



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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CATHERINE R. McCABE
Commissioner

Environmental Justice Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2020
Via Microsoft Teams

Council Members

Present: Kim Gaddy, Amy Tuininga, Joann Held, Colandus (Kelly) Francis, Zachary Lewis, Phyllis Reich, Leilani Holgado, Meredith Taylor, Melissa Miles, Ted Carrington, Andy Kricun

Absent: Monique Griffith, Gantry Fox

OEJ Staff: Riché Outlaw, Nadia Akbar

DOH Representative: Barbara Goun

DEP and State Agency Guests: Commissioner McCabe, Debbie Mans, Michael Gordon, Peg Hanna, Allison McLeod, Christine Schell, Myla Ramirez, Ken Ratzmann, Brad Bollen, Branden Carreno, Chris Collacello, Susan Rosenwinkel, Laura Scatena, Elizabeth George-Cheniara, Frank McLaughlin, Kerry Pflugh, Jennifer Feltis, Jessica Sponaugle, Davon McCurry, Elizabeth Dragon, Armando Alfonso

Call to Order

Acting Chair, Kim Gaddy, opened the meeting at 10:12am.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Draft minutes from the February 27, 2020 meeting were corrected to update the attendance list. Ted Carrington moved that the minutes be approved as amended. Zachary Lewis seconded the motion. Andy Kricun, Amy Tuininga and Kim Gaddy abstained from voting since they were absent on February 27. All others voted yes. Minutes were approved.

EJAC Business

Council By-Laws

It has been recommended that the Council review their by-laws and consider making changes to bring them up to date and make clarifications.

Suggested areas for consideration:

- Description of membership representation in the various sectors
- Criteria for removal from the Council
- A procedures document that complements the by-laws and fills in some details should be considered.

Council members should review the by-laws and make recommendations regarding possible changes by April 22. The E-Board will review recommendations and bring possible changes back to the Council.

Vacancies

The call for applications to fill vacancies on the Council closed on April 13. Nine applications were received. They will be reviewed by OEJ Staff and recommendations will be given to Commissioner McCabe who makes all Council appointments. If there is a Sector with a vacancy not covered by the 9 applications, then the Department will wait until next year to fill the vacancy. Kelly Francis requested that Council members have an opportunity to weigh-in on the candidates.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Water (Andy Kricun)

The workgroup is pursuing several initiatives.

- Working with Jersey Water Works to prepare recommendations to the Governor with respect to Water Shut Offs & Late Fees.
- Supporting the program for replacement of Lead Service Lines. Also championing the Right To Know if a service line has lead, and pursuing Lead Awareness programs.
- Drafting a letter to the Urban Mayors Association to alert them to the availability of loans from the Infrastructure Bank & also the availability of a Peer to Peer assistance program.
- Encouraging Water Utilities to hire within their communities.

COMMISSIONER McCABE REMARKS

The Commissioner provided an update on some of the ways that the Department is functioning during the COVID crisis and fielded additional questions and issues from the Council.

- DEP staff are now working from home. The transition has gone smoothly.
- Closing State Parks has been necessary to protect public health.
- DEP Compliance and Enforcement Discretion Policy is being exercised but is not being used to allow relaxation of compliance with environmental requirements. Examples of discretionary changes were described.
 - Crematories have asked for an increase in the hours of operation allowed in their Air Permits. Temporary extensions have been granted.
 - Drinking Water Utilities are having trouble accessing homes where they usually collect samples. DEP is working with them to find acceptable alternatives.
 - The volume of medical waste has increased dramatically. To address the need to use extra trucks, DEP is issuing additional decals to Waste Haulers upon request.
 - Elizabeth Dragon, Assistant Commissioner for Compliance & Enforcement, is regularly consulting with OEJ to identify any local concerns related to potential relaxations.
- The state has a website that provides answers to general questions: www.COVID19.nj

- Concerns were raised regarding the disproportionate effect of COVID on minority communities. McCabe replied that this pandemic has shined a light on the issue of health & environmental disparities and will help to highlight the issue going forward.
- It was noted that Weeqauhic Park in Newark is a Corona virus test site, but for drive up testing only in a community where many people do not have cars.
- Concerns were raised that refrigeration trucks being used for morgues are running around the clock. How are they powered?
- NJEJA & ICC sent a joint letter to DEP regarding the EPA memo. While we appreciate DEPs constraint, could they issue a statement to the general public regarding the fact that NJ is not relaxing environmental requirements?
- EO127 allows extension of certain deadlines, but it does not apply to flexibility in emission standards.
- The Covanta pink plume events are continuing. DEP has been communicating with COVANTA and tracking down the material that is causing that plume.
- Questions were concerned about the incineration of PPE. These materials are all being shipped out of state. No medical waste is being burned in NJ.

DEP PROGRAM UPDATES (Debbie Mans)

DEP will provide a written report on the status of S232, RGGI and TCI.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UNDER COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Council members spent some time brainstorming ways to engage with communities in this time when gatherings are impossible. Suggestions include:

- Working on our Contact list so that it can be used more effectively for outreach.
- Use of Microsoft Teams.
 - A tutorial on how to make meetings run more smoothly was requested.
- Using Facebook: Many DEP programs have Facebook pages, and it would be useful for Council members to follow those pages. But EJAC does not have a Facebook page. Is it possible to start one?
- Would Facebook Live be another tool for engaging community groups in conversation?

EJAC members should e-mail Riche & Nadia with their current contact information so that it will be easier for us to continue to communicate with each other while so many are working from home.

Announcements – None were reported

Adjournment

Ted Carrington moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Leilani Holgado seconded the motion.

Next Meeting

June 10, 2020 at 10am