

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: November 27, 2007
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: HeartLove Place, Inc.
3229 N. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director, Division of Workforce Development,
Chair Kenosha County
Yolanda Santos Adams Director, League of United Latin American Citizens
Ness Flores..... Attorney, Flores & Reyes Law Offices
Joette Heckenbach Cope Services, Ozaukee County
Nancy Holmlund President, Racine Interfaith Coalition
Darryl Johnson Executive Director, Riverworks Development Corporation
N. Lynnette McNeely..... Attorney, Law Offices of Thomas J. Awen
Larry Moore Community Partnership Coordinator,
Housing Authority, City of Milwaukee
Brian Peters Housing Program Coordinator, Independence First
Wally Rendon Member Education/Outreach Representative
Racine Educators Credit Union;
Former Racine Police Officer
Theresa Schuerman Employment Specialist/Migrant Worker Outreach,
Walworth County Job Center

Guests and Staff Present

Robert P. Biebel Special Projects Engineer, SEWRPC
Crystal DuPont..... Program & Planning Analyst,
Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Southeast Region
Jennifer Epps..... Organizer,
Good Jobs & Livable Neighborhoods Coalition
Philip C. Evenson..... Executive Director, SEWRPC
Gary K. Korb Regional Planning Educator, UW-Extension/SEWRPC
Peter McAvoy 16th Street Community Health Center
Karyn Rotker..... Attorney, ACLU of Wisconsin
Jim Rowen Citizen
Melissa Scanlan Midwest Environmental Advocates
Kori A. Schneider Program Manager, Community & Economic Development,
Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
Marty Wall Citizen
Kenneth R. Yunker Deputy Director, SEWRPC
Sandra Zupan University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairperson Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:10 p.m., welcoming those in attendance. She noted attendance would be taken by circulating a sign-in sheet for signature, then asked the other Task Force members, staff, and guests present to briefly introduce themselves. Ms. Greene also noted that Alderman Willie Wade of the City of Milwaukee Common Council had called the Commission offices expressing his regrets at needing to miss the meeting due to a scheduling conflict with the City's Utilities and License Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 7, 2007, MEETING

Ms. Green asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes of the Task Force's first meeting held August 7, 2007. Mr. Peters asked about the purpose of the secretary's notes in the minutes, and moved that they be removed. Ms. Santos Adams seconded the motion, indicating that she wanted to hear discussion on the issue. Mr. Peters indicated that the notes on page 3 of the draft minutes related to Ms. Rotker's presentation, but had not actually been referenced during the meeting. Mr. Flores suggested that the staff could provide additional information and clarification in a separate memorandum, rather than as notes in minutes. Mr. Evenson explained that the Commission has customarily used secretary's notes to provide clarification and/or to follow up on matters raised in meetings; however, such clarification or follow-up could be provided in a separate memorandum, if the Task Force preferred. Ms. Holmlund agreed that clarifications or related information be provided in separate memorandums. There being no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously. Mr. Moore then moved, and Mr. Rendon seconded, that the minutes of August 7th be approved subject to removal of secretary's notes. There was no discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

SEWRPC PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH PROCESS

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Korb to provide an overview of the Commission's public involvement and outreach process, noting that this was an item of continuing interest at the previous meeting. Mr. Korb briefed the Task Force using a handout (see Attachment 1 to the minutes). In response to a request in Mr. Korb's presentation for any suggestions to better involve, inform, or equip the public—particularly minority, low-income, and disabled populations—the following were offered:

1. Ms. Schuerman suggested working with job centers as an additional contact for minority and low-income populations. Mr. Korb agreed and asked if she would be an appropriate follow-up contact for Walworth County job centers, and Ms. Schuerman responded affirmatively.
2. Mr. Flores asked whether some forms of outreach worked better than others. He observed that sometimes connecting with a key person could be helpful. Mr. Korb agreed, and noted that one form of outreach involved sending newsletters, notices of public meetings, and requests for meetings with a personalized letter to the heads of minority and low-income population groups. These were then followed up with a phone call. Meetings were requested with the whole group, or its board, or staff, and an attempt was made to develop that connection with someone within each group.
3. Mr. Moore observed that it may be difficult to obtain public involvement on public policy issues, but that it is important. He stated that people may need to understand how the public policies could affect them, and it may be necessary to try to get the message to the public in a variety of

ways. He suggested that appearances on radio stations with large minority and low-income population audiences should be tried.

4. Ms. Holmlund agreed that reaching people in a variety of ways was desirable, and noted that SEWRPC staff has been doing this. She added that everyone has so much coming at them today that picking and choosing is difficult.
5. Ms. Heckenbach asked how comments received were used in the planning process. Mr. Evenson responded that Commission practice is to record every comment, and a document is prepared including all comments received. In addition, a summary of comments is prepared along with a proposed staff response to each issue represented by comments. He stated that both the full record of comments and the summary is provided to the advisory committee guiding the particular study, and the Commission itself for consideration. Mr. Yunker added that both the complete record of comments and the summary and response to comments are available for public review. Mr. Yunker stated that the response may result in the conduct of additional analysis or note that the suggested analysis had already been performed and summarize the findings. He added that comments could also result in a proposed change to plan recommendations.
6. Ms. Santos Adams asked whether follow-up occurred with organizations in order to encourage participation. Mr. Korb noted that each group is contacted via letter and telephone.
7. Mr. Rendon indicated, in looking at the list distributed of SEWRPC minority and low-income organization contacts, that he could suggest five additional organizations that could be added. He recalled meeting with Mr. Korb regarding commuter rail for Racine's Hispanic Roundtable, but that organization is not listed. Mr. Korb responded that the list has evolved and increased over time, and the list shared today was the list used during the Commission's recent long-range land use and transportation system planning process. Several groups have since been added, one being the Hispanic Roundtable. Mr. Korb and Mr. Rendon agreed to be in contact to identify other Racine area organizations, and Mr. Korb noted that it would be helpful if Task Force members could review the list and identify other organizations.
8. Mr. Moore moved that the Chair form a focus group to identify additional groups and means of outreach. Ms. Schuerman suggested, and others supported, the participation of all Task Force members. Mr. Yunker suggested that communication could occur via email. Mr. Moore withdrew his motion, and Mr. Evenson stated that Commission staff would follow-up and facilitate means of exchange among Task Force members and staff.
9. Mr. Rendon suggested other media be used to reach the Latino/Hispanic community, beyond "El Conquistador." Mr. Korb indicated that, in addition to direct contacts, other local newspapers had also been used in the past. He stated that he would follow-up with Mr. Rendon.
10. Mr. Moore indicated that he was concerned about the lack of participation by minorities on SEWRPC advisory committees. Ms. Greene noted that this was the next agenda item.
11. Mr. Flores noted that it was important for all public comment to be treated with respect, though it is not easy at times dealing with the public. What staff does with input is also important, and if comments are taken seriously, then that attitude will be conveyed to the public. Some comments may not be articulate, but may contain "nuggets of gold."

12. Mr. Johnson suggested when public comment and involvement is being sought by the Commission, that staff prepare a short summary of the issue, and opportunity to comment, and provide that to each minority and low-income population group for possible use on their website or newsletters.

Ms. Greene thanked Task Force members for their guidance and assistance, and suggested moving on to the next agenda item while noting that the topic of outreach techniques would remain open for Task Force comment.

SEWRPC ADVISORY COMMITTEE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Evenson to address the Task Force on Commission advisory committee selection and appointment. Mr. Evenson proceeded, using a handout which had been previously sent to Task Force members (see Attachment 2 to the minutes). Task Force discussion and comments were as follows:

1. In response to Mr. Evenson's indication that the Commission would like to appoint more minorities, but sometimes was constrained in relying upon units of government and their selections, Mr. Moore asked how the situation could be corrected. He added that SEWRPC may not be the issue, but the local officials making the requested appointments need to be prompted. He noted that with respect to his own appointment to the Commission Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning, he believed that the City of Milwaukee's delay in appointing him had caused him to miss important decisions. Mr. Evenson responded that the Commission was open to ideas to help address this problem.
2. Mr. Johnson asked, where minorities were a large portion of the population, how staff requests local elected officials to make appointments. Mr. Yunker responded that in letters of request, minority candidates have been suggested. Ms. Santos Adams observed that the process of chief elected officials making appointments was not working to achieve racial proportionality on committees. Mr. Flores asked how the process could be changed. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff was considering a number of different approaches: 1) specifically asking elected officials of communities with large minority populations to consider appointing minorities to better represent minority populations. This would be done in the letters requesting elected officials to make appointments; 2) possibly suggesting in these same letters specific minority candidates for appointment; and 3) seeking appointments from multiple elected officials, such as from both the Milwaukee County Executive and Board of Supervisors Chairman, and from both the City of Milwaukee Mayor and Common Council President. Mr. Schuerman asked whether racial parity could be mandated in requests for committee appointments from elected officials. Mr. Evenson responded that it probably could not.
3. Ms. Holmlund said that it was sad that some Committees, such as transportation, did not have more balance. She added that with respect to the Water Supply Study Advisory Committee, she personally could not have offered any suggestions. Mr. Evenson noted that the water supply committee was a technical advisory committee, with individuals participating because of their professional expertise and experience and current positions, including water utility managers and university professors.
4. Ms. Rotker observed that the Task Force has a role in making suggestions for advisory committee appointments, as noted in the guidance document distributed prior to, and during the first Task Force meeting.

5. Ms. Greene suggested, and Mr. Evenson agreed, that the Commission staff could bring potential new advisory committee rosters to the Task Force for suggestions, before they are appointed by the Commission.
6. Mr. Peters suggested making a list of minority professional organizations that could be consulted to help identify prospective minority committee members.
7. Mr. Moore stated that committee appointments should continue to be a priority issue for the Task Force. Ms. Holmlund suggested placing the topic on future agendas for updates. Ms. Greene agreed, and indicated that she will also report back to the Commission on the Task Force discussion. Mr. Yunker added that the staff would maintain a list of the ideas discussed at Task Force meetings, so that they can be refined and applied as the Commission considers appointment of advisory committees. Mr. Johnson stressed that it would be important to hold elected officials accountable if they did not make appropriate appointments.

SEWRPC REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY ALTERNATIVES

Ms. Greene asked that Mr. Biebel, SEWRPC Special Projects Engineer, brief the Task Force on regional water supply planning, as the topic is one of considerable interest. Mr. Biebel proceeded, using a handout which was distributed in advance (see Attachment 3 to these minutes). Discussion and comments regarding Mr. Biebel's presentation included:

1. Ms. Heckenbach asked what goal was in mind for Task Force review of the water supply planning process. Mr. Evenson stated that the Commission was looking for guidance from the Task Force, particularly with respect to analyses that should be conducted to consider the impacts of the alternatives on minority and low-income populations.
2. Mr. Peters questioned the viability of some of the alternatives to be considered, specifically, whether increased use of Lake Michigan water would be permitted by other Great Lakes states. Mr. Biebel responded that any increased use of Lake Michigan water would require return flow of spent and treated water back to the Lake. He added that under the proposed Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Compact, the approval of other states would only be required for use of Lake Michigan water in a community (such as Waukesha or Sussex) totally west of the subcontinental divide and located in a county straddling the divide. He noted that communities straddling the divide such as New Berlin only require the approval of the Governor of the State of Wisconsin. Mr. Johnson asked how clean the return flow of spent and treated wastewater would be. Mr. Biebel responded that sewage treatment would be necessary to the level required of current Great Lakes communities discharging wastewater to the Great Lakes.
3. Mr. Peters asked whether the amount of water returned to Lake Michigan would equal the amount taken out. Mr. Biebel responded that due to stormwater inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewerage system, experience has shown that the amount of treated wastewater returned to the Lake will exceed by about 10 to 20 percent the amount of water taken out.
4. Ms. McNeely asked whether any municipality in Milwaukee County was currently using groundwater. Mr. Biebel responded that none of the municipalities were currently using groundwater as a water source; however, some individual residential wells in the City of Franklin area, and some industrial and commercial wells, were using groundwater.

5. Mr. Peters asked why New Berlin needed to access Lake Michigan water. Mr. Biebel responded that the principal reason for expanding Lake water use in New Berlin was to address a water quality concern, specifically, the level of radium in its groundwater supply.
6. Mr. Flores asked what may be the negative impacts associated with expanded use of Lake Michigan for water supply. Mr. Biebel responded that analysis has not been conducted yet of all alternatives, and costs and impacts have not been estimated. He said that increased capital and operating costs may be a negative impact. Mr. Yunker stated that impacts on minority and low-income populations were yet to be determined, and the Commission staff was looking to the Task Force to help identify what analyses should be conducted.
7. Ms. Holmlund stated that she was pleased that SEWRPC was doing this study. For everyone, education would be very important in understanding all of the issues.
8. Ms. McNeely questioned how increased use of Lake Michigan water from the City of Milwaukee's plants in other communities could result in a decrease in rates for City residential water users. Mr. Biebel responded that the costs to produce, treat, and distribute more water were largely fixed costs, and the City of Milwaukee water treatment plants were currently operating at about 50 percent of their capacity. Consequently, the more water that the City of Milwaukee sells to other communities, the greater the beneficial impact on City of Milwaukee ratepayers.
9. Ms. Santos Adams, in commenting on Alternative No. 4, asked why potential use of Lake Michigan water was not shown in Racine or Kenosha Counties west of the subcontinental divide. Mr. Biebel indicated that use of Lake Michigan water was proposed under Alternative No. 4 west of the subcontinental divide in the City of Kenosha, Village of Pleasant Prairie, Town of Yorkville, and Village of Union Grove. He added that it was not proposed in western Racine or Kenosha County, as the communities were not experiencing, and were not expected to experience, any groundwater quantity or quality problems.
10. Mr. Peters asked which of the plan alternatives outlined was most consistent with the regional land use plan. Mr. Biebel responded that each of the water supply alternatives would be designed to meet the water needs of the land use pattern proposed in the year 2035 land use plan. He stated that the analysis of the alternatives will indicate whether each alternative can accomplish this, that is, whether the potential water supply would be sustainable, and present the attendant capital and operating costs, and environmental and other impacts.
11. Ms. McNeely asked whether new water supply systems could be compatible with the older water supply and treatment systems of the City of Milwaukee. Mr. Biebel responded that the City of Milwaukee water supply system was an advanced system, using ozone treatment, and with, as noted earlier, substantial treatment capacity. Mr. Flores commented that he expected that expanded use of Lake Michigan water would involve transmission costs, and that system lifespan and depreciation costs may be important to the evaluation of alternatives.
12. Ms. Schuerman asked what is the timeframe for completing the evaluation of plan alternatives. Mr. Biebel indicated that the study schedule called for the planning to be nearing completion in the spring of 2008. Mr. Yunker suggested that this issue also be kept on the Task Force agenda for future meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene thanked the Task Force for their active participation, and audience members for their patience. She then asked whether those in attendance wished to comment. The following were offered:

1. Mr. McAvoy expressed a need to link water supply planning to other regional planning and implementation of those plans, and other issues and concerns as well. He stated that this included achieving greater land use centralization and density, stabilization and revitalization of central city job centers, and improvement and expansion of public transit.
2. Ms. Schneider said the question should be not how to supply water west of the subcontinental divide, but whether development should be happening there at all. She said the same question should have been asked in the southern California area now experiencing wildfires. She added that Waukesha County would like regional cooperation on water, but has not been cooperative with respect to public transit or housing.
3. Ms. Scanlan stated that adequate and sustainable cheap, high quality water will not be available from groundwater west of the subcontinental divide. She added that as a result, the water supply planning should recommend changes in the regional land use plan, including protection of groundwater recharge areas. She stated that she expected that the Great Lakes Compact will ensure retaining Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes region. Moreover, she said that SEWRPC forecasts of population and employment growth in southeastern Wisconsin east of the subcontinental divide greatly underestimate what is likely to occur.
4. Ms. Epps said that as part of her job, she participated “at the table” in many meetings, and at many of those meetings there are people observing in the audience who are not “at the table.” She added that she now knows how those people feel, and it is disempowering. Regarding advisory committee appointments, Ms. Epps stated that the Task Force should consider what is expertise. Should a large farmer be considered more knowledgeable than a small one, or a planner more expert than the unemployed who can’t get to a job using transit? She suggested an application process for advisory committee membership.

Regarding the water supply planning study, Ms. Epps said that presenting the water supply planning study as apolitical was offensive to her, and disingenuous. She said that race and class were reasons for white suburban flight across the subcontinental divide, and now these areas lack sufficient water, and want Lake Michigan water. She noted the need to link Lake Michigan water supply with providing affordable housing, implementing improved public transit, and addressing racial and income segregation. She stated that the Task Force should have the water issue presented to them from a community perspective.

5. Ms. Zupan indicated an affiliation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where her interest was environmental justice and brownfield redevelopment. She noted that the Task Force activities may relate to her work.
6. Mr. Wall indicated agreement with Mr. McAvoy and Ms. Epps, believing that all issues—water, housing, public transit, race, and class—must be on the table at once. He stated that New Berlin first got Lake Michigan water under the premise that some low-income housing would follow. He added that low-income housing has not been developed in New Berlin, and New Berlin officials are saying that the demand for such housing is not there.

DETERMINATION OF NEXT MEETING

There being no further public comments, Ms. Greene indicated that some discussion had occurred regarding the frequency with which the Task Force would meet. Mr. Peters expressed a concern that quarterly meetings would not allow a chance to comment meaningfully on the water supply study. Mr. Flores asked whether every two months would be appropriate. Ms. Santos Adams then offered the Racine Urban League as a possible meeting site. Hearing no objection, Ms. Greene indicated that the end of January or early February 2008 would be targeted for the next meeting, and it would be held in the Racine area. Mr. Evenson noted that a regular date and schedule for meetings would be preferable if possible, and stated that Commission staff would send out a potential schedule for review and comment via email.

Mr. Johnson asked what might be the focus of the Task Force at upcoming meetings. It was decided by consensus that the water supply study, committee appointment process, and public involvement would all continue as agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene again thanked the Task Force and guests for their time and participation. With the projected end time well past and several Task Force members departing, Ms. Greene declared the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

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