

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD

RCSOB, 16TH FLOOR, DELAWARE ROOM

HARRISBURG, PA

November 14, 2017

Voting Members Present:

Eli Brill	Allison Robinson
Adam Cutler	Horace Strand
Arthur Frank	Tom Torres
Hazem Hijazi	Brian Twyman
Kirk Jalbert	John Waffenschmidt
Carol Parenzan	

Non-Members:

Nora Alwine – DEP
John Brakeall - DEP
Abbey Cadden - DEP
Glenda Davidson - DEP
Jessica Shirley – DEP
Sarah Martik - Community Organizer, Center for Coalfield Justice
Veronica Coptis - Executive Director, Center for Coalfield Justice

Call to Order:

Chairman Arthur Frank called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

Secretary Update:

Secretary McDonnell provided the following updates:

Carl Jones recently vacated his position as Director of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB). Human Resources will advertise the position in the near future, which will be open to internal and external applicants. EJAB members will be notified when this position is posted and members may encourage individuals to apply.

Secretary McDonnell will continue to hold bi-weekly meetings with the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) and the Policy Office to discuss the agency's environmental justice (EJ) initiatives.

DEP's Policy Office is in the process of updating its public participation policies. The Department will then move onto the Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy. The revised policies will knit together cohesively, recognizing the value of public comment, the ability of the public to make comment, building a community baseline for conversation with DEP, and formulating the comments that were received from the Environmental Justice Listening Sessions.

Based on the Listening Sessions, changes will be made to DEP's public participation policy to reflect how EJ is managed across the state, and those discussions are ongoing. It is fair to say

that changes will also be made to the EJ definition. The Secretary noted that additional work can be done without injuring the strengths of the EJ program traditionally.

Introductions:

Member introductions were made. Newly appointment EJAB members including Tom Torres, Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter; Carol Parenzan, Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper of the North and West Branch; Brian Twyman, Reading City Councilman, provided a summary of their professional background and involvement with EJ.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Arthur Frank requested a motion to approve the Minutes of June 6, 2017. John Waffenschmidt made a motion to approve the Minutes, which motion was seconded by Kirk Jalbert and unanimously approved. Minutes adopted.

Chairman Frank reminded the members, when solicited by the media to comment on EJAB-related activities, to forward those inquiries directly to the Chairman.

Office of Environmental Justice Update:

An update was provided on the current initiatives of the OEJ and timeline changes with the departure of Director Carl Jones. The OEJ released the Listening Sessions Comment Document and the transcripts on October 27 and has been working on revising the OEJ Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy, taking into consideration the comments received from the Listening Sessions. The initial draft was submitted internally to the DEP's Policy Office last week. The OEJ has been working on revising standard operating procedures related to the permit application consultation tool and GIF forms to better integrate environmental justice into all of DEP. The EJ Viewer mapping tool will be rolled out at the EJ Summit.

Carl Jones was a representative for DEP on the PA Interagency Health Equity Team. The OEJ recently met with David Saunders at the Department of Health to discuss the intersection of environmental justice and health equity. On January 23, David Saunders, John Brakeall, and Nora Alwine will be hosting a PIHET meeting in the Rachael Carson State Office Building. Secretary McDonnell will provide introductory remarks, and John Brakeall and Nora Alwine will discuss environmental justice as it relates to health equity.

Jessica Shirley, the Director of DEP's Policy Office, stated that the overall goal of the Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy is to make it more readable and incorporate some of the changes that were heard through the Listening Sessions. The internal Environmental Justice Workgroup, for the last 18 months, has been discussing how to better integrate environmental justice into the Department's grant-making and permitting decisions. The Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy will reflect those discussions. The Secretary will hold an EJ Summit in December with all Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Deputy Secretaries, and Bureau Directors to discuss changes to the EJ policy to further reinforce the prioritization of environmental justice department-wide not just the Office of Environmental Justice.

A discussion was held about an earlier publication entitled “EPA Guidebook for Communities.” The Policy Office will attempt to locate the guidebooks or redevelop it with help from the Communications Office. EJAB members requested follow-up on that issue at the February meeting.

Presentation:

What is Health Equity?

David Saunders, Director of the Office of Health Equity for the Pennsylvania Department of Health, discussed health disparities, preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations. The mission of the Office of Health Equity is to provide leadership to promote public awareness of health disparities, to advocate for programs to eliminate health disparities, to empower communities, and to collaborate with stakeholders to achieve measurable and sustainable improvement in the health status of underrepresented populations.

EJ Viewer/Story Map

Carrie Tropasso, GIS Director for DEP’s Bureau of Information Technology, discussed at length the development of the EJ Viewer/Story Map and the many ways to maneuver around and locate data within the tool.

Public Comments:

Mollie Michel is a Field Organizer with Moms Clean Air Force, a nationwide organization which advocates to protect children’s health from a clean air perspective. Mollie distributed to EJAB members a report from the NAACP Clean Air Task Force titled *Fumes Across the Fence-Line*. The report outlines the health impacts of oil and gas operations on African American communities and states that Pennsylvania is the second largest natural gas producer in the country and ranks fifth in the country for the highest African American population living within a half-mile radius of oil and gas facilities.

Veronica Coptis, Director for the Center for Coalfield Justice, attended the EJAB meeting anticipating a report back from the Listening Sessions. She stated that she was delighted to hear the Secretary’s comments regarding public engagement since she is part of an organization that is very engaged in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Policy Office Update:

Abbey Cadden, Executive Policy Specialist with DEP’s Policy Office, provided an overview of the updates to the Regulatory, Technical Guidance, and Advisory Committee policies. The policies were first developed in the 1990s and were revised in 2017. The revisions intend to increase transparency and clarity and to facilitate meaningful conversation between DEP and stakeholders. For simplicity, unnecessary, confusing, and obsolete details regarding workflow processes were removed.

New/Unfinished Business:

- EJAB members stated individually their reason for serving on the Board and what it is they hope to accomplish.

- The Board should look back to the Environmental Justice Task Force report to see what might be gleaned from that to animate the mission of the EJAB going forward and call to the Secretary's attention those items that were good ideas 16 years ago that are still good ideas today.

- Broaden environmental justice by looking at health and economic issues and begin to think about how society can address the needs of those at the bottom.

- Carl had previously put together a brainstorming document. Nora Alwine will attempt to locate that document and redistribute it to the EJAB members.

- Feedback from the Listening Sessions should be provided to the commenters. Posting the Listening Session notes online should not constitute the response. Policy changes on workflows should not be the response. From the perspective of people who live in EJ communities, it is an injustice when responses are not received to their questions or comments.

- DEP should go out into EJ communities rather than asking them to come to the Department.

- DEP should post more information online.

- Question for OEJ to take to the PIHET meeting in January:
 - How do we care for the least among us in our society that will advance those who need the most support in our society?
 - Ask the Department of Health to capture epidemiological data and cross-walk with DEP to make it actionable.
 - Ask the Department of Health if their agency has rates by groups that match up with EJ communities for issues such as infant mortality, longevity, maternal deaths, asthma rates, and cancer.

- Support the Secretary by filling the EJAB complement.

- Boots on the ground are a strong signal that DEP cares.

- Volunteers to serve on subcommittee to review "short list" candidates for Director position:
 - Reverend Horace Strand
 - Eli Brill
 - John Waffenschmidt
 - Adam Cutler

- Members would like OEJ activity report on individual matters being handled. Distribute activity report prior to meetings.

- Find way to reuse old EJAB information and keep history continuity for new EJAB members
- Select 2018 meeting dates in February, May, August, and November. Consider alternate location for the May or August EJAB meeting, possibly the Northeast or Northwest. Find alternate February date in the event of inclement weather.
- Members would like several interim phone sessions on specific matters.
- Think about joint meeting with CAC in November. Take issues to the CAC for their assistance.
- Chairman and Vice Chairman elections should be held at February 2018 meeting. Possibly elect parliamentarian to keep track of minutes/by-laws, etc.

Chairman Frank solicited a motion to hold elections at the February 2018 meeting. Kirk Jalbert made a motion, which was seconded by Brian Twyman. Motion approved.

Adjournment

Chairman Arthur Frank requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eli Brill made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, which was seconded by Adam Cutler. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 P.M.