

# Edmonds Sustainability Heroes

*Eric Moss*



*(On August 18<sup>th</sup>, Jim Stevens, a member of the Mayor's Climate Protection Committee of Edmonds interviewed Eric Moss, the facilities manager for the Point Edwards Owners Association (the HOA), to learn more about his successes in increasing energy efficiency and sustainability in this community. The following article describes his efforts, motivations, and results achieved.)*

Sometimes achieving success doesn't come so much by working out the right answers as it does by determining the right questions. Eric Moss exudes enthusiasm when he talks about the initiatives he has spearheaded at Point Edwards, and his passion for pushing new efficiency measures cannot be disguised or denied. In his work at Point Edwards, he has achieved enviable results by asking the right questions and being ready to jump when the response comes back positive.

His time with the HOA began about four years ago, soon after he finished college. At the University of Arizona, coursework for his degree in regional development included significant involvement in sustainable development, especially relating to water usage and solar energy in Arizona's desert environment. He credits these educational experiences for much of his motivation to seek efficiency and savings whenever possible.

A couple of years ago he played an instrumental role at Point Edwards to reduce the association's electric consumption by about half. The work addressed approximately 2500

fixtures across the property, and also featured occupancy-driven features, using sensors to reduce area lighting when no one is around. Because he asked the questions at the right time to enable assistance through PUD and the Community Energy Efficiency Program, the HOA was able to leverage additional grant assistance for the work. This dropped the out-of-pocket costs by 90% so that payback was achieved in about four months. By the end of the first year, the changes had already netted about \$20,000 worth of savings for the HOA.

Next, he investigated bringing a community solar project to Point Edwards, but ran up against the limitations imposed by installing such a system on private property. While those questions did not immediately lead to another success, Eric says, “Hopefully the HOA can budget for solar power in the future,” and he is still looking for the right leverage to reopen the effort. His ambition to move forward with solar installation remains because he knows it is not a matter of if, but when, the economics will support it.

More recently, he learned that PSE had a program called the Comprehensive Building Tune-Up (CBTU) aimed at commercial and industrial customers. While Point Edwards did not specifically qualify as an eligible participant because it is a multi-family residential development, Eric’s question did not go unanswered. He approached PSE to create a pilot program in which Point Edwards is now participating. The pilot is based on the CBTU and focuses on reducing gas usage in multifamily residential communities through the implementation of low-cost or no-cost installations. Already the pilot has shown that it is reasonable to expect savings of least 10%, and possibly as much as 15%. At this point, the effort is focused on establishing the range of products that can be installed to achieve this reduction. Additionally, this pilot program does not solely cover the management buildings, but individual units as well. So, the base of participation is greater than just the common areas of Point Edwards, and individual residents have the opportunity to push the initiatives on their own too. Just because Point Edwards is a fairly new development does not mean it is without solid opportunities to increase efficiencies. Most buildings are constructed only to meet current codes, and there are often relatively approachable opportunities left unconsidered on the table as a result.

Eric uses both PUD’s PowerTrend and Energy Star’s Portfolio Manager benchmarking software so he can keep a finger on the pulse of energy consumption at Point Edwards. By reviewing consumption baselines along with the current values, it is easy to track the impact of improvements. He has also been working with the landscape management folks at Point Edwards to address irrigation usage and take advantage of rainwater harvesting. His calculations indicate the development can generate about 2000 gallons of water for every inch of rain that falls on the roof of one of their amenity buildings. For the approximately 39 inches of rain that Edmonds accrues yearly, this represents a capture potential of nearly 80,000 gallons, something that surely could make a dent for irrigation needs. Concern about water also extends to the community swimming pools at Point Edwards. Because pools are

considered an amenity, they do not qualify for rebates like household heating systems and lighting. However, Eric has determined that a solar hot water heater has the potential to pay for itself in as little as one season of usage. This is even without the assistance of utility rebates, and it is easy to see he will be moving on this initiative soon.

Eric cannot encourage others enough to take a little time periodically and investigate the resources that are available to them to assist in energy efficiency projects. The utility companies readily list rebates and programs online. New measures are frequently introduced, reflecting the evolving changes in technology and the understanding of what works best. His instinct is still to ask anyway as long as it is reasonable believe an idea has merit, even without any track record. He further counsels, "Don't stop there, but also ask others about their experiences and take advantage of those lessons learned as they apply to your situation."

Keep asking until you get the answers you need, because Eric's example shows it works.