

Curriculum and Workforce Development: Yetsuh Frank of USGBC-NY outlined their “introduction to green” modules under development for the construction and building operating trades. Availability expected summer or fall 2009. Michael Bobker of the Lab described training courses currently being offered through NYC-DCAS and through the IUOE Local 94 Training Center, leading to the nationally recognized Building Operator Certification (BOC), level 1. There were questions about how these and other elements, such as LEED EBOM AP, ASHRAE, and other certifications and training opportunities, all related to one another.

These issues are also being addressed as part of the NYC Apollo Alliance Green Jobs Round Table process that is developing policy recommendations expected to be released by fall 2009.

Benchmarking: Marlon Harewood, a Lab Intern and graduating senior from CUNY City Tech’s program in Facilities Management, reported on his six-month experience in supporting the EnergyStar Portfolio Manager process for the NYC Department of Education. This highly data-intensive effort covers all 1,200 K-12 schools in the system, making it perhaps the largest single dataset in the Portfolio Manager database. Besides the direct value in moving a city agency towards its goals, this work was applauded as showing the value that CUNY students, interning through the Lab, could bring to energy projects.

Chairperson Nancy Anderson noted that a requirement for Benchmarking (of buildings over 50,000 square feet) was one of **four pieces of draft legislation** being considered by the Mayor’s Office for introduction before the City Council. This led to a spirited discussion of the status and specific content of this legislative package.

Green Leasing: Referencing work by NRDC, HR&A, and a recent conference organized by the Newman Real Estate Institute, “green leasing” was discussed as part of an emerging

toolkit. If we think we want “greener high performance buildings”, who, asked co-chair Barry Hersh, will pay for the work to make them so? The green lease is emerging as a framework for addressing this question of equitably sharing costs and benefits of building improvement projects.

New Topic: Facing Stimulus

From consideration of what we might want to see in our buildings under Green Leases, it was a small step to introduce a new topic: how do we position ourselves to take advantage of federal stimulus funding for a resurgent economy?

The Empire State Building retrofit project was held up as an example of the kind of project that might be a model combining major energy reduction (38% projected) with transformation of a property’s image as an office space location. Kathy Baczko of the Clinton Climate Initiative explained the project finance model using a modified shared-savings performance contract.

Randolph Horner suggested that utilities and developers might usefully bundle projects to make use of federal loan guarantees applied to stimulate private capital. Such financing might be estimated in the range of \$50 – 250 billion.

Manny Patino, citing his long-term experience in energy financing, suggested a potential problem with large-volume deal-flow because of the specialized and customized nature of the energy-savings performance contract. Without attention to financial and physical engineering, pressure from above from a large reservoir of funding resources might have difficulty in flowing smoothly through a narrow project pipeline.

There was much interest in this topic, but discussion was limited by time constraints. It was agreed that there was important substance and willingness around the table to pursue this topic via a working group to be convened through the spring and summer that would report back to the next Consortium meeting in the fall.