

**Commission on Environmental Justice & Sustainable Communities
Annual Retreat July 24, 2018
The College Park Airport**

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

- Commissioners: Duane Johnson, Crystal Faison, Subha Chandar, Robert Hackman, Joseph Griffiths, John Papagni, Camille Burke, Richard Fairbanks, Stephen Levitsky, Janet Moye Cornick

- Participants: Akosua Dosu, Paula Montgomery

Introductions

Camille Burke started the meeting by welcoming everyone.

June meeting minutes were approved.

Discussion

Akosua Dosu from the Prince George's County Department of the Environment gave a brief introduction on how the PG County EJ Commission was started and about the composition and structure of the Commission.

She talked about the community block that deals with issues in Brandywine coming from coal plant emissions and burning of fossils fuels. She said the PG County EJ Commission is the source for community when they have questions or concerns about health issues.

Akosua said at the moment she didn't have a lot to share surrounding the EJ Commission due to the fact it is just forming. Dawn Hawkins-Nixon will be the staffer.

Joe Griffiths asked do any of the sector plans have proactive plans like EJ policy for development reviews. Akosua said they doing a summary rewrite and meeting the with the Department of Planning because of the location of some of the plants. She talked about the sector plan around Sherriff Road involving truck traffic routes and speed mitigation. She said their work at the health department could be stronger.

Akosua said one of the problems they are having is obtaining health data Camille Burke suggested that they should reach out to the Maryland Department of Health and Housing Baltimore City has an MOU with these departments.

Camille asked Akosua why the PG County EJ Commission was necessary and if it was because of an abundance of issues in PG County? Akosua she said she did not know the answer but that their residents are extremely active and vocal in holding their Department accountable.

Camille asked Akosua what communication challenges are and if she could provide any tips to help them work smarter not harder. Akosua said the permitting process and how permits are given out.

Aksosua asked if CEJSC works with counties. Camille said we do and that the Commission has State wide-representatives on it. Robert Hackman said it would be good if the PG County EJ Commission could designate a liaison to the CEJSC to keep them informed.

Camille gave a brief introduction about the Baltimore City lead program and talked about quarterly meetings, the MOU with agencies, and the partnership with Green Healthy Homes Initiatives. She also talked about how inspections are done and lead prevention.

Paula Montgomery of the Maryland Department of the Environment gave an overview of lead in housing.

Camille asked the Commissioners what ideas they would like to talk about moving forward.

- Robert said the liaison should be coming from the legislators because they are the one's talking to their constituents. He said this is in line with the communication and outreach idea.
- Crystal said she would like to still see community representative being considered as liaisons.
- The creation of community liaisons for outreach.

The question was asked how we achieve the above bullets points.

- Camille said possibly by sending letters to all Maryland State Delegates and Senators, introducing them to the EJ Commission.
- If legislators cannot come to Commission meetings encourage them to send a constituent.
- Joe said the Commission could do mock meetings with the PG County EJ Commission.

Subha Chandar said the Commission needs to be clear about what they will be offering to the community groups as it relates to outreach. She said the Commission could offer referrals but not act as though the Commission can fix the problems.

Joe said once the Commission goes out to the communities and fields questions they can develop referrals based on those questions. A resource guide could be built from this.

Robert said the Commission should have some influence to get legislators to reach out to their constituents.

Dick Fairbanks suggested a good start would be going to the Brandywine community where he thinks there are a lot of EJ issues.

- Camille said she would rather not revisit an issue from the past and be asked by community why we are back. Dick said the Commission never went to Brandywine.
- Brandywine folks have come to Commission meetings in the past but there was never any follow up on the Commission's part.
- Janet Moyer said it might be good to gather some data on the Brandywine issues and then put it in a form to be presented to legislators for that District. Then the constituents could meet with

the legislators and say “they met with the EJ Commission and here are their findings, what are ya’ll going do about these issues?”

- It was brought up that Brandywine is in negotiations with the EPA over a claim Brandywine has filed.

Janet asked how the Commission determines what cases it supports as it and whether it an EJ or a health issue. Robert said the Commission is an advisory body and not an investigative one. He said the Commission doe not investigate whether or not a claim has merit.

Subha said she thinks the Commission needs to be clear about how much it can help communities and the actions they can take. Those decisions should be based on data collection. She said collaborating with the PG County EJ Commission could be beneficial to both Commissions.

Camille said the agencies have collected a lot of data and that the Commission could direct the PG County EJ Commission to those agencies.

It was decided that Camille will write a letter of support to the PG County EJ Commission to be discussed at the September meeting.

Robert said the letter should be sent to the County Executive’s Office, County Council Chair and a thank you email should be sent to Adam Ortiz.

An email will be sent to legislators introducing the EJ Commission, describing what it does, and encouraging them to get their constituents involved.

Next year goals

- Camille said she wants to get ahead of the legislators on EJ matters in the coming year.
- Keep up dialogue with MACo and try to include them in the Commission’s outreach plan.

- The Commission wants the legislators to recommend someone from the community to be an ambassador/liaison.
- Joint meeting with CEHPAC
- Focus on Asthma in Maryland
- Continue conversation with Legislative Black Caucus
- Meet with local jurisdictions or have listening sessions to talk about the Commission’s responsibilities
- Medicaid Plan
- Eastern Shore Case study

Crystal asked how the Commission can meetings make more accessible for people who may not be able to make it in person.

Joe said survey monkey could be used or Google forms.

Robert said you need staff to do the work and asked “ where is the staff going to come from?” He said this is the job of the legislators and that it may not be a good idea to make all of these great ideas and then have nobody around to carry them out.

Subha said can see if her department can look at providing data through a 1-800 number they use collect sewer, perk test and lead data.

Meeting adjourned