

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY BOARD
CONFERENCE CALL
October 8, 2019

Voting Members Present:

Adam Cutler
Arthur Frank
Clea Hollis
Gary Horton
Allison Robinson
Jerome Shabazz
Tom Torres

Non-Members Present:

Allison Acevedo - DEP
John Brakeall - DEP
Abbey Cadden - DEP
Glenda Davidson - DEP
Justin Dula - DEP
Allen Landis - DEP

Non-Members Present:

Alice Wright (for Horace Strand)

Call to Order:

Chairman Cutler called the conference call to order at 9:10 A.M. without a quorum.

Review of Agenda Items from August 13, 2019 Meeting:

Boards and Commissions

The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) and DEP's Policy Office are seeking to diversify the agency's boards and commissions. OEJ has been researching other states' policies and language used regarding diversity and boards and commissions. The OEJ is working with DCNR to look review its diversity and inclusion plan, which includes examining diversity for its boards and commissions.

Allison Acevedo will keep the EJAB apprised of openings on other DEP boards and commissions.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Cutler solicited comments or corrections to the Minutes of the August 13, 2019 meeting. Hearing none, the Chairman requested a motion to approve the Minutes. A quorum had been established before Chairman Cutler called for the motion to approve the Minutes.

Arthur Frank moved to approve the Minutes of the August 13, 2019 meeting. Gary Horton seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

Parliamentarian Election

With the resignation of Eli Brill, a new parliamentarian will need to be selected. Chairman Cutler solicited interest from participants on the call. Hearing none, the vote will be held over for another meeting.

Clea Hollis nominated Allison Robinson. Allison thanked Clea for the vote but declined the nomination because she is serving as Vice Chair.

DEP and OEJ Updates:

OEJ Updates/Western Region Updates/Allison Acevedo

Allison Acevedo stated the Regional Coordinator position in the Southwest Region has been posted. Interested candidates must apply online.

Senator Hughes has been working on legislation around environmental justice. The legislation would codify the OEJ and EJAB by statute and provide a mechanism for communities to address environmental justice issues through a task force.

As a result of the roundtable held in Sharon, Pennsylvania, DEP made signs outlining the dangers of fishing in the Shenango River and list resources for subsistence fishers. Approximately 100 signs will be going up in the community near Sharon.

Allison Acevedo testified at City Council in support of their environmental justice legislation. Philadelphia has created an environmental justice commission.

Allison will be working with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Philadelphia School District to present at a conference in Lexington, Kentucky on October 16 about environmental education and environmental justice.

An Executive Order was signed by Governor Wolf, which will join the state in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Central Region Updates/John Brakeall

A grant was awarded to DEP from EPA to develop a brownfields inventory, site prioritization and redevelopment plan for the City of Shamokin. DEP and OEJ held a kick-off meeting with the City and approximately 30 community members attended.

DEP's work with the Environmental Teen Core project was recently highlighted at Harrisburg's Environmental Advisory Council meeting.

Eastern Region Updates/Justin Dula

Justin Dula has been elected President-elect of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association. He hopes to be able to use planning community connections around the state to further the goals of the OEJ.

Justin has been an active participant in the Philadelphia Energy Solutions advisory group meetings led by the City of Philadelphia.

A roundtable is being planning in the northeast region, the current date being November 21. The OEJ is having trouble making connections with community groups in the Lehigh Valley and welcomes any and all connections from the EJAB members.

Legislative Update

DEP's Legislative Director, Greg Kauffman, stated that the House and Senate are out until October 21.

There are two bills included as a part of the Energize PA package introduced by Speaker Turzai. HB 1106 prescribes a 30-day timeline for the review of all permits. The bill would effectively

eliminate the opportunity for public comment and violate the agency's delegation agreements, which means the agency would lose federal funding. HB 1106 is on the House calendar for third consideration on October 21. HB 1107 would create a Pennsylvania Permitting Commission that would absorb the agency's permitting functions, permitting fees and resources, and move them to the Commission. This would likely violate the agency's delegation agreements with EPA, which would mean the Department would lose federal funding. HB 1107 is currently in the House Appropriations Committee but will likely move when the House and Senate return. Greg solicited organizations with which EJAB members might be associated to write letters opposing HB 1106 and HB 1107.

SB 619 passed the Senate and is currently in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. The bill changes the reporting requirements of the Clean Streams Law and the definition of pollution. Under this bill only substances that have a numeric criterion (e.g. nitrates, phosphorous) would be considered as water pollution. The bill would be in violation of federal law, and the agency would lose its federal delegation and federal funding.

With the abolition of the Capital Stock & Franchise Tax, Hazardous Sites Clean-Up Act (HSCA) is underfunded by \$30 million a year. HSCA has started to ramp-down projects, anticipating a shortfall in resources this year.

Climate Action Plan:

Allen Landis from DEP's Policy Office explained that DEP released its updated Climate Action Plan (CAP) in April. The plan provides strategy leadership toward attaining the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals put forth by the Governor, which are 26% by 2025 from 2005 levels and 80% by 2050. For the first time, the CAP also includes adaptation measures to help adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already being seen.

The CAP presents a list of potential strategies and actions that governments, citizens, and businesses in Pennsylvania can take to address and adapt to climate change. The plan identifies 19 strategies, including over 100 actions across eight different sectors that, if implemented would drastically lower Pennsylvania's GHG and increase the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The adaptation strategies aim to minimize disruptions to Pennsylvania's citizens, economy, and environment from climate-related hazards.

College Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP):

OEJ and EPA working together on a CUPP project, which is an EPA program linking colleges with communities. The OEJ met with Misericordia University and EPA to identify a project. The OEJ linked the professor with Nanticoke City, which is a coal community of about 10,000 people. The City will be working with classes from Misericordia in communication and marketing to help identify needs, create a strategic plan, and develop communication strategies to improve economic development in Nanticoke City. The OEJ is hoping to expand the program and roll it out with other universities across the state.

EJAB Committee Updates:

Waffenschmidt Symposium

Adam Cutler stated that the subcommittee met on September 16. The subcommittee is working to identify the scope of event, which should be to honor the legacy of John Waffenschmidt and

navigate the funding challenges. The subcommittee is no longer looking at the spring of 2020 because of lack of funding and direction. The subcommittee will meet again on November 6.

Dr. Frank would like to discuss specifics at the November 19 EJAB meeting to get a sense of what the Drexel School of Public Health might be able to do and then he will investigate the possibility of the University getting involved.

DOH Subcommittee

Allison Robinson stated that the Interagency Environmental Health Committee did more refinement on the mission and vision document. Allison Acevedo will invite DEP's Policy Director, as well as Tammi Peffer from the Department of Education, to participate in the next subcommittee meeting on November 6. The next step will be to look at expectations in terms of actions for the interagency committee. The Environmental Health Section of the Department of Health is seeking to construct a community advisory committee, which Arthur Frank and Allison Robinson have been invited to participate.

The Department of Health (DOH) will host a Health Equity Summit on November 1 in Philadelphia. OEJ staff will be facilitating a session at the Summit about EJ and Climate Change. Gary Horton expressed interest in attending the Health Equity Summit.

An Environmental Justice Town Hall Meeting will be held in Philadelphia on November 2 with the support of Drexel University. Allison Acevedo will send around the information to the members.

Member Updates:

Arthur Frank initiated a discussion on the problem of asbestos within two high schools in Philadelphia and how students are being sent to other schools. Justin Dula and Allison Acevedo will be meeting with the Philadelphia Energy Authority on October 11 to talk about the work that they are doing with the schools and in the City of Philadelphia and to discuss how the OEJ might support their work through state-level resources or community engagement.

Allison Robinson stated how schools in her area have been having problems with infestations and having to shut down for several days because of pesticide use and lack of climate control. With climate change and the summer season being extended, it will be a major investment for school districts to renovate.

Allison Robinson also discussed cases of a rare disease, Ewing Sarcoma, in southwestern PA for which there is no explanation. A community meeting was held on October 7 and a representative from the Department of Health (DOH) was present. The Children's Hospital received a \$100,000 grant to investigate and provide an analysis of the cases of Ewing Sarcoma. The community is citing that it might be related to fracking, but fracking is taking the defense saying that they are not the cause of it.

Gary Horton spoke on the cross-section between health and environment that impact many schools, including Erie schools. He suggested looking at a common approach to survey in order to bringing it into focus. Health and the environment are interconnected in terms of the impact that the environment may have on the health of the community, particularly women and children, and may impact air or building quality issues.

Adam Cutler initiated a discussion on the EPA's Healthy Schools program and encouraged contacting EPA Region 3 for guidance and possible resources for the school districts across the state. Allison Acevedo and Justin Dula will reach out to EPA Region 3.

Adam Cutler discussed a meeting held with Chester Environmental Partnership in September concerning ongoing efforts to reach out to PQ Corporation. There is a great deal of concern in the community about PQ's operations and how they have been subjected to various enforcement actions from DEP. Adam spoke on how the community would like to establish a better relationship with the company. Justin Dula provided PQ Corp's contact information to Reverend Strand. Alice Wright stated that Dr. Strand contacted PQ, but PQ did not return his call. Adam Cutler will reach out to Dr. Strand to see if he can help facilitate something further.

Board Terms and Vacancies:

According to the bylaws, appointments for past vacancies were set up for exactly two years. The OEJ would like to consider updating the bylaws to make it "up to a two-year appointment" so member would be appointed in odd year or an even year, which would allow for turnover but retain institutional knowledge.

Concern was expressed by several members about the wording, suggesting it may allow for members to leave before their terms expire. It was suggested that the bylaws be updated in a way that preserves current terms or renews members for a special one-year term to get onto the half and half schedule. Justin Dula will work on new language and send it to the members in advance of the November 19 meeting.

Wrap Up and Next Steps:

The next meeting is November 19. Part of the meeting will be a joint meeting with the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC).

Adjournment:

Chairman Adam Cutler requested a motion to adjourn the conference call.

Arthur Frank made a motion that the conference call be adjourned, which was seconded by Clea Hollis. The call was adjourned at 11:10 A.M.