



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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SHAWN M. LATOURETTE
Commissioner

Environmental Justice Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2021

Via Microsoft Teams

Council Members

Present: Andy Kricun, Amy Tuininga, Meredith Taylor, Nancy Griffeth, Jeffrey Perlman, Kim Gaddy, Phyllis Reich, Melissa Miles, Jackie Park Albaum, Monique Griffith, Joann Held

Absent: Ted Carrington, Gantry Fox, Kelly Francis, Leilani Holgado

OEJ Staff: Riché Outlaw, Nadia Akbar

DEP Guests: Deputy Commissioner Olivia Glenn, Brad Bollen, Ken Ratzman, Carrie Sargeant, Christine Schell, Anthony Findley, Michael Gordon, Mandy Futey, Frank McLaughlin, Peg Hanna, Brandon Carreno

EJIC Representatives and State Agency Guests: Barbara Goun, Valerie Barnes, Donna Rendeiro, Julie Veffer, Jessica Steiger, Christa Fontecchio, Crystal Pruitt, Mike Preisig, Juliet Herndon, Charu Vaidya, Charles Appleby, Leotis Sanders

Other Guests: Yaw Asante

Call to Order

Monique Griffith opened the meeting at 10:06 am.

April Minutes

Kim Gaddy moved to approve the April 21, 2021 minutes. Phyllis Reich seconded the motion. All present voted to approve.

Discussion with NJ Student Climate Advocates (Yaw Asante)

Yaw Asante is a representative of the NJ Student Climate Advocates, a coalition of 50 High School and College students across NJ. It began with a focus on Climate Change Mitigation and now includes a focus on activism in environmental justice communities. One of their priorities is to make sure that critical voices are represented at the table while policy is being discussed.

They would like to learn more about the issues that EJAC is addressing and are looking for ways that students can support our efforts.

To learn more about this organization, visit them on Social Media:

<https://www.facebook.com/NJSClimateAdvocates/>

<https://www.instagram.com/njclimateadvocates/?hl=en>

Riche Outlaw thanked Leilani Holgado for bringing this group to the attention of EJAC.

Deputy Commissioner Olivia Glenn Remarks

Shawn LaTourette has been confirmed as Commissioner of NJDEP.

Rulemaking update. Thanked EJAC Members for involvement in the Stakeholder group and for forming the Ad Hoc Committee. The next Stakeholder meeting will be June 24 with business, industry, environmental and community advocates et al. together.

You can review past Stakeholder meeting recordings and presentation materials at:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/ej/policy.html#ejlaw>

Elimination of Enforcement Division. Kim Gaddy raised concern about the elimination of the DEP Enforcement Division. Glenn explained that the goal is greater alignment between enforcement and respective media. DEP will create the position of Chief Enforcement Officer to coordinate and keep issues on Commissioner's radar.

Diversity at DEP. Kim Gaddy & Monique Griffith expressed concern about diversity at DEP including both Management and in Staff. Glenn reported that DEP has created a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council which has made some recommendations for improving recruitment. DEP is creating an action plan which is to be completed by the end of June.

Long Term Control Plans in water program. Kim Gaddy & Melissa Miles noted that DEP response to municipal plans for Community engagement was very weak, especially given input made by community on these plans. Glenn responded that she will be getting an update from the water program soon and will keep this in mind.

Land Working Group (Jackie Park Albaum & Amy Tuininga)

The Land Working Group is focused on 4 areas: Urban Agriculture, Adaptive Reuse Brownfields, Urban Forestry and Solar Energy Siting.

Urban Agriculture: The major issue is lack of access to land. The Workgroup is looking at policies and following up on the urban agriculture white paper. EJAC has not formally heard back from the NJ Department of Agriculture, although there have been brief discussions on some issues.

Brownfields: Exploring a white paper on adaptive reuse, lays out best practices to make urban green spaces or other healthy uses.

Riche Outlaw Thanked Jackie & Amy for stepping up and taking reigns of leadership of this Working Group.

Water Working Group (Andy)

Affordability: The NJ water shut-off moratorium has been extended to end of the year, but meter still continues to run and people will be faced with a large bill at that point. There is hope that a safety net will be in place before the moratorium is lifted.

Concerns about Long Term Control Plan: Looking for ways to reduce cost to municipalities.

Lead in Drinking Water: Some American Rescue Plan funding may be available to replace some lead service lines. Work also continues on the lead awareness program, which needs to be developed to become a state-wide program. Monique Griffith noted that the Department of Community Affairs is working on lead issues somewhat, but their focus is mostly on lead paint. Riché Outlaw reported that EJAC is working with NJ Future on their Lead-Free New Jersey Initiative which will help to promote awareness at a state level. NJ Future is looking for more partners.

Equity: Speaking with NJ Transit and NJDOT about possible collaboration, because of impervious service issues and impact on CSO areas.

Ad Hoc Rules Committee (Joann Held & Nancy Griffeth)

The committee is preparing some recommendations that will funnel through Monique Griffith & Kim Gaddy. Focus so far is on compelling public interest, and incorporating stressors that represent contaminated sites, odors & impervious surfaces.

EEC Working Group (Meredith Taylor)

Primer: Meredith is doing some writing and will be sharing with working group members soon. The EEC Working Group is looking to compile a list of key EJ, environmental and community organizations, to be included as contacts in the Primer.

What's in My Community App Update (Brad Bollen)

Brad Bollen demonstrated some of the new features of the What's in My Community App, including:

- Wind Speed and Direction layer
- Location of Air Quality Monitors
- Dialogue Box for each major source has lots of info
- EJ Overburdened Communities layer
- Hourly Air Quality Levels

The App also includes:

- Option to just focus on Major Sources or just Minor Sources
- Near Me: Pick radius
- Find a Facility Search Tool
- Distance Measuring Tool

What's in my Community can be accessed through the DEP Air Quality Program Page.

Ken Ratzman offered to do training sessions if someone would like to organize one.

Jackie Park Albaum asked how we could promote this tool to Community members. Riché Outlaw described the efforts made so far through the OEJ website and through the Office of Local Government Assistance, but more needs to be done.

Riché Outlaw noted that the Site Remediation Program is exploring ways to build a similar tool for looking at hazardous and solid waste sites.

Announcements

Barbara Goun: DOH and DEP have been refunded for a 5th year of the Environmental Public Health Tracking Grant.

Mike Gordon: Recent law introduced (A 5803) to categorize and encourage plastic recycling by exempting some facilities. Not sure if this might affect the scope of the EJ Legislation passed Sept 2020.

Riché Outlaw: OEJ has been asked to compile a list of contacts for community representatives and organizations in the Kearny area who can be engaged in discussion of new permits being proposed for the development of a new sludge processing facility. Suggestions for addition to this list should be sent, along with e-mail contact info, to OEJ

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 12:16pm

Next Meeting

September 15, 2021 at 10am virtually via Microsoft Teams