

Minutes of the Eighteenth Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: January 6, 2011
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Independence*First*
540 South 1st Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director, Division of Workforce Development,
Chair Kenosha County
Nancy Holmlund..... President, WISDOM Interfaith Coalition
Vice Chair
Ella Dunbar Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee
Lynette McNeely Attorney, Law Offices of Thomas J. Awen; NAACP
Brian Peters Housing Policy Advocate, Independence*First*
Yolanda Santos Adams Director, League of United Latin American Citizens
Theresa Schuerman Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach
Willie Wade Alderman, City of Milwaukee

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Nancy M. Anderson Chief Community Assistance Planner, SEWRPC
Dennis Grzezinski Midwest Environmental Advocates
Gary K. Korb Regional Planning Educator, UW-Extension/SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKay Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker Attorney, ACLU of Wisconsin
Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:05 p.m., welcoming those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2010, AND NOVEMBER 4, 2010

Ms. Greene noted that not enough Task Force members were present at this time to constitute a quorum and noted that two additional Task Force members were expected to attend. She suggested that this agenda item be moved to later in the meeting when enough Task Force members would be present to constitute a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene asked if there were any public comments on the agenda or other Task Force business. There were none.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN – CHAPTER IX, ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Ms. Greene asked Ben McKay of the Commission staff to provide the Task Force with an update on Chapter IX, *Accessible Housing*, of the regional housing plan, which was distributed to Task Force members at the meeting. Mr. McKay asked the Task Force to turn their attention to the PowerPoint presentation entitled *Overview of Chapter IX, Accessible Housing, of the SEWRPC Regional Housing Plan* (see Attachment 1). The following discussion points and comments were made regarding the update on the regional housing plan:

1. Ms. Holmlund noted that the Federal and State laws requiring accessible housing described in the presentation have been applicable for some time and asked if the standards are enforced. Ms. Anderson responded that various Federal agencies have oversight regarding Federal laws. For example, the U.S. Department of Justice generally has oversight of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) generally has oversight of the Federal Fair Housing Act. Mr. Peters stated that enforcement is often reactive, such as when an individual files a complaint, and a newly constructed unit that is non-compliant may not appear to have any problems if it is not occupied by a person who needs access to particular features. Ms. Holmlund stated that the public assumes there is oversight of the laws requiring accessible housing, but that may not always be the case. Mr. Wade noted that from the standpoint of the City of Milwaukee Department of Community Development, the City should ensure projects adhere to applicable accessibility requirements during the development and review process. Mr. Peters stated that personnel must be properly trained to ensure adherence.
2. Mr. Peters noted that the Federal Fair Housing Act requires an accessible exterior path of travel in addition to accessible building entrances and interior routes to units. He also noted that accessibility can be more complex than meeting the needs of persons with mobility disabilities. He noted that, for example, buzzer access systems do not work for persons with hearing difficulty.
3. Mr. Peters noted that urban areas typically have a higher concentration of persons with disabilities because of the availability of public transit and other services. He noted that areas with high concentrations of persons experiencing poverty often overlap areas that have a high concentration of persons with disabilities because of the connections between poverty, health, and disabilities.
4. Ms. Holmlund noted that Racine County has experienced less multi-family residential development than other areas of the Region between 1990 and 2000. Mr. Peters noted that Racine has a large number of community living facilities, which may provide an alternative to multi-family housing with accessible units.
5. Ms. Dunbar asked if there are any requirements for retrofitting multi-family units to provide accessibility in housing constructed prior to 1991. Mr. Peters noted that laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act do not apply to landlords that allow housing vouchers. Mr. McKay noted that Section 504 accessibility requirements do apply to units constructed prior to 1991 if they are significantly altered or remodeled.

6. Ms. Schuerman asked if homeless shelters have been addressed as part of the *Accessible Housing* chapter. Mr. McKay responded that homeless shelters will be addressed as part of the *Subsidized Housing* chapter.
7. Mr. Peters stated that the slide title reading *Supply of Accessible Housing Stock* on page 14 of the PowerPoint presentation is potentially misleading. He noted that the map shown on the slide is of community and assisted living facilities and the slide title could make it seem like community and assisted living facilities are the only types of accessible housing stock. He also noted that adult family homes are not necessarily accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. Mr. Yunker suggested that the slide title be changed to the title of the map shown on the slide, *Community and Assisted Living Facilities in the Southeastern Wisconsin Region: 2010*.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2010, AND NOVEMBER 4, 2010

Ms. Greene noted that additional Task Force members had arrived and there were enough members present to constitute a quorum. Ms. Greene asked if there were any questions or comments on the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes. Mr. Yunker noted that revisions in response to comments from Ms. Rotker of the ACLU were underlined on pages 7 and 8 of the meeting minutes. He then suggested that the word “diversion” be inserted into the revision on page 8 so it would read “Mr. Yunker reminded the Task Force of Mr. Rast’s comment at the July 8, 2010, EJTF meeting that the science indicating that groundwater supplies are of adequate quantity and quality would make it difficult for the City of Waukesha’s diversion application to be approved.” Ms. Rotker stated that she agreed with the revisions to the meeting minutes as they relate to her comments.

Mr. Peters noted Professor Rast of the UWM Center for Economic Development (CED) had written a letter to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in response to an article titled, *Commission Report Backs Waukesha Lake Water Bid*. Mr. Peters noted that the letter was not published by the paper and asked that the letter be acknowledged because Mr. Rast’s comments are important as they relate to an accurate description of the Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of the Regional Water Supply Plan. Mr. Yunker stated that staff was unaware of the letter and suggested attaching the letter to the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes if Task Force members were in agreement (see Attachment 2, which will also be added as Attachment 5 to the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes). Ms. Santos Adams suggested that the letter be distributed to Task Force members in attendance for their review. Ms. Rotker provided copies of the letter to Task Force members. The Task Force unanimously agreed to attach the letter to the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes. Hearing no other comments, Ms. Greene asked for motion to approve the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes as amended with the attachment. Ms. Santos Adams made a motion to approve the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes as amended with the attachment. Ms. Holmlund seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the September 2, 2010, meeting minutes were approved unanimously by the Task Force.

Ms. Greene asked if there were any questions or comments on the November 4, 2010, Task Force meeting minutes. Hearing no comments, Ms. Greene asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Peters made a motion to approve the November 4, 2010, meeting minutes. Ms. Dunbar seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the November 4, 2010, meeting minutes were approved unanimously by the Task Force.

DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ms. Greene asked Steve Adams of the Commission staff to review the Commission's public outreach efforts. Mr. Adams asked the Task Force to turn their attention to the handout titled *Public Involvement and Outreach Division Update on Primary Organizational Contacts* (see Attachment 3). He explained that the list contains 22 of the 90 organizations that SEWRPC regularly sends outreach materials to, such as the letter that is scheduled to be distributed that provides an update on the regional housing plan and transportation planning efforts. The 22 organizations are regarded as key to an intensified level of participation and have shown the most interest in the Commission's efforts. The Public Involvement and Outreach Division is attempting to deepen the Commission's relationship with these organizations. Mr. Adams continued by explaining the outreach efforts and discussions that Public Involvement and Outreach Division staff has had using illustrative examples from among the organizations. The following discussion points and comments were made regarding the Commission's public involvement and outreach efforts:

1. Mr. Wade asked if the Commission's contact with the NAACP was prior to the recent Association election. Mr. Adams responded that Commission staff has had contact with the Milwaukee Chapter leadership prior to the election and after the election. Mr. Wade asked if Commission staff has had a meeting with the new NAACP leadership. Mr. Adams responded that preliminary contact has been made and that Commission staff anticipates scheduling a meeting.
2. Ms. Santos Adams asked if United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS) had been contacted by Commission staff. Mr. Adams responded that Commission staff has been in contact with UMOS and that UMOS can be added to the list of primary organizations. Ms. Santos Adams also suggested adding the League of United Latin American Citizens, which she represents as a Task Force member, to the primary organization list.
3. Mr. Wade asked if Commission staff has been in contact with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (HCC), which serves the Region, primarily in the Greater Milwaukee Area. Mr. Adams responded that Commission staff has been in contact with the HCC as part of its work with the organizations in the Walker's Square Neighborhood in the City of Milwaukee. Mr. Adams indicated that staff also works with the Hispanic Roundtable of Racine and Kenosha, which serves the Latino communities in the Racine and Kenosha areas. Mr. Wade encouraged further efforts to expand SEWRPC's relationship with the HCC because of their knowledge and experience.
4. Ms. Holmlund noted that the United Way is a good organization to partner with concerning public outreach efforts. Mr. Wade asked if Commission staff works with Goodwill. Mr. Korb responded that Goodwill is one of the 90 organizations that receive outreach materials and attempts have been made, which will continue, to personally sit down with Goodwill representatives to discuss future collaboration. He then noted that the primary list of 22 organizations includes organizations that have shown the most interest in the Commission's materials and outreach efforts. He stated that a smaller "partner" list of the most intensively involved organizations may be developed as well; however, all 90 of the organizations will continue to receive outreach materials. In addition, those that the Commission works with may be somewhat fluid over time depending on planning efforts undertaken and organizational interest. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission's contact list of 90 low-income, minority, and central city organizations and the suggested primary contact list of organizations will all continue

to receive materials and meeting invitations. Organizations can be added to each of the respective lists, with suggestions always welcome.

5. Ms. Dunbar suggested adding the Hmong American Friendship Association and Native American organizations such as Southeastern Oneida Tribal Services to the primary contact list. Mr. Adams responded that these organizations will be approached about being added. Ms. Schuerman asked if area literacy councils have been contacted by Commission staff. Mr. Adams responded that staff has not contacted them to date, but could in the future.

Following the discussion regarding the Commission's public involvement and outreach efforts, Ms. Greene asked Mr. Adams to discuss efforts to create simplified communication pieces for key audiences. Mr. Adams stated that Public Involvement and Outreach staff is continuing to work on improving communication pieces intended to explain complex planning efforts. Mr. Yunker suggested that staff develop a short, simplified communication piece regarding the regional housing plan for the next Task Force meeting. He suggested that it should not have a lot of information and it should be designed to attract people's interest and guide them to other sources of information such as the SEWRPC website. The following discussion points and comments were made regarding simplified communication pieces:

1. Ms. Schuerman suggested that some pieces could draw interest using a comic book style with more pictures. Mr. Peters suggested using bite-sized pieces of information, such as those found in a blogging format, to discuss specific aspects of a study. Ms. Santos Adams noted that the Interstate 94 construction updates provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on Facebook, which are about a paragraph long, would be a good example. Mr. Yunker suggested that an e-mail update using this format could also be explored.
2. Ms. McNeely stated that the summary brochure for the Milwaukee County Transit Development Plan does not have an interesting format. Mr. Yunker suggested that a paragraph sized e-mail could be developed to get people interested in looking at a piece with more detail, such as a brochure or website. Ms. McNeely suggested that the focus of outreach materials should be on motivating people from target audiences to seek further education regarding the subjects. Mr. Korb noted that a "living room" meeting format that featured maps and pictures was used at Repairers of the Breach to get input from the homeless community during preparation of the Milwaukee County Transit Development Plan. Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff has also participated in panel discussions and Community Brainstorming events, as well as recent transit-related events held by the Urban Economic Development Association. Ms. Holmlund noted that she has attended other SEWRPC informational meetings where too much information was presented. She suggested developing a simple handout that would spark interest and discussion at the meetings.
3. Ms. McNeely stated that marketing is important. Ms. Dunbar suggested marketing vendors could be used in African American, Latino, and Hmong communities to assist with SEWRPC's outreach efforts. She also suggested that SEWRPC use community newspapers in public outreach efforts. Mr. Adams responded that the Commission currently uses community newspapers to announce meetings; however, the relationship could be expanded. Mr. Yunker suggested that newspaper articles accompanying the meeting announcements may help to increase public interest. He suggested that the short, simplified study brochure be provided to Task Force members via e-mail prior to the next Task Force meeting.

4. Ms. Rotker stated from the audience that SEWRPC public outreach and communication pieces should be framed in a manner that gets the public to think about why they should care about the subject. She suggested using questions intended to solicit input.
5. Ms. Schuerman suggested that local schools with digital graphics programs may have students willing to produce illustrations for communication pieces as projects at no charge. Ms. McNeely asked if the budget constrains SEWRPC's public outreach options. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission has operated with a flat budget for several years and cost is always a difficulty; however, there have been many suggestions that staff can pursue.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Yunker to provide the Task Force with an update on transportation planning projects. Mr. Yunker asked the Task Force to turn their attention to the PowerPoint presentation titled *Transportation Update* (see Attachment 4). Mr. Yunker reviewed:

- Public transit local dedicated funding
- Short-range transit development plans
- Project updates – KRM, Milwaukee Streetcar, and bus rapid transit
- Transportation Improvement Program

The following discussion points and comments were made regarding the transportation update:

1. Mr. Peters suggested that Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) service could be improved by providing information about waiting times at bus stops through technologies such as a mobile phone application that provides information about where buses are in their routes. He stated that he thinks this technology is currently used in some cities. Mr. Yunker stated he has heard of a similar technology used in some cities and that some transit systems provide wait time information at bus stops.
2. Ms. Holmlund asked about the status of the KRM project under the new Governor and whether the Governor supports the project. Mr. Yunker responded that the Governor supported the project prior to his campaign; however, during the campaign he expressed concern about the project, as he believed the plan to fund the KRM with a car rental tax would be inadequate and would eventually have to be replaced by a sales tax. Mr. Yunker noted that the Governor's position regarding KRM was detailed in a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article that could be attached to the meeting minutes (see Attachment 5). Mr. Yunker also noted that some KRM Board members questioned whether the project should move forward without there first being dedicated funding for local transit systems. Mr. Peters noted there may be turnover on the KRM Board.
3. Mr. Wade noted that the MCTS suffers from a perception problem during the discussion of public transit expenditures. He noted that the perception is that there is not enough security on County buses and juveniles and persons with mental health disabilities are not supervised. Mr. Yunker noted that transit officials have statistics that show traveling on MCTS buses is safe; however, they have observed the safety perception problem. Mr. Wade stated that, generally, people fall victim to a crime due to domestic violence or if they are involved with gangs or drugs. The risk of falling victim to a crime is very limited outside of these factors. He noted the example of the Parklawn housing project located in his aldermanic district. The public's perception of housing

projects is that they are typically dangerous places; however, Parklawn is not in the news for crime and his office does not receive problem calls from Parklawn.

4. Ms. Holmlund noted the misperception that many people have regarding the costs of highways during the discussion of arterial highway and public transit expenditures. She noted that many people assume that highways are not subsidized and take the position that public transit receives too much government funding and should pay for itself.
5. Ms. McNeely stated that the Milwaukee Streetcar would be nice to have; however, the proposed route serving Downtown and the Lower Eastside does not seem very functional, particularly with the struggling economy. Mr. Yunker responded that there is a larger vision for the system that would eventually serve other parts of Milwaukee. He noted that a smaller, starter line is typically required to build a larger system. Often the starter line is implemented in an area with intense transit use where the greatest potential ridership exists. He also noted that it was important for the starter line construction cost to be covered using existing funds available to the City of Milwaukee and that many communities struggle with the location of a starter line. Ms. Holmlund stated that such projects should be mentioned as part of a larger plan in order to generate public support.
6. Mr. Peters noted that the streetcar system and other forms of public transit should be supported in response to the struggling economy because they provide transportation for people to jobs. He also stated that persons who would not use transit but drive should support transit because additional transportation options can reduce the number of drivers on the road. Mr. Wade noted that the streetcar system has an economic development value. He noted that streetcar systems have been catalysts for development in other communities, and the Milwaukee system may encourage development in Downtown Milwaukee.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Greene thanked the Task Force and audience members for their active participation. She then asked whether those in attendance had any additional comments. The following comments were made:

1. Ms. Rotker requested that the letter Professor Rast sent to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel regarding the Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of the Regional Water Supply Plan be made part of the Regional Water Supply Plan record, and not just an attachment to the Task Force minutes. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff would examine what could be done; however, the Advisory Committee had already completed its work and plan reports and other documents have been published.
2. Ms. Rotker made a number of comments regarding page 28 of the transportation update PowerPoint, which compared public transit and arterial street and highway expenditures in the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the percent of work trips made by minority populations by public transit and by automobile. Ms. Rotker asked if the transit expenditures reflected anticipated Milwaukee County budget expenditures based on property tax funding or the increased expenditures based on proposed dedicated sales tax funding. Mr. Yunker responded that the transit expenditures reflect property tax funding. Ms. Rotker noted data was presented on minority population use of public transit for work travel, and asked that data also be provided for travel other than for work purposes. She also noted that while minority populations may use the automobile more than public transit for travel, minority populations

represent a disproportionate number of public transit riders, and asked that this information be provided. Lastly, she noted that the regional transportation plan had recommended that both public transit and arterial street and highway plan elements proceed to implementation, and asked for information on transportation plan implementation since the plan had been completed in 2006. Mr. Yunker indicated the information would be added to Appendix G of the TIP (see Attachment 6).

3. Ms. McNeely stated that she had remaining concerns with the Milwaukee Streetcar system because it seems as though it serves the elite population of the City and not the population that needs public transit service the most. Mr. Yunker reiterated that the current streetcar project is intended to be a starter line that will lead to a more extensive system that will serve larger areas of the City (see Attachment 7 for potential route extensions). Mr. Wade noted that larger systems that are successful and serve large segments of the population in other communities were expanded from starter lines. Mr. Yunker noted that stimulus funds were applied for to accomplish detailed planning for a larger starter streetcar line, but that funding was not awarded.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Greene noted that the next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2011, at Independence *First*.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene declared the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin R. McKay
Recording Secretary

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