

## Carson City Planning Division

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# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Historic Resources Commission **F-6**

**From:** Jennifer Pruitt, Principal Planner

**Date:** March 11, 2010

**Subject:** HRC-10-005  
2010-2011 HRC Training Opportunities

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### DISCUSSION:

As a result of the reduction in training funds for Carson City, the Planning Division, with the assistance of the Historic Resources Commission will embark on a HRC self training program. The self training program will provide various training opportunities for the HRC and the general public at no costs to Carson City.

The program will consist of Planning Division provided articles related to Historic Preservation on a monthly basis, posted on the HRC website and HRC training session(s) provided by commission members and or City personnel.

This month's topic is "Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Historic Preservation: A Guide for Historic District Commissions" is the first in the HRC training program series.

Which is an appropriate topic as it relates to this year's Archaeological Awareness and Historic Preservation Theme, **Old is the New Green**. We know that preservation is good for communities and good for the pocketbook, but in the face of our growing climate crisis, we can also say with confidence that preservation has a significant role to play in fostering development that is more environmentally and economically sustainable.

Next's months topic is "How to Work with Storefronts of the Mid-Twentieth Century" provided by Commissioner Rebecca Ossa. The information will be posted on the HRC website and provided to the HRC members via email. All HRC members are all encouraged to provide information to the Planning Division for distribution or prepare a presentation for the HRC this year, to participate in the HRC self training program.

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

## A Guide for Historic District Commissions



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AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION:**

**A Guide for Historic District Commissions**

## Acknowledgements

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Illustrations by Emma Armstrong

## Forward

Clean Air-Cool Planet is a non-profit organization in Portsmouth, NH that works to find practical solutions to the global climate change problem through civic engagement, education, and effective policy. Clean Air-Cool Planet works with Local Energy Committees (LECs) in numerous New England communities, and often fields questions regarding the treatment of historic resources in these towns. This guide is an attempt to answer these questions, by starting a conversation between communities of experts in preservation and energy efficiency.

This guide was authored by Meg Giuliano, LEED AP, a fellow in the Clean Air - Cool Planet Climate Fellows program, with Anne Stephenson, PhD, LEED AP, BPI building analyst and HERS energy rater, who manages the Climate Fellow Program.

Ms. Giuliano was a master's candidate in Environmental Management at Duke University during the summer of 2009, while working on this guide as part of her Climate Fellows Program project.

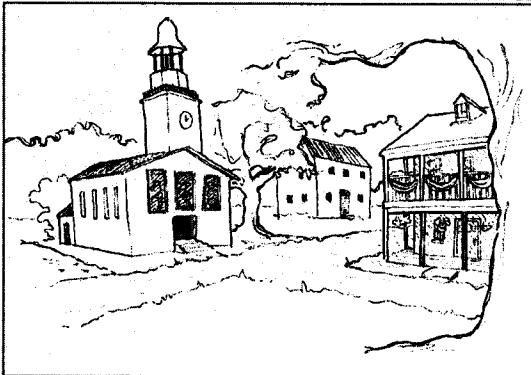
# INTRODUCTION

## Pushing for energy efficiency

As energy prices rise and concern about climate change grows, building owners across the country have been eager to learn about how they can improve the energy efficiency of their homes and businesses.

Without switching fuels or making major changes to infrastructure, there are a number of simple (and relatively inexpensive) things that people can do to decrease energy use without lowering quality of life. Many efficiency investments will even pay significant dividends throughout the lifetime of the building. In New England, where winters are cold and long, there has been an active movement towards weatherization and energy efficiency in buildings of all shapes, sizes, and ages.

*New England town greens form the center of many historic districts.*



Recently introduced “green building” requirements call for higher standards for energy efficiency in *new* buildings in many places, but not many communities apply these principles to existing buildings. Because older buildings represent a large portion of the residential sector throughout the U.S. – and especially in New England – we need to find ways to make them more efficient. Some places are exploring incentive programs and new code structures to encourage this, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

## Fossil fuels are only a short-term solution

Since the Civil War, most New Englanders have heated their homes and fueled their daily activities with oil, gas, and coal. Today, for several important reasons, it is evident that we cannot continue to depend upon these fossil fuels for our energy needs. Fossil fuels are finite resources that will only become more expensive as their supplies dwindle. We need to start using these fuels more efficiently, while simultaneously transitioning to an alternatively fueled economy.

Additionally, it is now clear that the climate is changing as a result of human activities. Burning fossil fuels increases the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases, causing irrevocable changes in the climate. In New England, climate change is already impacting our natural resources and the economy. Rising temperatures have shortened the winter recreation season, and have the potential to affect fall foliage (an important tourist draw) and the maple syrup industry. Lastly, although there are fossil fuels that can be found within our national borders, the United States has also come to rely upon other nations for our energy supply. While complete energy independence seems unlikely in this global market, it is important to our national security that we become more self-sufficient in providing for our national energy needs.

New England’s very oldest buildings were not built to be powered by fossil fuels. These systems were added by twentieth century residents during a time when energy was cheap. Now, as twenty-first century citizens, we need to re-engineer the built environment and begin to decrease greenhouse gas emissions aggressively.

### By the Numbers

In the United States, the residential sector uses 21 percent of all consumed energy. This includes energy use for heating and cooling in homes, as well as electricity. In New England, nearly 30 percent of occupied dwelling units were built before 1939. This is more than twice the national average for this age category, which is about 14 percent.