

## **Clark County Sustainable Communities**

Stakeholders Meeting #5

February 18, 2010 4-6 pm

CTRAN Fisher's Landing Passenger Service Office

Rose Besserman Room, 3510 SE 164th Avenue, Vancouver WA

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Members in Attendance**

Gordy Euler, Clark County  
Laura Hudson, City of Vancouver  
Marty Snell, Clark County  
Mike Piper, Clark County  
Jim Muir, Clark County  
Mike Selig, Clark County  
Mark Basham, Basham Woodworks  
Avaly Mobbs, BIA  
Leslie Johnson, Clark County  
Frank L'Amie, Vancouver Housing Authority  
Ryan Zygar, Tamarack Homes  
Chuck Dougherty, Synergy Design  
Jamie Clark, SGA Engineering  
David Burdick, Sustainable Steps  
Jennifer McClure, Mackay Sposito  
Timothy Buckley, Greenstone Architecture

#### **Staff in Attendance**

Pete DuBois, Clark County  
Katie Spataro, Cascadia  
Adrienne DeDona, JLA  
Kelly Skelton, JLA

#### **Agenda items:**

- Welcome, introductions, meeting agenda and purpose
- Recap of Meeting #1
- Review Hybrid House Pilot Project Ordinance
- Overview of Pilot Project – Living Farm
- Discuss the Hybrid House Ordinance: benchmarks, code issues, incentives

#### **Welcome:**

Katie reviewed the agenda and goals for the meeting and initiated a round of introductions. Katie reviewed the project vision which is to support and encourage sustainable communities in Clark County with emphasis on innovative models of land use, transportation, and resource-efficient residential/mixed use projects.

#### **Recap of Meeting #1:**

Because there were a few people attending the meeting for the first time Katie gave a brief recap of the project and the purpose of the group. She explained that at the last meeting the group discussed

example tools and resources that might be useful to the private sector building and development industry for promoting sustainable projects. The group brainstormed ideas for the types of tools and information most needed. The consensus was that the types of information most needed are:

- Technical training for builders/developers and subs/trades
- Database of certified projects
- Consumer cost/benefit analysis
- Homeowners manuals
- List of financial incentives
- Documenting alternative methods
- Analysis of most useful/valuable green strategies
- Dialogue between code officials and development community

The preferred delivery methods are:

- Online
- Workshops
- Demonstration projects
- Targeted tours
- Online video
- School-based programming
- Business involvement
- Planning commission 1st Tues. workshops
- Marketing campaign
- PUD/utility inserts
- Code guidance
- Print materials
- Wiki site

The preferred delivery methods are:

- Training for builders/designers/trades/consumers
- Pilot projects: hands on learning
- Web-based delivery methods

### **Hybrid House Pilot Project Ordinance:**

Pete explained that the County is proposing a Pilot Project ordinance to allow for alternative methods of development with an initial focus on promoting and showcasing the design and construction process of a Hybrid House Project. The Hybrid House Pilot project concept includes building a living farm on the 80 acres located at the 78<sup>th</sup> Street farm in Hazel Dell. The ordinance will allow for other, similar demonstration projects and will pave the way for addressing code and regulatory obstacles comprehensively as well as a variety of educational opportunities.

Katie told the group about a similar ordinance in Seattle (the Living Building Pilot project) that provides for voluntary compliance.

Marty said last year he had asked Commissioner Steve Stuart if he sponsor this type of project and he agreed. He said this would be a truly voluntary pilot program for a builder to enter into. The parameters of the project are yet to be defined; right now the concept is just getting laid out. It is likely that this could go through the Board of County Commissioners exclusively for approval, so it could be put into place relatively quickly (a 2-3 month timeframe). Katie added that the goal would be help to stimulate these types of projects, on a voluntary basis, and at the same time weed out the code and regulatory

issues that were outcomes of the SARD project. She said any kind of demonstration project creates a great educational opportunity with videos, online resources etc.

### **Hybrid House Pilot Project:**

Timothy Buckley of Greenstone Architecture gave a PowerPoint presentation about the living farm, the project priorities, and some details on how it could possibly be built. For more detailed information, please see the PowerPoint presentation at < <http://www.clark.wa.gov/sard/docs.html>>

Group discussion regarding the Hybrid House Project:

- David Burdick asked why the ordinance doesn't have a more ambitious goal of trying to achieve a net zero status. Timothy said there have been some discussions about the different opportunities and possibilities but more research will need to take place beforehand.
- Chuck asked if the site selected on the property is the same as what the County has identified. Pete said it's close.
- Frank asked if it's practical to build something so specific for an end user that hasn't yet been defined. In the long run it needs to make economic sense – what will eventually “sell” the project. Frank suggested quantifying volunteer labor as part of the model, and how it can be estimated to convey the value of labor for a future project. It was determined that tracking hours and materials will be very important.

For other questions about the Living Farm project, Timothy can be contacted at [tbuckley@greenstonearchitecture.com](mailto:tbuckley@greenstonearchitecture.com).

### **Hybrid House Pilot Ordinance:**

Katie presented the following main elements of the Hybrid House Pilot Ordinance.

The goals of the Hybrid House Ordinance are to:

- Stimulate the development of residential and mixed use projects that meet advanced levels of sustainability
- Allow for departures from code and regulatory requirements that might otherwise discourage or prevent projects from meeting sustainability goals
- Provide education to designers, builders, developers, homeowners and potential homebuyers

The proposed requirements are residential or mixed-use zones which meet a minimum of 60% of the prerequisites of the Living Building Challenge (LBC) in addition to all of the following:

- Use a minimum of 75% less energy
- Use a minimum of 75% less water
- A minimum of 50% storm water captured and used onsite

There are possible code departures for prohibited or conditional use provisions, but only for accessory uses that would directly address a prerequisite of the Living Building Challenge including but not limited

to uses that could re-use existing waste or reduce the transportation impacts of people or goods. There could also be departures around residential density limits, structure heights, parking limits (minimum and maximum) and alley, easement and setback requirements. For more information, please view the PowerPoint presentation at [www.clark.wa.gov/sard.docs.html](http://www.clark.wa.gov/sard.docs.html)

#### **Group Discussion on Hybrid House Pilot Ordinance:**

After the presentation Katie invited the group to help brainstorm about the ordinance with questions and comments.

David asked why the goal is only 75% less usage instead of just defining what a sustainable home is. He felt this was setting the bar too low and it would not be inspiring.

Frank said this pilot project needs to be adaptable to the real world, because this type of development can't be done affordably right now. He felt a project with a sliding scale that meets a variety of levels will provide a better idea of what is achievable now, and how goals should be set for the future.

Chuck recommended instead of doing percentages, the usage goals could be based on square footage.

Ryan said that he has done a few of these types of projects and met the goals identified. He said he has customers that want to build for energy efficiency, but there are different entities with different options and it would be nice if Clark County had standards to build to. He felt the general public could benefit from education programs about what builders can do. He said that builders need to have educated buyers; otherwise it isn't worth buildings sustainable/energy efficient homes.

Katie asked what kind of incentive Ryan would want from the County to build "green". He said he'd probably refer them to Chuck. Mark said we've got code and zoning issues overlapping with the economic barriers. He felt that some of the barriers should be removed by allowing builders to use available land in ways that it might not be zoned for.

Marty said if this gets off the ground, and someone gets the idea to build 100 houses using the same model (75% less energy use) that is a huge energy savings. He noted that the goal of the project is to impact larger developments, educate people so they understand and can request this type of construction.

Frank said from a user standpoint he likes all these ideas, but from his perspective the biggest impediment is getting approval - how do we get these ideas into the system so the planners can get approvals in a timely manner. It can take years to get approvals; the planning staff needs to have the authority to approve these projects. He thinks it needs a sliding scale. For example a committee of three people could do an initial review of a project to and give a yes or a no answer in a timely manner. Marty commented that some kind of resource team needs to be behind this ordinance. He said the County's hope is that all jurisdictions within the County will eventually adopt this ordinance.

Jamie commented that building commercial buildings with the LEED certification has been a no brainer because the owner will own the property for a while. The residential builder turns a property over to a buyer who is uneducated about the value of what they are buying. Jamie also commented on how

difficult it can be to make zoning changes, in some cases a comp plan change is necessary which requires a lot of the time.

Chuck commented that the LBC you don't get certified until a year later when you can demonstrate your energy efficiency through utility bills. He doesn't see verification in this ordinance.

Jennifer commented that doing something different can add 10-15% to the costs of project. Penalties are daunting as well and it would be a big risk from the design standpoint.

Frank said penalties put the risk on the builder and the owner, if we are trying to do something different and if we ask someone to take the risk to try something new there needs to be some acceptance of responsibility on the public side if things don't work out as intended. There needs to be more attention to verification process with the builders and the agencies.

Gordy said he envisions a time when the UGB is expanded and areas will be zoned for no water or sewer utilities for people to build in this sustainable manner.

Chuck agrees there need to some level of flexibility around the verification issue. He also felt consumers and builders may have a hard time understanding the term "hybrid house", this may not be a marketable name for the project.

Jim commented that he thinks the ordinance starts off with a negative tone. He doesn't think a minimum of 25% is realistic; it should be less stringent in the performance benchmarks, maybe building in rewards for those who reach higher.

Katie commented that Bainbridge Island model creates incremental incentives.

Jim said on the building code side there are lots of things we could do for incentives such as fast tracking permits.

Ryan commented that building costs are at low right now, so it's good timing for a builder to take a risk and think differently -- It will cost a lot less today.

Mark Basham asked if there were people in the room who have the authority to push these zoning changes through and what are the timeframes involved.

Avaly said that the BIA is trying to educate the public and push the builders to build this way now through programs such as the Parade of Homes.

Leslie said she is concerned about the penalties section and how occupant behavior will play into the performance of the home.

Mike Selig likes the idea of there being different types of buildings to appeal to the different options available.

**Closing and Next Steps:**

Katie wrapped up the meeting and explained the next steps. The next meeting will be held on March 11th from 4 to 6 p.m. at the CTRAN Fisher's Landing Transit Center. The draft ordinance will be presented with the stakeholder feedback incorporated at the next meeting. Any comments or suggestions should be sent to the project team by e-mailing Adrienne at [Adrienne@jla.us.com](mailto:Adrienne@jla.us.com).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.