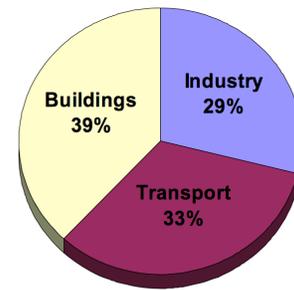


Zero Place – Setting the Bar for Energy Performance

Jo Margaret Mano in her letter to the New Paltz Times on 5 Oct 2016 questions the zero-energy commitment of Zero Place, calling it “zero energy’ magic” and “green washing”. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to highlight what is truly extraordinary about our project.

As the U.S. Green Buildings Council points out, buildings are the largest source of CO₂ emissions, exceeding both transport and industry. In the northeast, we continue to rely on natural gas and fuel oil to heat the vast majority of our buildings. We know there is a better way, and the Zero Place team is committed to bringing a host of technologies together to give New Paltz its first net-zero-energy structure at this scale.

CO₂ Emissions from Fossil Fuels



USGBC

<http://www.eesi.org/files/climate.pdf>

Zero Place will build upon the legacy begun by Anthony Aebi when he built the very first zero-energy development in the country, right here in New Paltz! (*A Kid from SOHO builds the country's first zero-energy*, NY Daily News, 8 Apr 2011) Amazingly, few people realize that New Paltz, thanks to Mr. Aebi's leadership, has become a beacon for sustainable development everywhere, and Zero Place will continue that legacy and add to the few, but growing amount of zero-energy projects in the U.S. (and world), providing all the energy needs for its 48 residential units.

So what does “net-zero-energy” (NZE) mean? The term has become a surrogate for achieving among the highest levels of energy efficiency and performance. It means that a building produces more energy (typically through on site renewable energy sources) than it consumes over the course of a year. It requires that the building invest in creating an extremely efficient envelope (insulation and windows) and heating/cooling solution as well as a means to generate its own energy.

How will Zero Place achieve “zero energy”? Our goal is to achieve zero energy for all of the residential units. (The 1st floor retail space, without knowing the future uses and tenants, is too unpredictable in its energy needs to include at this time.) To do so, we are making significant investments well beyond energy code with a tightly-constructed, super-efficient enclosure, 192 kW of solar PV and additional solar thermal for hot water, geothermal heating and cooling, and more. This building is so far beyond what the energy code requires and what is typically built that we expect it to set award-winning levels of energy performance with recognition from NYSERDA, the U.S. Dept of Energy, LEED and other similar organizations.

We will be looking for residents who share our commitment to efficient living. If you'd like to meet many others like myself who find this compelling, take a trip to Green Acres (behind the community center and My Market up Bonticou View and right on Cooper St). You will find the 15-home NZE development full of families who, like mine, believe that we owe future generations better building practices and lower carbon options. Zero Place will meet this obligation and set the bar for responsible, sustainable development.

But don't rely solely on my word. We have hired one of the leading building performance and Energy Rating experts in the region to help evaluate the energy efficiency features of our project. The Energy Rater's report confirms that Zero Place should exceed its zero-energy goals for all the residential units. We've posted the report online at www.zeroplace.com.

We are deeply proud of the commitments we are making to create a building of the future—one that recognizes the challenges our world faces. We chose to make New Paltz its home because of the forward thinking zoning of the Village along 32N (called "NBR"). Our Village Board, in creating the NBR, recognized that increasing the density along State Route 32N and allowing buildings up to four stories would reduce the sprawl pressures on our farmlands and allow New Paltz to accommodate inevitable growth in a smart way. We have accepted the Village's invitation to invest in our community and have doubled down by offering a building that is truly superior in its energy and sustainability commitments.

(Note: In a future letter, we will describe the additional accommodations we have made in response to aesthetic, height/mass, and safety concerns made by some community members. Although it's impossible to give everyone everything they would like, we are committed to being responsive to our neighbors. After all, every member of the Zero Place team is also a member of this community.)

David Shepler
Village resident, Founder and Managing Member of Zero Place