



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PHIL MURPHY
Governor

SHIELA OLIVER
Lt. Governor

Mail Code: 402
Office of Environmental Justice
401 East State Street, 7th Floor
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402
TEL # (609) 292-2908
FAX # (609) 984-3962

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE
Commissioner

Environmental Justice Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

Council Members

Present: Amy Tuininga, Jeffrey Perlman, Kim Gaddy, Jackie Park Albaum, Joann Held, Meredith Taylor (via phone), Phyllis Reich, Andy Kricun

Absent: Ted Carrington, Gantry Fox, Kelly Francis, Nancy Griffeth, Melissa Miles, Monique Griffith

OEJ Staff: Kandyce Perry, Nadia Akbar

DEP Guests: Michael Gordon, Brad Bollen, Christine Schell, Jennifer Fearon, Anthony Findley, Frank McLaughlin, Emily Nanneman, Kerry Pflugh, Brandon Carreno, Peg Hanna, Carrie Sargeant

EJIC Representatives and Other State Agency Guests: Barbara Goun, Christa Fontecchio, Leotis Sanders, Sarah Helble, Lauren Griffith, Chris Hillman, Adam Neary, Terri Goldberg, Julie Veffer, Crystal Pruitt, Domenico Stockton Rossini, Francine Wright, Richard Wille, Franklin Dureke, Rachel DeFlumeri, Tammori Petty, Melanie Walter

Other: Yaw Asante

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Kim Gaddy at 10:02 am.

Kandyce Perry announced that Leilani Holgado has stepped down from the Council and thanked Leilani for her service.

October Minutes

Jackie Park Albaum moved that the October Meeting Minutes be accepted. Phyllis Reich seconded the motion.

Land Working Group (Jackie Park Albaum)

Brownfields to Greenfields: Smaller cities have problems applying for grants. To address this problem the Land Working Group is preparing a quick and easy guide to brownfield reclamation and reuse.

Increasing Urban Tree Canopy: The Working Group is exploring ways to better utilize existing resources in order to increase the urban tree canopy.

Urban Agriculture: The Department of Agriculture is working with Rutgers to better understand how to categorize urban agriculture. In the meantime, the Working Group is exploring resources to support urban agriculture.

Announcements

- Groundwork Elizabeth had received an Environmental Justice small grant.
- The Working Group welcomes new members.

Environmental Education & Communication Working Group (Meredith Taylor)

Primer: A working draft of the Primer should be available to circulate to Council members for comment in early 2022. Meredith noted that Dr Francine Wright (Dept of Education) has joined this Working Group. She brings a depth of knowledge to the effort, especially related to ways to engage young people.

Webinar & Videos: The Working Group is considering the possibility of hosting a Webinar with NJDEP Commissioner & Deputy Commissioner and others to introduce the history of EJ in New Jersey and the role of the Office of Environmental Justice. It would be about an hour long with time for Q&A. As a follow-up to the Webinar, the Working Group would create brief YouTube videos that would allow all Working Groups to share information about their projects. These videos would be posted throughout the year.

Discussion:

- These vehicles would also be useful in shedding light on the new EJ Law.
- Would it be possible to have translations, especially Spanish? Perhaps a grant could be found to do this.

Water Working Group (Andy Kricun)

Water Shutoff Moratorium: The moratorium is scheduled to expire at end of December. Once it is lifted, water bills must be paid, including past due amounts. Could EJAC send a letter through NJDEP to Governor Murphy to advocate for extension? Andy could prepare a draft. Kim will confer with Monique and assess options. Andy noted that it would also be useful to advocate for a Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) before the moratorium is lifted to provide a safety net.

New Water Infrastructure Funding: The American Rescue Plan funds, already in hand, could be used for lead service line replacement or CSO corrections. Communities in need could use help to apply for the funding. Note: New Jersey has 21 CSO municipalities. (Perth Amboy has a plan to replace their CSO system, but it would take 40 years and cost would be covered by Rate Payers.) Build Back Better may also have grant money, especially for CSO improvements.

Ad-Hoc Rule Committee (Joann Held)

The next step for the committee is to review the proposed rules when they are published, along with the accompanying guidance document.

Air Working Group (Joann Held & Kim Gaddy)

Communications and Emergency Management: It is very difficult for communities to get information about the health and environmental impacts of emergencies as they occur and in the aftermath. This became even more obvious during recent fires in Newark, Camden and elsewhere. More transparency, coordination and information sharing between NJDEP and Emergency Management officials is needed, and a means to convey this information to the community should be put in place.

Port Issues: Noting that the Port Authority is not part of EJIC, the Working Group is exploring ways to engage with them.

Warehouses: The Working Group would like to develop some guiding principles for siting Warehouses. The South Coast AQMD has a Warehouse Rule that may be a good starting point. Also, EDF is preparing an inventory of warehouses that could provide useful information.

Air Monitoring Project : Kim provided an update on the Community Air Monitoring project that is being established in Newark. There will be a total of 12 monitors. (Five are already in place.) This project could be a model for other neighborhoods. USEPA recently released about \$20 million in air monitoring funds that could be used for similar projects.

EJAC Meeting Calendar for 2022

A draft calendar was presented which includes 6 full council meetings, e-board meetings on the Wednesday prior to the full council meeting, and monthly meetings for each working group. The calendar was approved by all present. In early January notices will be sent out to council members as appointments. Members can request that they be on the notice list for Working Groups that they are not on so they can see the agenda and join if there is a topic of interest to them.

EJIC 3rd Meeting Recap (Kandyce Perry)

The third meeting of the Environmental Justice Interagency Council (EJIC) was held on December 2. The focus of the meeting was how to incorporate a Whole of Government Approach to addressing EJ issues. NJDEP shared the methodology that they used for assessing Department EJ efforts. The first steps are to identify core Department activities and assess whether EJ is currently included. These steps establish a baseline. Next challenges and opportunities are identified. It was recommended that other agencies use this methodology to do their own assessments, customizing it to their needs. By mid-2022 there will be an assessment report that covers all New Jersey agencies. This will lead to developing a state-wide EJ plan with specific next steps.

Discussion

- Could a broader definition of EJ be offered to EJIC, rather than rely on the USEPA definition? It should encompass how we value our relationship to the land, where we live, work, and play. This goes beyond the simple consumer-driven economy, and opens for consideration regenerative, diverse, and circular economies. This approach might make it easier for other Departments to see where they fit in.
- The question of finding correct economic balance should be raised in the context of warehousing. This also raises the question of proper balance discussed above.
- Kandyce noted that it is incumbent upon every state agency to figure out what it means to incorporate EJ into their operations, and there is no single roadmap.
- Terri Goldberg (Attorney General's Office) asked whether a private Twitter or Instagram page might be an efficient way to share ideas. Eventually it could be a place where the public could post questions and suggestions.

Announcements

- South Ward Environmental Alliance will host its first environmental summit in Newark on Feb 19 from 9am to 1pm. A hybrid in person and on-line meeting is planned. (Kim Gaddy)

- Natural and Working Lands Strategy/Scoping Document was just released. You can find it here: https://nj.gov/dep/climatechange/mitigation-nwls.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
Comments are due on Feb 11. (Carrie Sargeant)
- Clean Water Action is hosting a Virtual Town Hall on Dec 15 with Trenton Community Partnership at 6pm via Zoom. (Kim Gaddy)
- Upstream/Downstream Environmental Injustice Project & Trenton Community Partnership Community Advocacy Training will be offered via Zoom on January 20. Hosted by the Delaware River Keeper Network. Learn more at: <https://www.delawareriverkeeper.org/node/6800>
- Potential Lead Exposure Mapping tool has just been released by NJDEP at <https://bit.ly/NJDEP-PotentialLeadExposureMappingTool> This tool goes down to the parcel level. (Barbara Goun)
- Congratulations to Andy Kricun who has been appointed to serve on the National Environmental Justice Council.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:34am

Next Meeting

February 9, 2022 at 10am virtually via Microsoft Teams