

Michigan Energy Code Compliance Collaborative

*** MEETING MINUTES – 5/13/2019 ***

Location: 7109 W. Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917
Date: May 13, 2019
Time: 9:00am – 2:00pm EST
Call-In #: 1 (877) 336-1829 **Access Code:** 2022874#

Facilitator for both Subcommittee Meetings: Jake Wilkinson, Michigan Energy Office (MEO)

Commercial Subcommittee group meeting 9:00am – 11:00am

Attendees In Person

Ed Bartram, Diversified Heating & Cooling
John Dulmes, Michigan Chemistry Council
David Gard, Michigan Energy Efficiency Contractors Association
Tim Mrozowski, Michigan State University (Retired)
Caile Richards, Small Business Association of Michigan
Jake Wilkinson, Michigan Energy Office

Attendees On The Phone

Ian Blanding, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Ed Carley, National Association of State Energy Officials
William (Bill) Hordyk, City of Grand Rapids
Kevin McNeely, McNeely Building Group
Sonya Pouncy, Energy Sciences
Nicole Westfall, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

Agenda Details

Commercial Subcommittee group to meet 9:00am – 11:00am

Welcome and Introductions (*brief project intro for any new members*)

Jake Wilkinson, Michigan Energy Office, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that the goal of the collaborative is to identify and address what are the gaps, issues and opportunities in compliance with the current Michigan energy code and how we can improve compliance. The goal of this meeting is to update everyone on the actions taken since the last meeting and get input to help guide the projects that are getting started.

Summary of Last Meeting and Updates on Action Items

- The last meeting was focused on identifying actionable items that could move forward to projects
- There is often a lack of understanding, comfort, and awareness of the current code.
 - Lack of awareness of when code is updated (every 3 years for all codes except residential which is 3 or 6 years)
 - Lack of understanding of different compliance paths so many stick to the one they know, even if it is not the best option for that situation
- There has been a shift to rely heavily on energy raters for energy code compliance due to lack of man hours for code officials
 - Need for educating municipal leadership on the value of the energy code to help drive proper enforcement of the code
- Trainings that could be considered
 - Bureau of construction codes was only aware of 2 energy focused trainings registered
 - Training on quality of installation to ensure building components perform to their potential
 - Trainings that include continuing education credits to incentivize participation

- Trainings on the value of codes to municipal leadership
- Using a “Living facility” for hands on training of techniques and technologies – partner with university or another partner site?
- The items discussed during the March meeting were then voted on by the members of the collaborative to prioritize the tasks identified. The results were summarized in the March 7, 2019 meeting minutes with the highest rated task being the education of municipal leadership on the value of energy codes.

Actions Taken Since Last Meeting

The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) submitted an application to the Michigan Energy Office to address the top rated item from the previous meeting, the education of municipal leaders on the value of energy codes.

1. This project will create 3 compliance checklists
 - i. Residential compliance checklist for use by industry professionals
 - ii. Residential compliance checklist for use by the homeowner/renter
 - iii. Commercial compliance checklist for use by industry professionals
2. Develop a 45 minute presentation on the value of building codes
3. Identify municipalities and meet with local leaders to discuss the value of energy codes

This project has been awarded by the Michigan Energy Office and will be moving forward soon. The project team wanted to get input from the collaborative to help inform the project and align with the goals of the collaborative.

- The Michigan Energy Efficiency Contractors Association (MEECA) recommended contacting the Michigan Municipal League and will connect with MEEA to develop that connection
- In 15 months MSU has had over 1,500 trainees and over 1,000 of those have been building officials
 - In general there is not a lack of understanding of the code by code officials but a lack of desire to enforce it from leadership so this project will be good to help combat that issue.
 - Some jurisdictions will overlook enforcing the code in favor of the economic benefits of businesses locating in that jurisdiction.
- There is still a need for training officials in economically challenged municipalities
 - Most technical questions seem to come from the mechanical/HVAC provisions
- The bureau of construction codes does not have an auditing function to ensure proper enforcement of the code
- A PSA campaign for building owners may be helpful to encourage owners to want to follow the code
 - The lack of buy-in to the E code is usually from owners in a leased building situation – lack of incentive to follow the code
 - Most owner/operators want to comply with the code because they will benefit from meeting code
- MEEA Project possibly to focus on the controversial issues that are not enforced the most frequently
 - These include Skylights, vestibules, lighting controls (especially in retrofits), U-factors for windows, etc.
 - General agreement that specific issues cause the most issues although some are traded out with other items through the performance path (which would not count as a non-compliance)
- MEEA has an existing fact sheet about how energy codes are health and safety codes which will be incorporated in this project.

Discussion of Direction of this Subcommittee and Plan Moving Forward

Jake Wilkinson, MEO, asked the group to start thinking about the direction of the subcommittee and what should be the plan and goals moving forward

- It was recommended that the collaborative have done studies on code complaint buildings to prove the value of complying with the code, related to the long term cost of the building.
 - May help to redefine “first cost” of a building to factor in fixing issues that arise and energy costs
- There is a PNNL study that may have done many of the items above that could be a good reference for this group.
 - Jake Wilkinson will send to the group
- It was suggested that the collaborative put a focus on large communities to have the most impact
 - Also that the group should develop relationships with the associations in the state that have members that we need to reach.
 - Examples given included, The Michigan Association of Mayors, Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Municipal Executives, Chamber of Commerce, and others
- It was suggested that the collaborative encourage the Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) to start the process for the new code as soon as possible (may not be possible due to BCC rules) and to adopt the code without amendments

11:00-12:00 Lunch – Provided (both commercial and residential subcommittee members are welcome)

Residential Subcommittee group to meet 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Attendees In Person

Brad Bartholomew, Bartholomew Heating & Cooling
John Dulmes, Michigan Chemistry Council
Tim Mrozowski, Michigan State University (Retired)
Jake Wilkinson, Michigan Energy Office

Attendees on the Phone

Ian Blanding, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Ed Carley, national Association of State Energy Officials
William (Bill) Hordyk, City of Grand Rapids
Kevin McNeely, McNeely Building Group
Chris McTaggart, Building Efficiency Resources

Welcome and Introductions (*Brief Project intro for any new members*)

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Summary of Last Meeting and Updates on Action Items

- The last meeting was focused on identifying actionable items that could move forward to projects
- To drive compliance there needs to be buy-in from both builders and customers
- Many builders seem to stick with one compliance path over others and this is often based on the size of the builder and the locations. (Small and rural use prescriptive more often; large and urban use performance more often)
- High performing buildings have been problematic in the real estate industry due to improper valuation of efficiency measures during appraisal
 - Aesthetics is valued more than performance in many real estate transactions
 - Some organizations have worked with realtor associations to help understand the value of high performance for proper home value comparisons
 - It may be helpful to raise awareness of energy code and the benefits of high performing buildings to customers. This may lead to customer demand driven code compliance (or above code)
 - There are some jurisdictions in other states that require disclosure of energy performance to potential buyers

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2. Develop a 45 minute presentation on the value of building codes
3. Identify municipalities and meet with local leaders to discuss the value of energy codes
4. Work with the appraisal institute to identify a local chapter within Michigan to offer a 2-day course focused on valuing energy efficiency.
 - a. Teach attendees appraisal procedures for valuing energy efficient properties in supporting an opinion of value
 - b. Attendees will learn to leverage the Residential Green and Energy Efficient Addendum and valuation tools

This project has been awarded by the Michigan Energy Office and will be moving forward soon. The project team wanted to get input from the collaborative to help inform the project and align with the goals of the collaborative.

- Many homeowners are not aware of difference compliance paths as an option so hopefully these compliance checklists will help address that issue
- In preparation for the next code update there was a suggestion that modeling be done to show the effects of the HVAC loophole that has existed in the code since the last update.
 - One member (absent for this meeting) has done some of this modeling but would likely share information with others for review and further calculations if this is of interest.
 - Michigan is the only state where this exists
 - There is not anything that can be done for this by the collaborative at this time. When the code is reopened it could be discussed at that time but this collaborative is designed to improve compliance with the current established energy code
- There is an existing certification program known as “Pearl Certification” which does value high performing homes
 - The connection will be made between this certification program and the appraiser training project lead.

Discussion of Direction of this Subcommittee and Plan Moving Forward

Jake Wilkinson, MEO, asked the group to start thinking about the direction of the subcommittee and what should be the plan and goals moving forward. The subcommittee needs to make sure the focus is on issues that can be addressed.

- Reach out to code official organizations to get buy-in around the state and help drive the mission
- The suggestion was made to conduct a survey of building officials and energy raters to determine the success and issues with the code
 - This could help orient the group and identify regional differences in code enforcement (urban vs. rural, etc.)
 - This could possibly be expanded to builders and mechanical contractors if desired
 - There was similar information collected through the compliance study that was done in 2016 (funded by DTE and Consumers Energy) and this would likely be a good reference
 - Should establish a shared document to add ideas and questions for this type of survey.
 - Once issues are determined there could be a circuit rider program established to travel to local enforcement districts to address these issues