

Minutes of the Twenty Second Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: December 13, 2011
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Independence*First*
540 South 1st Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Members Present

Adelene Greene..... Director, Division of Workforce Development, Kenosha County,
Chair and Commission Secretary, SEWRPC
Yolanda Adams.....President and CEO, Urban League of Racine and Kenosha
Ella Dunbar..... Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee
Lynnette McNeelyLegal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Brian Peters..... Housing Policy Advocate, Independence*First*
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
Gary K. Korb Regional Planning Educator, UW-Extension/SEWRPC
Benjamin R. McKayPrincipal Planner, SEWRPC
Cathie Madden..... Vice Chair, City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board
Marcus Smith..... Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Rose Stietz Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Greene called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force to order at 4:10 p.m., welcoming those in attendance. Ms. Greene asked those attending at Independence*First* to introduce themselves at this time, and upon speaking during the meeting, for the benefit of Ms. Schuerman who was attending via teleconference.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2011, MARCH 3, 2011, MAY 12, 2011,
AND SEPTEMBER 22, 2011**

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

PRESENTATION REGARDING A SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN HOUSING TRUST FUND AS PROPOSED BY THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE HOUSING TRUST FUND

Ms. Greene thanked Mr. Wade for suggesting a presentation to the Task Force on a proposed regional housing trust fund, particularly in light of discussions the Task Force had engaged in relative to preparation of the regional housing plan. Ms. Greene then asked Ms. Cathie Madden, Vice Chair of the City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund, to brief Task Force members on a proposed Southeastern Wisconsin Housing Trust Fund. Initially, the regional trust fund would combine the Housing Trust Fund of the City of Milwaukee with the Milwaukee County Special Needs Trust Fund to form a Housing Trust Fund of Southeastern Wisconsin (HTF-SW). The HTF-SW could eventually be expanded to include other counties and communities in the Region. Ms. Madden voiced appreciation for the opportunity to present on the topic, and noted that a regional housing trust fund, if realized, would be the first of its kind in the United States. She referred attendees to the PowerPoint presentation and handout entitled, *“Sustaining and Expanding Affordable Housing: Housing Trust Fund of Southeastern Wisconsin”* (see Attachment 1).

The following discussion points and comments were made by Task Force members in response to the presentation:

1. Ms. McNeely asked whether financial assistance prospectively available through the HTF-SW for eligible developments would be in addition to other forms of financial assistance. Ms. Madden responded that the answer was often yes, in that the trust fund would be government sponsored, as a gap-filling source of assistance. Ms. Madden also indicated that the benefits may include monetary assistance not having to be paid back and/or lower interest rates than typically available from a bank. Ms. McNeely asked whether there would be criteria limiting housing trust fund usage. Ms. Madden stated that points may be scored by a proposed project depending upon the composition of jobs provided, the type of housing provided, and objectives of the trust fund.
2. Mr. Peters asked whether there would be an ability to change housing trust fund scoring on an annual basis. Ms. Madden stated that, indeed, scoring could be weighted toward what is most needed in terms of housing.
3. Ms. Dunbar asked whether there was any oversight of housing trust fund projects to ensure that recommendations or conditions regarding use would be followed. Ms. Madden stated that the City of Milwaukee conducts oversight using its Community Development Block Grant Office. The proposed merger of trust funds of the City and Milwaukee County, if implemented, would follow current procedures of the City’s housing trust fund for project review, scoring, and administration.
4. Mr. Peters stated that the Milwaukee County Special Needs Housing Trust Fund has an emphasis on meeting the needs of those experiencing mental illness or homelessness for county housing trust fund projects, but may adjust the emphasis. Ms. Madden stated her belief that all trust fund projects in the County are for special needs and are located in the City of Milwaukee; and Mr.

McKay confirmed that as being correct. Mr. Peters added that the past year also emphasized a “bricks and mortar” focus, but housing trust fund activities could be broadened to include housing counseling in the future. Ms. Madden noted that the initial focus on buildings was needed at first to demonstrate the benefits of trust fund efforts.

5. Referring to photos shown on page 3 of Attachment 1, Ms. McNeely observed that some of the affordable housing depicted appeared to be of a mixed use nature. She asked whether that was correct, and thus permissible under housing trust fund assistance. Ms. Madden stated that such projects may be permissible, but the commercial uses would represent only a portion of the development dollars relative to residential uses. Ms. Madden added that, at times, the composition of uses can be stipulated for a given project. Mixed use, she continued, may actually be desired under certain circumstances and can help offset some development costs. Mr. Peters stated that he was familiar with a Villard Square project containing housing units above and a public library below.
6. Ms. Madden stated that the City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund had not done much in the area of workforce housing, but was hoping to coordinate in a regional approach to this issue in the future. Ms. Madden cited an example of BuySeasons, Inc., in the City of New Berlin, where people were being bused in to work, using the development’s own private transit. Mr. Wade stated that this development would more appropriately have been located in the Menomonee Valley area of Milwaukee, with accessible workforce housing available.
7. Ms. McNeely asked about the relationship between the housing trust fund and the impact on discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, given that legally there can be no discrimination against a population living in or seeking a particular type of housing. Ms. Madden stated that the housing emphasized by the trust fund may be related, for example, to the workforce, seniors, or families with young children, which would not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity. Mr. Wade noted another age-related housing example in Villard Square, which was designed to provide housing for grandparents caring for their grandchildren.
8. Ms. McNeely stated that a large proportion of single parents with young children are white women, which was confirmed by Ms. Madden to comprise a significant percent of this population sub-group in the City of Milwaukee. Ms. McNeely asked how race and ethnicity issues could then be mitigated if the housing trust fund was tied only to the criterion of low-income. Mr. Peters stated that on a policy basis, there could be a stop placed on building only senior affordable housing in the suburbs; tax incremental financing extensions for affordable housing could be used in certain communities; and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development could be utilized as a partner because of work on affirmatively furthering fair housing.
9. Ms. Dunbar asked what regional boundaries would be used for a Housing Trust Fund of Southeastern Wisconsin. Ms. Madden stated that a starting point would be to consolidate the housing trust funds of the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. Afterward, it would be hoped that the full region of seven counties would participate. Ms. Madden also stated that the topic of housing could not be separated from the topic of jobs.
10. Ms. McNeely stated that Milwaukee County seems so substantial from the standpoint of housing compared to surrounding counties, and she wondered how a regional housing trust fund could be made to work given that context. Ms. McNeely noted, for example, that if Milwaukee County

were putting more resources into the housing trust fund, then it would likely want to direct the fund including the establishment of priorities. Ms. McNeely indicated that could be difficult for surrounding counties to accept, just as it would be for Milwaukee County if a disproportionately large share of assisted housing projects were located in New Berlin, for example. Ms. Madden stated that perhaps a participating outlying county would effectively hire a portion of a regional housing trust fund staff person, and that the packaging of trust fund housing assistance could occur in a number of ways. Mr. Peters stated that he personally saw benefit to the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County, and that he perceived their interest in working for regional collaboration on this issue.

11. Ms. Dunbar stated that perhaps a regional housing trust fund could stipulate a low percentage of outside contractors to be used for trust fund projects, and a minimum percentage of minority contractors, which would benefit City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County participation.
12. Mr. Peters asked Mr. Korb whether SEWRPC could be looked to as a model for multiple funding sources contributing to the completion of projects, and involving a local funding share. Mr. Korb stated that the Commission's work largely is the preparation of regional infrastructure plans, not individual projects throughout the seven counties. The Commission's budget melds multiple funding sources—Federal, State, and local—as well as contracts for specific work projects. The local funding from each of the seven member counties is based upon the proportional total assessed value of real property in each county, as established by State law. Ms. Madden stated that establishing local funding for a regional housing trust fund may be difficult particularly as it would involve specific housing projects.
13. Ms. Adams asked whether what was being proposed for the Housing Trust Fund of Southeastern Wisconsin (HTF-SW) had been tested in other areas of the United States. Ms. Madden stated that it had not been undertaken on a regional basis. Ms. Madden stated that there needed to be a distinction made between collaboration and consolidation of efforts, the latter of which was being proposed for Southeastern Wisconsin. She drew a contrast with King County, Washington, for which their housing trust fund is just one tool within a collaborative program package. Ms. Madden stated that even with only a housing trust fund involved, consolidation would make it easier to create a stable funding stream targeted toward strategic goals.
14. Mr. Peters stated that he felt community groups should be part of the voting process for the HTF-SW, though he was pleased to have the current initiative.
15. Mr. Peters stated that he seemed to recall that the City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund was supposed to be funded in part through a portion of Potawatomi Casino profits, but that funding was not realized as envisioned.
16. Ms. Greene asked if there was any targeted timeframe for establishing the HTF-SW. Ms. Madden responded that she hoped for action merging housing trust funds of the City and County in 2012, and development of a memorandum of understanding thereafter. Mr. Wade stated that, assuming a resolution would come before the City of Milwaukee Community Development Block Grant or Zoning Committees, January 2012 would be the earliest possible time for consideration because of the approval cycle. Mr. Wade added that he sensed a desire to move forward, assuming that such a request was coming out of demonstrated need.

17. Mr. Wade stated that the climate may have changed in regard to the perceived acceptability of the HTF-SW proposal as the City of Milwaukee inches closer to a survival mode. Mr. Wade said he felt the City cannot handle and manage the needs of all the poor on behalf of the Region. Some of the suburbs want residential lots of one-and-one-half acres, which is not affordable. Ms. Madden said she expected that conversations regarding the HTF-SW would heat up, as potential crises have often helped to force discussion prior to action. As cautionary notes, she stated that the detractors may not understand all the facts, trust fund governance may become an issue related to who gets the money and who has oversight, regional housing is not part of the current culture, the perceived issue of race is huge, and misconceptions exist regarding low-income housing.
18. Ms. McNeely stated that the trust factor between urban and suburban areas has been non-existent at times, and that there was a need to respect strengths and weaknesses on both sides. She further stated that some people are relying upon and profiting by the negativism and separatism. Ms. Madden stated that perhaps the discussion has been broadening compared to the past, but that serious existing problems would require a serious solution.
19. Mr. Wade noted that many boards and committees in the City of Milwaukee on which he serves understand the problem and what needs to be done. He stated that others don't want Milwaukee in charge of the HTF-SW, but do want the City to provide the trust fund monies and want to utilize the City's resources in administration. Mr. Wade added that these others may, "want to bring \$1,000 to the table and make a million dollar decision." Ms. Madden stated that perhaps the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County Housing Trust Funds could join, add one more jurisdiction, and then have one successful project as a means of beginning to allay concerns.
20. Ms. McNeely stated that the Bradley Foundation has hundreds of millions of dollars in reserve, and asked if the proposed HTF-SW has positioned itself for approaching that foundation regarding support. Ms. Madden stated that the Bradley Foundation had not yet been approached, but the idea was a potentially good one.
21. Mr. Peters stated that he feels it is very important to have a clear and transparent process for moving forward with the HTF-SW.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2011, MARCH 3, 2011, MAY 12, 2011, AND SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Ms. Greene noted that a quorum of Task Force members was present, and thus asked for a motion of approval regarding past meeting minutes. Mr. Peters moved, and Mr. Wade seconded approval of the Environmental Justice Task Force minutes of January 6, March 3, May 12, and September 22, 2011, as they had been distributed. In discussion, Ms. Adams indicated that for future meeting minutes she should be listed as President and CEO of the Urban League of Racine and Kenosha. Ms. McNeely indicated that for future meeting minutes she should no longer be listed as affiliated with the Law Offices of Thomas J. Awen, and would provide a new affiliation to SEWRPC staff for today's meeting minutes. The motion on the floor regarding past meeting minutes of January through September 2011 was approved unanimously.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN – REVISED CHAPTER X, SUBSIDIZED AND TAX CREDIT HOUSING, CHAPTER XI, BEST HOUSING PRACTICES, AND REPORT ON PUBLIC MEETINGS

Ms. Greene asked Ben McKay of the Commission staff to provide the Task Force with an update on revised Chapter X, *Subsidized and Tax Credit Housing*, and Chapter XI, *Best Housing Practices*, of the regional housing plan, which were distributed to Task Force members at the meeting, as well as providing a report of the public meetings held throughout Southeastern Wisconsin from November 16 through December 7, 2011. Mr. McKay noted that the Task Force had reviewed Parts 1, 2, and 3 of Chapter X and a corresponding PowerPoint presentation entitled *Update on the Regional Housing Plan* during the last meeting; and a new Part 4 on homelessness was intended to be reviewed today. Because of time constraints associated with the remainder of the meeting, however, Mr. McKay indicated that Ms. Anderson would like to begin with the more time-sensitive report on public meetings.

Regarding the recently completed public meetings, Ms. Anderson stated that a total of nine meetings were held, three of which occurred in the City of Milwaukee. All public meetings were conducted in open house fashion, with handouts previously shared with the Task Force and display boards used to convey information. The November 30th public meeting, held in the Tommy Thompson Youth Center at State Fair Park, also included a formal public hearing with a court reporter available to formally record comments. A total of 65 persons attended the meetings, including several Housing Advisory Committee members and six SEWRPC Commissioners. The best attended meeting was at HeartLove Place on Milwaukee's near north side, with 12 participants. A total of 11 display advertisements were purchased in newspapers to help publicize the meetings, supplementing direct mailings to some 2,000 SEWRPC Newsletter recipients and 90 central city, minority, and low-income groups and organizations. The Commission staff was aware thus far of two newspaper articles regarding the public meetings published in response to a news release which was distributed, one article in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, and one article in the West Bend Daily News. Ms. Anderson concluded her report by thanking Mr. Peters for helping to make *IndependenceFirst* available to host one of the public meetings. The following discussion points and comments were made regarding the update:

1. Mr. Peters asked if the newspaper articles could be shared with Task Force members, because he had heard some negative comments related to housing in response to a story by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter, Laurel Walker. Specifically, Mr. Peters noted that he had heard inferences of "social engineering," regarding the needs identified for multi-family housing and smaller lots in the suburbs, thereby "trying to make all communities look the same." Mr. Peters also stated his feeling that many people did not support public housing assistance. Ms. Anderson stated that the newspaper articles would be shared, along with all comments and details such as those just provided in her oral report, as part of the summary documenting the public meetings. Ms. Anderson stated that an email link to this document would be provided to the Task Force, and a paper copy of the report would be sent to members upon request.
2. There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Korb thanked the Task Force for its prior review and suggestions regarding Chapter X of the regional housing plan, noting that requested changes from the September 22nd EJTF meeting had been incorporated. Mr. Korb stated that Part 4 of Chapter X, "Emergency Shelter Needs and Facilities," was the only part of the Chapter which was new; and Task Force members could feel free to contact Mr. McKay or any of the SEWRPC staff to share related questions or concerns over the coming weeks. Mr. McKay briefly referred the Task Force to changes which had been made to Chapter X, notably with respect to maps and map insets providing clarification and greater detail.

3. Ms. Greene stated that, due to the late hour, review of Part 4 of Chapter X and Chapter XI would be deferred to the next Task Force meeting.

DISCUSSION OF 2012 TASK FORCE MEETING ALTERNATIVES

Ms. Greene asked Mr. Adams to brief the Task Force on an idea for evaluating meeting alternatives with members. Mr. Adams stated that SEWRPC staff would like to meet with Task Force members individually to explore the preferred and most effective way(s) of working with the EJTF in going forward. He indicated that interviewing all members should allow time for individual discussion of needs and preferences, as well as an assessment of past effectiveness—what has worked well, and what could use improvement or redirection. Mr. Adams reminded the Task Force that topics such as modification of the meetings, alternative formats, agenda content, meeting frequency, and availability of refreshments had been discussed in the past. He proposed that Commission staff would work to develop survey questions to help address these matters. The following discussion points and comments were made by Task Force members:

1. Ms. McNeely stated that, given the time of day, having food available was appreciated and probably a good idea for future meetings.
2. Mr. Peters stated that Task Force members who have not been attending meetings should be replaced if their schedules do not permit participation.
3. Mr. Wade stated that when meetings have to be cancelled and then rescheduled, it can create difficulties for maintaining and updating calendars. He noted that it would be better to set the meeting schedule so that there would not have to be rescheduling.
4. Ms. Greene asked the Task Force whether March 2012 would be an appropriate time to schedule the next meeting, given at least some initial preference to resume a quarterly meeting schedule rather than meetings scheduled every other month. Ms. McNeely stated that she favored March for the next meeting, since the year-end holidays through the new-year typically create difficulties in trying to accomplish work and squeeze in other meetings and events. Mr. Wade stated that quarterly meetings may work, but reserving the addition of a meeting if appropriate for key issues or to accommodate review schedules could also become important. Mr. Peters agreed with the ability to add needed meetings, and asked whether 2012 could become a very busy year with completion of the regional housing plan and initiation of other efforts. Mr. Korb responded that the next generation of regional land use and transportation system planning would likely be starting in 2012, with the availability of significant inventory information including survey results. Ms. Adams stated that adding an extra half-hour to the meetings may be advisable if food is available, and especially so if the Task Force moves to a quarterly meeting schedule. She added that the Urban League of Racine and Kenosha offices would be open as a meeting location if the Task Force wishes. Ms. Greene suggested that March 2012 be targeted for the next Task Force meeting; and Ms. McNeely stated that during March a Tuesday rather than Thursday evening would be preferable for her.

FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

1. Ms. Stietz, with Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH), indicated that she had attended one of the public meetings for the regional housing plan. She stated that she has continuing concerns that the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has too few minorities on the Commission, and the composition of the Commission should be changed.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Greene thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m., following a motion by Ms. McNeely and second by Mr. Peters.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary K. Korb

Recording Secretary

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