

Minutes of the Thirty Eighth Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: June 6, 2017
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)
General Commission Room
260 W. Seeboth Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director of Workforce Development, Kenosha County (retired)
Chair
Yolanda Adams.....President and CEO, Urban League of Racine and Kenosha
Huda Alkaff Founder and Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims
Ella Dunbar Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee
N. Lynette McNeely.....Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Jackie Koch..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach
May yer Thao.....Director, Hmong Chamber of Commerce

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Dennis Grzezinski Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski
Michael G. Hahn Executive Director, SEWRPC
Andrew Levy Urban and Regional Planning Supervisor,
Southeast Region, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Gary K. Korb Public Involvement and Outreach Specialist, SEWRPC
Eric D. Lynde.....Chief Special Projects Planner, SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKay Chief Community Assistance Planner, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker.....Senior Staff Attorney, ACLU of Wisconsin

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:40 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 21, 2016, MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Greene noted that not enough Task Force members were present at the beginning of the meeting to constitute a quorum; however, additional members were expected to attend. She suggested moving the agenda item to later in the meeting when a quorum of members may be present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED REVIEW OF COMMISSION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD BENEFIT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Hahn to introduce the agenda item. Mr. Hahn stated that a request was made at a City of Milwaukee Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee meeting to report on the potential benefits of Commission plan recommendations to environmental justice populations. Mr. Hahn then asked Mr. Lynde to provide an overview of the proposed report using an outline that was distributed to Task Force members and guests in attendance (see Attachment 1). The following comments and discussion points were made during the overview:

1. Ms. Koch noted that the request made at the Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee meeting was to report on the Commission recommendations that would benefit African American residents of the City of Milwaukee. She commented that the Task Force is responsible for integrating environmental justice into the regional planning process for the Region's entire environmental justice population. Mr. Lynde responded that while the request was specifically addressed towards African American residents of Milwaukee, Commission staff thought it was important to prepare the report to address all environmental justice populations.
2. Ms. Koch expressed concern regarding the ability of the Region's lower-income aging population to afford housing and transportation. She suggested addressing this concern in the regional planning process. Ms. Koch then commented that the Task Force should have an active role in representing groups that may have been underrepresented in the regional planning process in the past.
3. Ms. McNeely questioned whether the Commission should be preparing a report on this topic, commenting that higher education institutions with access to quantifiable data have typically undertaken this type of work. She also noted the perception that minority populations are underrepresented on the Commission's staff. She further suggested that the Region would benefit if the institution is located in a region that is more integrated than Southeastern Wisconsin.
4. Ms. Adams asked for examples of the types of recommendations that may be included in the report. Mr. Lynde responded that examples could include recommendations from the regional housing plan and public transit recommendations from VISION 2050. Ms. Koch noted that the public transit expansion and improvement recommended in VISION 2050 cannot be implemented using existing public transit funding sources.
5. Ms. McNeely noted the concentrations of low-income households and high unemployment rates in some Milwaukee neighborhoods and commented that job training programs may be more important to reverse negative outcomes than providing public transit to residents for reaching low-wage jobs in outlying communities. Ms. Koch suggested that the report include a historical perspective on how segregated conditions developed in Milwaukee. She also suggested inviting a guest speaker on the subject to a Task Force meeting. Mr. Korb noted that the Commission completed a report comparing key socioeconomic aspects of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Area to

peer metropolitan areas as part of the VISION 2050 planning process, and that the findings of the peer report could be useful.

6. Ms. Koch asked about the process for incorporating Task Force input into the regional planning process. Mr. McKay responded that comments from the Task Force are incorporated into draft regional planning documents and presented to advisory committees that oversee regional planning processes, such as the regional water supply plan, regional housing plan, and VISION 2050. Mr. McKay then noted that the advisory committees have supported incorporating Task Force comments into regional plans. Ms. Adams commented that public outreach to environmental justice populations was effective during the VISION 2050 planning process and the Commission's effort to work with its eight community partners resulted in diverse attendance at workshops.
7. Ms. Koch suggested that there may be a need to reexamine how the Task Force reviews and comments on regional planning efforts. Ms. Dunbar suggested developing criteria for how the Task Force could vet regional planning efforts. Ms. Koch suggested devoting the next Task Force meeting to examining the purpose and functions of the Task Force. Mr. Korb suggested that it may be valuable to review the purpose and functions that were developed when the Task Force was originally formed.
8. Ms. Koch suggested that a retreat involving Task Force members, Commission staff, and guests who are regular attendees may also be useful in examining the role of the Task Force. A retreat would also allow those involved with the Task Force to become more familiar with one another. Ms. Koch then suggested allowing guests in attendance to comment on the discussion. Ms. Greene provided an opportunity for public comment. Mr. Grzezinski commented that the Task Force has been operating for about a decade and it may be useful to discuss long-term goals and public outreach methods. He noted that it is important that Task Force members communicate with their networks regarding regional planning efforts. Ms. Rotker commented that the Task Force should explore its role in regional plan implementation and that it is important for communities to incorporate regional plan recommendations into their local comprehensive plans.
9. Ms. Koch commented that the current role of the Task Force is to provide input to regional planning advisory committees and the Regional Planning Commission on whether the regional planning process is meeting the needs of environmental justice populations. She then commented that the Commission's regional planning efforts address infrastructure-related issues such as transportation and housing, but do not address issues such as educational opportunities that are critical to creating diverse neighborhoods. Ms. Adams commented that community opposition to multifamily housing is, in some instances, intended to prevent diversity. Mr. Prunty commented that local government officials need to be made aware of the benefits of diversity when faced with community opposition to projects that may promote greater diversity. Ms. McNeely commented that the Commission's regional planning efforts are regionwide and Commission staff can share perspectives expressed by the Task Force with residents and officials in all areas of the Region. She added that it may be useful to examine the implementation status of regional plan recommendations.
10. Ms. Dunbar suggested that increased diversity may help the Commission staff better understand Task Force perspectives. Mr. Hahn noted that the UW-Milwaukee Urban Planning Program has undertaken an outreach effort to engage with neighborhoods throughout Milwaukee and

encourage increased diversity in the field of urban planning. Mr. Hahn stated that the Commission recognizes the importance of increasing diversity in the field of urban planning, and is participating in this effort.

11. Mr. Hahn stated that several valuable discussion points have been raised regarding the proposed review of Commission plan recommendations that would benefit environmental justice populations and the need to examine the direction of the Task Force. Mr. Hahn noted that the time between Task Force meetings has been longer than usual because Commission staff has been focused on publishing VISION 2050 and outreach efforts to local governments and organizations. Ms. Koch commented that long periods of time between Task Force meetings may create communication problems. Mr. Hahn responded that staff will work to ensure communication with the Task Force is maintained. He also stated that the Task Force will be able to review the report on Commission plan recommendations that would benefit environmental justice populations as it is developed.

Ms. Greene asked if there were any further comments. There were none.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 21, 2016, MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Greene noted that a quorum of Task Force members was now present and asked if there were any questions or comments on the June 21, 2016, meeting minutes. There were none. Ms. Greene then asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Schuerman moved, and Ms. Adams seconded, the approval of the June 21, 2016, meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED REGIONAL CHLORIDE STUDY

Ms. Greene noted the length of the previous agenda item and asked Mr. Hahn to provide a brief introduction of the proposed regional chloride study. Mr. Hahn suggested including this presentation on a future Task Force agenda due to time constraints. There was general agreement to do so.

DISCUSSION OF COUNTY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES AND RELATIONSHIP TO VISION 2050

Ms. Greene asked Mr. McKay of the Commission staff to provide a brief presentation on the agenda item. Mr. McKay noted that a PowerPoint handout (available [here](#)) had been distributed to Task Force members and those in attendance at the meeting. Mr. McKay highlighted the requirements of the State's comprehensive planning law and current Commission efforts to work with local governments to consider incorporating VISION 2050 plan recommendations into comprehensive plans. Ms. Greene asked if there were any comments on the presentation. There were none.

PRESENTATION ON *MKE AEROTROPOLIS DEVELOPMENT PLAN: A SHARED VISION FOR THE COMMUNITIES AROUND THE AIRPORT*

Ms. Greene suggested including this presentation on a future Task Force agenda due to time constraints. There was general agreement to do so.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Greene noted that the next meeting would be in fall 2017 if the Task Force would like to stay on a quarterly schedule. She suggested including discussions of the Task Force's purpose and the proposed Task Force retreat on the agenda. Ms. Greene commented that the timelines of regional planning efforts have driven past Task Force meeting agendas, and now the Task Force has an opportunity to provide more input into its meeting agendas. Ms. Greene also suggested limiting the number of presentations on an agenda to fit meeting time constraints. She then requested that Commission staff email Task Force members with prospective fall meeting dates.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene thanked those in attendance and attending by phone. She then declared the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay
Recording Secretary

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