Environmental Justice Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2022
Via Microsoft Teams

Council Members
Present: Amy Tuininga, Kim Gaddy, Jackie Park Albaum, Joann Held, Phyllis Reich, Andy Kricun, Ted Carrington, Nancy Griffeth (via phone), Melissa Miles
Absent: Jeffrey Perlman, Meredith Taylor, Gantry Fox, Kelly Francis, Monique Griffith

OEJ Staff: Kandyce Perry, Nadia Akbar, Olivia Glenn

DEP Guests: Michael Gordon, Brad Bollen, Christine Schell, Jennifer Fearon, Anthony Findley, Brandon Carreno, Ashley Connor, Abbie Tang-Smith, Cecile Murphy, Bryana DeVeaux, David Pepe, Martha Sapp, Nick Angarone, Ken Ratzman, Marelyn Rivera, Emily Nanneman, Kerry Pflugh, Peg Hanna

EJIC Representatives and Other State Agency Guests: Barbara Goun, Christa Fontecchio, Leotis Sanders, Sarah Helble, Lauren Griffith, Adam Neary, Terri Goldberg, Julie Veffer, Francine Wright, Richard Wille, Rachel DeFlumeri, Tammorei Petty, Barbara Vadnais, Christopher Huber, Maria Prato, Ashwini Sivaganesh, Antoinette Minors-Fergusson, Raymond Souweha, Preethy Thangaraj, Charu Vaidya, Charlie Williams, Suchir Govindarajan, Charles Appleby, Melinda Haley, Christopher Holmes, Kimberly Holmes, Julie Krause, Christopher Longwith, Erin Nardelli, Chirag Patel, Marvel Paulino, Brian Ross, Manuel Paulino, Jessica Steiger

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Kim Gaddy at 10:02 am.

Opening Remarks (Olivia Glenn)
Deputy Commissioner Glenn announced that NJDEP is planning a belated 50th Anniversary celebration the weekend of Earth Day. The Department was established in 1970, but the celebration had to be postponed due to COVID. More details will be shared with EJAC members as they are developed. They plan to showcase EJ issues during the event.
December 2021 Minutes
Amy Tuininga moved that the December Meeting Minutes be accepted. Jackie Par Albaum seconded the motion. All present approved.

Office of Environmental Justice 2022 Priorities (Kandyce Perry)
Kandyce Perry presented an overview of the 2022 Priorities for the Office of Environmental Justice. They are:

Priority 1: Amend DEP’s internal work to incorporate environmental Justice.
Priority 2: Facilitate a council of NJ agencies to amend the way the entire state achieves environmental justice.
Priority 3: Engage with overburdened communities to remove barriers to accessing resources so that communities are better informed, heard, and able to advocate for justice locally.

As context, she also shared Highlights from 2021 and Goals for 2022.

There was a substantial discussion of the last 2022 Goal: Seek thought partners to establish a program to increase EJ community education and capacity. NJDEP hopes that EJAC can help with this initiative. There may be a special synergy with Environmental Education and Communication (EEC) Workgroup. Suggestions related to this goal that were raised during this meeting include:

- Tapping into activities at Kean University or use them as a model
- Reminder that we need resources in Spanish and perhaps other languages (DEP is actively working on “limited English proficiency planning” and can brief us at a future meeting)
- Find ways to engage a younger generation
- A good example of communication is the Site Remediation program where signage is required when an activity is under way.
- Note that the Land Use requirement to put a notice in the newspaper is out of date; Also you can always do better with the website; but don’t rely exclusively on the website.
- Participate in community days. Perhaps create an interactive game regarding who you call in an emergency – fire, explosion, etc. Or “take the show on the road” quarterly to different parts of the state
- Have a calendar that is easy to access and has lots of advance notice so that people have time to plan to participate
- Tap into Housing Authorities – be sure to communicate with them so they can communicate with their tenants.

EJAC 2022 Work Plan (Kandyce Perry)
OEJ staff has prepared a 2022 Work Plan in Conjunction with the EJAC Workgroups and Executive Board. NJDEP management also has additional areas in which they would like to solicit advice from the Council. This as a living document which may change throughout the year. Kandyce has reviewed the Work Plan with Commissioner LaTourette and, overall, he is pleased with the content. Each Workgroup briefly described the primary focus of their workplans.
Air Workplan (Melissa Miles)
~ Emergency Communications and Response Protocols
~ Warehouses

Water Workplan (Andy Kricun)
~ Infrastructure Funding Workshop
~ Green Infrastructure and Workforce Development

Land (Jackie Park Albaum)
~ Brownfield Revitalization
~ Increasing Urban Agriculture

Environmental Education & Communication (Joann Held)
~ EJ Primer
~ Webinar and Short Video Series

In the discussion that followed, Ken Ratzman noted that the Community Corner is a good example of a tool for Education and Communication and he offered to provide training for anyone who would like it. Leotis Sanders offered the assistance of NJ Transit to get out announcements and communicate information important to their riders. Barbara Vadnais offered the assistance of NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA). She pointed out the NJIT Brownfield Assistance Center as a useful place to find free webinars and other educational resources. [https://www.njit.edu/njbrownfields/](https://www.njit.edu/njbrownfields/)

**EJAC Vacancy Solicitation (Kandyce Perry)**
There are currently 6 vacancies on the Council, and we expect to fill 6 vacancies every year. (With the 18 members of the Council serving 3-year terms.) Please encourage good candidates to apply. OEJ will do a preliminary review of candidates for eligibility. Then the Council Executive Board will review the list of eligible candidates and make recommendations to the Commissioner. The Deadline to apply is March 15.

**EDA Brownfield Impact Fund (Barbara Vadnais)**
The Brownfield Impact Fund is a USEPA Revolving Fund program administered by NJ EDA. The fund provides both loans and grants to be used for cleaning contaminated sites, beginning with preparation of Remedial Action Workplan.

The fund promotes Environmental Justice through deliberate consideration, including designation as:
- Community Collaborative Initiative (CCI) Cities. (First 90 days, interest rate reduction)
- Government Restricted Municipalities (GRM). (Interest rate reduction)
- Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI). (Consideration for evaluating hardship; application fee waiver, interest rate reduction)
- Opportunity Zone Census Tract. (Interest rate reduction)

There is a Pre-qualification form that you can use to quickly ascertain whether a possible site might be eligible.
Announcements

- Bryana DeVeaux & Michael Gordon: On Feb 10 at 10am, the Senate Environment and Energy committee will discuss two important topics: 1) climate mitigation, 2) legislation (Bill S1005) to allow the Attorney General to pursue damages from manufacturers of lead paint (see [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2022/S1005](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2022/S1005)). The meeting can be viewed virtually on the NJLEG website [https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/). In order to testify in-person you will need to fill out a slip when you arrive. To submit written testimony, email OLSaideSEN@njleg.org.

- Andy Kricun: The Drinking Water Shut-off Moratorium ends in March.

- Kim Gaddy: Kamala Harris is coming to Newark to highlight removal of lead water pipes.

- Kim Gaddy: South Ward Environmental Alliance will host its first environmental summit in Newark on Feb 19 from 9am to 1pm. A hybrid live and on-line meeting is planned. (Kim Gaddy)

Adjournment
Meeting was adjourned at about Noon.

Next Meeting
April 13, 2022 at 10am virtually via Microsoft Teams