

Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: May 12, 2011
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: IndependenceFirst
540 South 1st Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Nancy Holmlund..... President, WISDOM Interfaith Coalition
Vice Chair
Brian Peters..... Housing Policy Advocate, IndependenceFirst
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach

Guests and Staff Present

Stephen P. Adams..... Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
Nancy M. Anderson..... Chief Community Assistance Planner, SEWRPC
Gary K. Korb..... Regional Planning Educator, UW-Extension/SEWRPC
Catherine Madison..... Policy Analyst, UWM Center for Economic Development
Benjamin R. McKay..... Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Karyn Rotker..... Attorney, ACLU of Wisconsin
Kori A. Schneider-Peragine..... Senior Administrator, Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
Kenneth R. Yunker..... Executive Director, SEWRPC

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Holmlund called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:10 p.m., welcoming those in attendance. Attendees introduced themselves, both at the meeting outset and thereafter when addressing the group, for the benefit of Ms. Schuerman who was participating via teleconference.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, AND MARCH 3, 2011

Ms. Holmlund stated that not enough Task Force members were present at this time to constitute a quorum and noted that additional Task Force members may be expected to attend. She suggested that this agenda item be moved to later in the meeting should enough Task Force members join to constitute a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Holmlund asked if there were any public comments on the agenda or other Task Force business. The following public comments were made:

1. Ms. Rotker indicated that she would not be able to stay until the end of the meeting, thus she wished to make a number of comments. First, regarding new maps showing concentrations of minority populations in the Region, Ms. Rotker stated that she would like the Commission to map the white non-Hispanic population in concert with maps identifying densities of minority populations. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission would prepare a map showing the concentrations of the white, non-Hispanic population in the Region and a map showing the distribution of all races (see last two maps in Attachment 1).
2. Ms. Rotker stated that she would like to direct a number of comments toward Appendix H, "Evaluation of the Impacts of the Recommended Year 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeastern Wisconsin." In regard to public transit, Ms. Rotker stated a desire to have included not just information on work commutes, but also information on other trip purposes and on populations which are transit-dependent, disaggregated by race. Ms. Rotker stated that she would like to see analysis of a projection of public transit system service and use, assuming that the present trend in transit system funding shortfalls would continue. She further stated that it was disingenuous to look at a proposed 2035 plan without including the present outlook on public transit system funding and the impact that it would have on minority and low-income populations.

Mr. Yunker noted that Appendix H was from the year 2035 plan which was completed in 2006. The evaluation documented in the Appendix assesses the projected impacts on minority and low-income populations of implementing that plan as foreseen in looking ahead from the time it was written. By providing Appendix H to the Task Force at today's meeting, and on March 3, 2011, the intent was to initiate a very early discussion—before the year 2045 planning process begins in earnest—regarding assessments of potential minority and low-income population impacts that would appear helpful and should be continued, as well as assessments that perhaps should be added, revised, or removed from the evaluation.

3. Regarding the regional housing plan chapter on the regional economy, Ms. Rotker stated that the chapter should include both employment and unemployment data, and the data should be provided by race and ethnicity. Mr. McKay stated that unemployment data in Chapter VII of the regional housing plan under preparation, notably Table VII-25, may help address the related comment by Ms. Rotker. Mr. Peters stated that he would like included in descriptions of regional unemployment an estimate of those people who have simply given up looking for work. Ms. Madison stated that the UW-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development had such data available and would provide the information, including a reflection of the alternative or expanded measures of unemployment developed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (see Attachment 2 for changes made to Part 2: Economic Characteristics of Chapter VII of the Regional Housing Plan).
4. Ms. Rotker stated that the public transit situation has reached the point of crisis. She suggested the development of a short informational piece soon which would emphasize the disproportionate impacts on the poor and people of color. Ms. Rotker suggested that information should be developed using a figure from the regional transportation plan which shows the plan-proposed expansion of public transit service. The figure should contrast the planned service expansion with the trend which shows the service reductions since 2006 and the potential reductions under the new 2011-2013 State budget. She suggested that a similar figure could be developed for highway capacity expansion. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff has conducted analyses to estimate the amount of transit service reductions and fare increases in the year 2012

that may result from the proposed State transit assistance reductions, information which the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors Committee on Transportation, Public Works and Transit, and the County Executive have used; and the Commission staff has also analyzed the source of state funding for transit systems of sizes similar to Milwaukee County and which receive significant funding as does Milwaukee County (see Attachment 3). Mr. Yunker noted that Commission staff had worked with Milwaukee County staff and elected officials to provide this information to State legislators. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission will continue to monitor the situation and will work with transit operators to provide information to them to meet their requests, and will also prepare the information requested by Ms. Rotker (see Attachment 4).

5. Ms. Holmlund thanked attendees for the discussion, indicating that the minutes will be used to update those unable to participate in the meeting. She thanked Commission staff for preparation of the minutes in a way that proves valuable in refreshing memories and establishing a common understanding of discussion that has occurred. Ms. Holmlund suggested, with Task Force concurrence, that the staff presenters proceed to agenda items number six and number seven, so that the update on the regional housing plan under agenda item number four might be heard by any late-arriving members.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE YEAR 2045 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANNING PROCESS

Ms. Holmlund asked Ken Yunker of the Commission staff to provide the Task Force with background information on upcoming regional transportation system planning particularly with regard to potential impacts on minority and low-income populations. Mr. Yunker asked the Task Force to turn their attention to Appendix H of the Year 2035 regional transportation system plan titled, "*Evaluation of the Impacts of the Recommended Year 2035 Regional Transportation System Plan on Minority and Low-Income Populations in Southeastern Wisconsin*," which was distributed at the meeting. Mr. Yunker indicated that a website link to this evaluation had been provided to Task Force members and interested parties before this meeting, and the March 3, 2011, meeting, because the document file size was too large to permit emailing. Task Force members unable to attend the March 3rd meeting were provided with a copy of the Appendix via U.S. Mail.

Mr. Yunker reviewed the next generation of planning which is getting underway. He stated that, with new U.S. Census data becoming available, the Commission is beginning its work on population and employment forecasts for the Region. These steps, as well as monitoring recent land development and conducting household surveys and other travel inventories, will help initiate a new round of regional land use and transportation system planning which should be concluded around 2015. Regional population patterns, land use changes, and transportation system use, among other items, are to be examined in looking ahead to plans that will extend to the year 2045. Before this process begins in earnest, the Commission would like to initiate discussion regarding the evaluation of impacts of the regional transportation plan on minority and low-income populations, as seen in Appendix H of the Year 2035 transportation plan. This evaluation of impacts shows what was assessed last time, as a starting point for the Task Force in letting the Commission know what would be important factors to consider. Mr. Yunker acknowledged the earlier comments by Ms. Rotker in that regard, and invited further comments from the Task Force, if any. He stated that, at a future Task Force meeting, a PowerPoint handout would be used to help examine the planning process and its evaluation in greater detail. The following comments and discussion points were made:

1. Ms. Holmlund stated that she had seen a You-Tube video related to the development of a successful public transit system in Portland, OR, which she hoped the Commission would be able to either distribute or identify the means by which Task Force members could obtain access. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission would be happy to distribute the video or access procedures if provided with the information.
2. Ms. Holmlund stated, with reference to Appendix H of the 2035 regional transportation plan, that the Task Force could consider review of the Appendix as a sort of “homework” assignment. She encouraged members to come to a future meeting prepared to identify assessment measures that would be appropriate to continue, those measures recommended to be added, and perhaps measures recommended for discontinuation.

UPDATE ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ms. Holmlund asked Steve Adams of the Commission staff to provide an update regarding the Commission’s public involvement and outreach efforts. Mr. Adams asked the Task Force to turn their attention to two handouts: a brochure titled, “*Planning for Housing in Southeastern Wisconsin,*” and a one-page flyer by the same title (see Attachments 5 and 6, respectively). He also referenced the Spanish language version of the brochure, which had been distributed, and noted that a Spanish language version of the one-page flyer was in production. Mr. Adams stated that the Commission staff had reviewed prior Task Force suggestions which encouraged a shorter, more visually appealing summary product for the regional housing plan and assembled the draft brochure for consideration at the March 3, 2011, Task Force meeting. While the final product was reviewed in its Spanish language version by Ms. Schuerman of the Task Force, she asked whether it would be possible to produce a further simplified outreach product on one page (resulting in Attachment 6). Mr. Adams thanked Ms. Schuerman for her review of the Spanish translation brochure and for her suggestion regarding the one-page flyer, which contains similar but culled text. He thanked the Task Force for prior comments recommending a simpler approach for outreach publications. Mr. Adams asked whether there were any questions or comments on the two handouts. The following discussion points and comments were made:

1. Ms. Holmlund asked where the brochure and one-page flyer were going to be used. Mr. Adams stated that the products would be used for general contact purposes, including with the Commission’s public involvement and outreach contacts.
2. Ms. Schuerman stated that the discussion regarding public transit funding problems may make a good topic for a simplified handout. Ms. Holmlund stated that environmental justice group members may be in a position to get the message out along with comments favoring sustained or increased funding for public transit, since SEWRPC is an advisory agency without a lobbying role.
3. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff is continuing to work with public transit operators on the funding and related service issue. He stated that numerous presentations have been given regarding the present transit funding crisis, and that a related PowerPoint could be posted on the Commission’s website. Regarding the nature of outreach publications, Mr. Yunker thanked Task Force members for their past comments and indicated that, based upon responses, the Commission would use a brief summary approach to brochures as a template for future such efforts.

4. Ms. Madison stated that the UW-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development was working with the Milwaukee County Transit System to update data and findings relative to the topic of jobs no longer connected by transit.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN – CHAPTER VII, DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS – AND NEW MAPS OF MINORITY POPULATIONS IN THE REGION UTILIZING 2010 CENSUS DATA

Ms. Holmlund asked Ben McKay of the Commission staff to provide the Task Force with an update on Chapter VII, *Demographic and Economic Characteristics*, of the regional housing plan, which was distributed to Task Force members at the meeting. Mr. McKay stated a preference to jointly address the next agenda item pertaining to new maps of minority populations in the Region utilizing 2010 Census data, and Ms. Holmlund concurred, given that the new maps are part of the regional housing plan and contained within his overview presentation. A separate handout of the maps in a page-sized version was distributed to meeting attendees. Mr. McKay asked the Task Force members to turn their attention to the PowerPoint handout entitled *Overview of Chapter VII, “Demographic and Economic Characteristics”* (see Attachment 7). The following discussion points and comments were made regarding the update on the regional housing plan:

1. Mr. Peters stated that concentration of the Region’s African American population appeared to be within the regional housing plan’s housing analysis areas 13 and 14 based on the map on page 6 of the PowerPoint handout, rather than in the entire City of Milwaukee. Ms. Anderson stated that the text on the slide was incorrect, and that over 60 percent of areas 13 and 14 are African American. Overall, 40 percent of residents in the City of Milwaukee in 2010 were African American.
2. Mr. Peters observed that the same color scheme, but different population density numbers, were used for different minority groups in the sequence of maps identifying population concentrations. He stated that this may be confusing when the maps are viewed side-by-side. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff would review the color scheme and population density categories to see whether clearer portrayal of the information would be possible (see Attachment 1).
3. Ms. Holmlund stated that she was puzzled by the mapped inclusions of minority person concentrations in areas considered outlying relative to urban centers. Ms. Anderson noted that these concentrations reflect the location of correctional facilities. Mr. McKay stated that U.S. Census blocks were the determinant of mapped concentrations for all population groups, and incarcerated persons are counted at the respective correctional facilities where they reside. Brian Peters suggested that an icon or symbol tied to a footnote may be a good way to explain why certain minority person concentrations exist in outlying areas, such as at the correctional institutions. Mr. McKay stated that there is a note beneath the map legend, but it may be overlooked. Ms. Anderson suggested that difficult to understand population concentrations on the relevant maps could be represented by an asterisk to more clearly tie the color-coding of those Census blocks to the map notes (see Attachment 1).
4. Ms. Schuerman asked if migrant worker housing was represented on the maps. She referred staff to an Ozaukee County examination which had been conducted on migrant housing. Mr. McKay stated that information regarding migrant housing would be obtained and a discussion included in the job/housing balance chapter (Chapter VIII) of the regional housing plan.

5. Mr. Peters asked whether one-person households were considered a family in the analyses of household characteristics. Mr. McKay stated that they were not. Mr. Peters continued, stating that the 34 percent of households identified as being non-family households on p. 12 of the handout then appeared to be too low a proportion when considering type of households as of 2010. The reason was that, under household sizes, 30 percent are already comprised of households of only one person—which would mean that an implausibly small portion of the remaining 70 percent of households containing more than one person would then be classified as non-family households. Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff would reexamine the population data and make any necessary updates (see Attachment 8).
6. Mr. Peters stated that the median household income graphically portrayed on p. 14 of the handout regarding household characteristics appeared to show a very large area in the highest income category of greater than \$70,000 annually. Mr. McKay responded that another category would be added to depict annual household incomes greater than \$85,000 (see Attachment 9).
7. Ms. Holmlund asked why the unemployment rate for Kenosha County would be as high as the 10.5 percent listed on p. 18 of the handout. Mr. McKay responded that the high unemployment rate may be due to the effects of the Chrysler Corporation and/or other large employers closing manufacturing plants. Mr. Yunker stated that the effects could also be due to the effects of Lake County, IL employers, whose employees live in Kenosha County and commute.
8. Mr. Peters, referring to p. 21 of the handout, noted that it indicated that there was only a 15 percent increase in the number of jobs in the Region from 1950 to 2000, while he recalled that population increased a much greater percent over the same period. Mr. Yunker stated that the timeframe shown for the 15 percent increase in number of jobs should be 1990-2000 rather than 1950-2000. Regional job growth between 1950 and 2000 was 113 percent.
9. Mr. McKay thanked the Task Force for its comments, noting that EJTF contributions are reviewed by the Regional Housing Plan Advisory Committee. He reminded attendees that the next meeting of the housing committee would be Wednesday, May 25th, 1:30 p.m., at the Tommy Thompson Youth Center located at the northwest corner of the Wisconsin State Fair grounds.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Holmlund stated that the next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for Thursday, July 14, 2011, at Independence^{First}. Because a quorum had not been reached today, Ms. Holmlund asked that approval of past meeting minutes be attempted via email.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Holmlund thanked the Task Force members for their active participation. She then asked whether the Task Force or attendees in the audience had any further comments.

1. Mr. Peters noted that two statewide conferences relevant to the regional housing plan would be held sequentially during the month of July, both in the City of Stevens Point. The 2011 Wisconsin Conference on Homelessness is scheduled for July 26, and the Fifteen Years—One Goal: A Home for Everyone 2011 conference is scheduled for July 27-28, 2011.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Holmlund declared the meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary K. Korb

Recording Secretary

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