

**MINUTES OF COMBINED MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD
AND THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 19, 2019**

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Heather Bedi
Adam Cutler
Arthur Frank
Hazem Hijazi
Rafiyqa Muhammad
Jerome Shabazz
Tom Torres

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:

Allison Acevedo
John Brakeall
Abbey Cadden
Glenda Davidson
Justin Dula
Allen Landis
David Saunders
Zakia Elliott

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA PHONE:

Gary Horton
Allison Robinson

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT VIA PHONE:

Alice Wright (for Horace Strand)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Adam Cutler called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Rafiyqa Muhammad and Heather Bedi are newly appointed EJAB members. Rafiyqa Muhammad is a native of Harrisburg. She serves on the City of Harrisburg's Environmental Advisory Council, has her own business called Sustainable Human Environment (SHE), and is an aquaponics farmer.

Heather Bedi studied environmental and social justice and now is a professor of Environmental Studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle. Additionally, Heather studies pipelines and fracking in Pennsylvania and understands how communities are opposing and framing grievances around environmental justice and wetland concerns.

All meeting attendees provided brief introductions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Adam Cutler solicited additions or corrections to the Minutes of the October 8, 2019 conference call. Hearing none, Chairman Cutler requested a motion to approve the Minutes.

Arthur Frank moved to approve the Minutes of the October 8, 2019 conference call. Hazem Hijazi seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS:

PQ Corporation

Chairman Cutler discussed the ongoing efforts of Dr. Strand and Alice Wright to schedule a meeting with PQ Corporation (PQ) in Chester. Chester Environmental Partnership (CEP) proposed a group of five or six stakeholders to attend the meeting. PQ preferred to meet only with Dr. Strand and Alice Wright as representatives of CEP. The lawyer for PQ has suggested his attendance at the meeting and has invited Adam to attend as EJAB Chair. CEP anticipates a meeting in early 2020.

Boards and Commissions

Allison Acevedo stated that the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) met with DEP's Policy Office regarding potential vacancies on DEP's boards, commissions and councils. The Policy Office will continue to send OEJ information about openings.

Parliamentarian

There have been no volunteers for parliamentarian, so the election will be held over until 2020. Chairman Cutler provided details about the role of the parliamentarian for the benefit of the new EJAB members.

Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence

The awards are given every year, but recipients are not generally diverse. Members were encouraged to share the Award announcement. The applications must be submitted online and are open through December 17.

Environmental Education Grants

The Environmental Education grant round is open. There are three grant tiers: mini grants up to \$3,000; Level 1 grants up to \$20,000; Level 2 grants from \$20,000-\$85,000. Applications are due by 11:59 PM on December 31. Members were encouraged to share the announcement to ensure diverse representation among applicants.

Food Infrastructure Grant

This is a new grant, up to \$200,000, from DEP funded through the recycling fees. The grant allows nonprofit organizations to purchase refrigerators and refrigeration supplies to maintain food before it becomes waste. The deadline is April 24, 2020.

The OEJ will provide a list of all available grants to the EJAB members.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES:

Vacancies

EJAB has two new members and two members left the board (Brian Twyman and Emily Collins). There are currently 11 members and four vacancies. Allison Acevedo encouraged the members to think about nominees from a wide range of geographic areas and the expertise those individuals possess. Any recommendations should be provided to the OEJ.

Hiring of Toxicologist

David Saunders reported that the Department of Health (DOH) has hired a toxicologist, Mike McCaskill, Ph.D.

BEGINNING OF JOINT EJAB/CAC MEETING

DEP REPORT:

The Secretary provided a brief update on the following:

Growing Greener Plus

The latest round of funding opened on November 4. There is \$30 million available in the current grant round to address nonpoint source pollution, agriculture activities, abandoned mine drainage, stormwater runoff, energy resource extraction, streambank and shoreline degradation, and legacy mining impacts. Grant applications are submitted online through the Commonwealth's Electronic Single Application website, eGrants, until 5:00 PM on December 20. The Department plans to hold two additional Growing Greener Plus grant rounds in 2020, most likely in the spring and late summer.

Driving PA Forward Grant Program

Between September 14 and October 16, 50 new locations and 194 new plugs were approved under the Level 2 EV Charging Rebate Program. To date, 223 projects have been approved for almost the full \$3 million available. The application submission period will close briefly later in 2019 for program updates but will reopen shortly thereafter. There are many other programs available under Driving PA Forward.

Performance Based Budgeting

The Commonwealth is moving toward more performance-based budgeting based on legislation that was passed. The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) oversees that process. A draft report should be available next month, and a final report be issued in January of 2020.

E-Enterprise Leadership Council (EELC)

The Secretary is currently Vice President of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) and Chair of the E-Enterprise Leadership Council (EELC), a national organization that uses a shared governance model to address leverage technology and business processes to advance environmental protection. Much of the discussion at a recent meeting surrounded taking proper advantage of electronic processes in order to do the work and how to utilize those processes to make information more available to environmental justice communities and others.

Climate Issues

DEP has several ongoing initiatives to support local communities as they engage on climate issues. The Energy Programs Office is partnering with the Local Governments for Sustainability to connect college students and municipalities to develop local greenhouse gas inventories. There are 37 students from 11 higher education institutes and 20 local governments, including Erie, Chester, Center Region Council of Governments, and the cities of York and Reading. The primary purpose is to get students involved with municipalities to help with redevelopment of

greenhouse gas inventories and then ultimately to develop plans for addressing those. There are 10 additional local governments interested in the next round of the program for 2020-2021.

PRESENTATION:

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

Jessica Shirley, Policy Director at DEP, discussed the proposed CO2 Budget Trading Program, referred to as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI has been around for 10 years, taking effect on January 1, 2009, and was the first mandatory cap-and-trade program for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It currently includes nine Mid-Atlantic states. The system applies only to carbon dioxide emissions from the electric power plants with capacities to generate 25 megawatts or more. Creating the program as directed by Governor Wolf would put a direct price on the carbon pollution emitted by larger power plants. A draft rulemaking will go to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for consideration in the summer of 2020. There will be an extensive outreach period on the proposed and final to its advisory committees.

Under the Air Pollution Control Act, any funds received must be used in the elimination of air pollution. Additional considerations DEP is investigating right now include electricity rates costs. DEP is working with the PUC to address utility burden for low-income residents which recently resulted in a new policy statement from the Commission lowering the maximum “energy burden” thresholds for low-income individuals to 6% of income. DEP is also evaluating nuclear facilities and other non-carbon emitting energy resources not required to purchase credits because of zero carbon emissions. DEP will be working with the PUC and the grid operator PJM to identify solutions to help prevent PA’s electricity generators from being disadvantaged based on the Commonwealth’s participation in RGGI compared to generators in the non-participating states.

Next steps: DEP will be seeking opportunities for engagement by the General Assembly, key stakeholders, and residents and businesses of PA. A draft Annex of the regulation is expected to be presented at an Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee and other advisory committees in the first quarter of 2020.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE:

Allison Acevedo, Director of OEJ, stated that seven environmental justice roundtables have been held across the state in the last year. OEJ has focused on building relationships through these roundtables. OEJ anticipates that roundtables will continue in 2020 with a report being developed in 2020 about the roundtables.

Another core piece of the work of the OEJ is interagency initiatives. A great deal of the work focuses on health impacts and disparities. The OEJ is also working with DCNR to look at their work around their agency’s diversity policy.

John Brakeall and DEP’s Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields program to partnered secure and administer a small communities assistant grant for Shamokin. A contractor AECOM was recently hired to prepare a brownfields inventory while DEP focuses on education, partnering with the City, organizations and others to understand brownfield sites in Shamokin and prioritize sites for redevelopment.

Justin Dula has been working on efforts to look at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) site and future use. Justin has also been working with academic institutions in the northeast, working with Misericordia University and Nanticoke City for an economic development project with university students. He is also partnering with Delaware County Community College to bring their wastewater and drinking water operator program to the William Penn School District in Delaware County.

OEJ will be hiring a regional coordinator for the western region.

Moving forward, the OEJ wants to continue to engage internal programs to ensure that internal initiatives have an environmental justice and equity focus.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OFFICE UPDATE:

Bert Myers, Director of Environmental Education (EEIC) discussed the environmental education grant program. Priority topic areas for the grant program include climate change, water, and environmental justice. The application period opened on October 31 for the 2020 EEO grants and will end on December 31.

The EEIC hosts an annual webinar to promote the grant and walk applicants through the process of applying for a grant. The amount of monies that will be administered through the grant program this year will be \$300K. Bert also mentioned the Environmental Literacy Forum that is scheduled for January 2020. The OEJ and EEIC will be attending the Forum and participating in roundtable discussions that include environmental justice, workforce development, sustainable schools, and an evaluation of challenges and successes.

Bert Myers also reiterated that the OEJ and the EEIC have been working in collaboration on a variety of activities. Through the collaboration of DEP's OEJ and EEIC, DCNR, PDE, and the Penn State Extension an environmental education program was developed for Environmental Teen Corp in Harrisburg. The students rotated through a variety of educational stations led by the participating agencies.

END OF JOINT EJAB/CAC MEETING

SIERRA CLUB PRESENTATION:

Zakia Elliott is the Philadelphia Climate Works (PCW) program manager and Tom Schuster is a senior campaign representative for the Beyond Coal Campaign and for the Clean Energy for All campaign. Zakia and Tom explained how studies reveal that communities of color are disproportionately subjected to transportation pollution because of their proximity to pollution hot spots. Zakia discussed ways to address the cumulative impacts issue.

Driving PA Forward provides opportunities for PA to reduce impacts to environmental justice communities. Eligible projects include electric vehicle infrastructure construction and the replacement of old, diesel-fueled medium and heavy-duty trucks and equipment with newer, or alternative, fuel vehicles.

Another policy which will provide an opportunity to impact environmental justice communities is the Transportation & Climate Initiative (TCI). Sierra Club's suggestions for TCI in PA include: setting strict limits on the allowances; setting a price to reflect the true cost of carbon; conducting regular environment health and economic impact assessments; ensuring no less than 50% of the investment goes back into overburdened EJ communities; implementing appropriate air monitoring; and developing and carrying out a robust public participation process.

Adam Cutler suggested that perhaps it makes sense to keep the discussion happening within the EJAB and potentially continue the discussion at the February meeting.

Heather Bedi suggested more community input via a town hall meeting and offered to organize one using Dickinson's facilities. Heather and Rafiyqa Muhammad discussed planning a town hall meeting in January 2020.

Allen Landis, from DEP's Policy Office, noted that the TCI states will issue a Memorandum of Understanding in December. While some adjustments may be made by PA, any revisions must be done in accordance with the Air Pollution Control Act. DEP is considering innovative ways to use the Air Pollution Control Act and give the investment back to environmental justice communities and is open to suggestions going forward.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental Justice Symposium

A subcommittee of members have been meeting to discuss the feasibility of an Environmental Justice Symposium to honor the memory of EJAB member John Waffenschmidt. The idea is that there would be a morning keynote and afternoon small group discussions. Any members are welcome to join the subcommittee.

Interagency Health Subcommittee

The EJAB and DOH have formed an Interagency Health subcommittee. Discussions have included what the committee should look like and what issues should be taken on., should the subcommittee expand to include other agencies that are relevant to issues of environmental justice and environmental health issues, the generic issue of climate change, and the issue of what we know about health effects of exposures.

Jerome Shabazz challenged the EJAB members to think about the possibility of creating connective relationships as a pilot within a community.

2020 MEETING DATES:

Some conflict has been noted with the original proposed 2020 dates. Allison Acevedo will send around new proposed dates for 2020 meetings and conference calls.

The EJAB elected to hold another traveling meeting in August in the Northeast Region. The meeting would likely be 2-7. Location will be determined later from candidate cities including Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Adam Cutler requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Arthur Frank made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, which was seconded by Jerome Shabazz. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 P.M.