

James City Green Building Design Roundtable

Monday, May 11, 2009

Government Complex Building C Conference Room

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Roundtable Introductions

Private Sector

Abigail Johnson, JCC Citizen
Andrew Cronan, Guernsey Tingle Architects
Tim Mills, TAM Consultants
Richard Costello, AES Consulting Engineers
Robert Magoon, Jr., Magoon Associates
Jack Van Kniest, Van Kniest
Shereen Hughes, Former JCC Planning Commissioner
Tim Isom, Wal-Mart Distribution Center 6088
Suzy Cheely, Busch Gardens
Matt Leffler, GVA Advantis
Susan Gaston,

Public Sector

James Kennedy, JCC Board of Supervisor
John McGlennon, JCC Board of Supervisor
Jennifer Privette, JCC General Services
Steven Hicks, JCC Development Management
Rick Hanson, JCC Office of Housing & Community Development
Michael Vergakis, JCSA
Cheryl Waldren, JCC Development Management
Scott Thomas, JCC Environmental Division
Tom Coghill, JCC Code Compliance
Steven Yarovsky, JCC Economic Development

General Discussion

Steven opened the meeting discussing the process of the subcommittees. He mentioned the goal is for the groups to meet and have a document or a policy from these meetings in reference to Green Building. We can look at what other localities are doing and review what the County may do since the group has not established whether we may follow LEED certifications, what type of incentives or tax credits we may wish to use to move forward.

Andy Cowan handed out to committee members a brief outline of research of Financial Incentives to Promote Green Building/Remodeling. He discussed briefly government-related incentives and business financial incentives. He also asked if anyone has knowledge in these areas to contact him.

Tom Coghill, with Code Compliance, gave a presentation on the Virginia State Codes in relation to building codes and standards already in place. In his presentation he discussed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The ARRA focuses on stimulating the economy through public-sector spending and tax credits with the emphasis on infrastructure and energy. He also talked about how LEED and Energy Star are above the baseline design standards. He also talked about that in his presentation the Building Envelope Specific Requirements, and he gave other descriptions of energy efficient codes as well. He then opened for questions in relation to his presentation.

KC McGurren and Chuk Bowles from Earthcraft also did a presentation to the JCC Green Building group. The presentation was about the products Earthcraft offers and how the company works in preserving green. Earthcraft was created in 1999, as a residential green building program in the Atlanta, Georgia area. Earthcraft builds energy and resource efficient homes. Earthcraft has built several homes in the Ironbound Square Area. Earthcraft then opened up the meeting for questions and answers after the presentation. Discussed “retrofit” which Earthcraft is piloting a program with 30% criteria for overall improvement. This would depend on the baseline for the home. Earthcraft also offers certification training for multi-family homes. They are hoping for more flexibility in training to reach other architects and engineers will begin in the fall.

Ms. Hughes mentioned that LEED is expensive and Earthcraft has a lot of involvement in the design of a home. How does it compare in price?

KC replied every builder builds at a different cost. The program costs \$950 for the builder for building training and the application is \$150. A technical advisor is on site twice and works with the builder of his/her first built home. It also includes two site inspections and dual certification. Earthcraft goes thru a lot of documentation. The difference between LEED and Earthcraft is approximately \$9000. Certification process takes six months and four are technical advisors are certified. Earthcraft wishes to change how homes are built to make it fairly easy, however it must be user friendly and inexpensive in order to do that.

Rick Hanson mentioned that Earthcraft has a user friendly program and the technical advisor that covers this area is very excellent.

Earthcraft mentioned the difference between LEED and Earthcraft is the technical advisors who are on site and it takes the burden off the builder to do all the documentation that LEED requires. Earthcraft is the same as LEED and Earthcraft is more astringent than LEED on energy efficiency.

Ms. Gaston mentioned she would be interested in receiving information from the Atlantic Builders Association and she also asked about sales data in the Commonwealth of Virginia as well.

Earthcraft replied back to Ms. Gaston that they do not have that data. You could find out the data thru the certification listing and then tracking the listing based on the data.

Earthcraft responded back that there are eight certified homes in the area and properly another 10 that are under construction.

Steven then asked Earthcraft if they know of other localities working towards having a third party provider and a certain percentage of homes.

Earthcraft response back to him was they have had comments from developments to do a 100 percent across the state. Charlottesville has incentives on their property taxes and the residents receive a tax credit. There are 180 houses certified in Charlottesville. Earthcraft has been in business for 18 months.

Rich Costello asked a question what other differences other than money and the energy efficiency, what are the differences between Earthcraft and LEED?

Earthcraft responded the LEED program was taken from the Earthcraft program. Earthcraft took a user friendly program and made it little more complicated. If you go through requirements the LEED program and Earthcraft program they are almost the same. It's just how the process works and Earthcraft has an infrastructure with staff and all the homes are energy star.

Tom Coghill asked is there any advantages with the mortgage companies to use Earthcraft?

Earthcraft responded back no.

Rick Hanson mentioned VHDA does give reduced interest financing.

Earthcraft mentioned if you choose to do affordable housing there are tax credits available thru VHDA based on who has the most points also has the best chance of receiving the credits. VHDA approved 34 projects and 32 of those projects were Earthcraft. The cost of LEED is a factor.

Jack asked is it the process of the blow test that sets the standards.

Earthcraft runs it thru a process called a blow test based on the number, which the lower the score the better, the more energy efficient the home is, such as installations and seal. Earthcraft uses the manual J. They use a level point system.

Earthcraft mentioned they do offer training for the certification every month and the training takes one day.

Ms. Hughes asked if they do retrofitting. How can we encourage homeowners to retrofit their homes? How can we provide them information on their cost savings of the expense of retrofitting versus the cost savings and does Earthcraft have that capability?

Earthcraft responded they have the capability and there is an expense involved in doing this. Once we find out with retrofit what are we starting with? Some plans were done thirty years ago, we must start with an energy model of the home in order to calculate or project the improvement for the home. What is the homeowner going to replace in the home or Earthcraft can tell you what needs to be replaced.

Ms. Hughes asked Earthcraft would they be interested in using JCC as a pilot program and in providing the initial service.

Earthcraft responses they would be delighted and would like to meet in order to discuss the program.

Steven mentioned getting the information out there to the public and there are programs that can make a difference in the retrofitting program and with the developer. How do we package the information and process it. Get a draft for a product. Steven also introduced Steven Yarvorsky, with Economic Development.

Bob Magoon mentioned he will coordinate with his group in two weeks.

Steven also mentioned Tom Isom, who is with Wal-Mart. Tom will coordinate the group's Research and Development.

Bob Magoon asked is Earthcraft doing some existing homes in Atlanta.

Earthcraft has been doing multi-family for two years.

Bob Magoon also mentioned the Earthcraft's one day program is a very good program and is a manageable process. He encouraged the group to take a Lead for Home thru Earthcraft instead of LEED.

Steven Hicks asked about the one-day course that Earthcraft's offers who all attends the course?

Earthcraft replied back they typically get consumer, builders, architects, and mechanical engineers anyone who would like to take the course. The cost for the course is \$175.00.

End of the meeting and presentations.