

Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the  
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

DATE: September 20, 2022

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Aloysius Nelson.....Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission;  
Chair Director, Division of Veterans Services, Kenosha County  
Yolanda Adams ..... Board of Education Member, Kenosha Unified School District  
Huda Alkaff ..... Founder & Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims  
Donna Brown-Martin.....Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission;  
Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation;  
Liaison to Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning  
Brad Holz.....Board Member, Independence First  
Keith Martin..... Engineering Specialist – Advanced 2, WisDOT  
N. Lynnette McNeely.....Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP  
Andrea Mendez Barrutia.....Director of Community Engagement, Hispanic Collaborative  
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach

Members Excused

Ella Dunbar..... Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee  
Pastor Ernest Ni’A ..... President, Racine African American Roundtable of Leaders  
Gina Green-Harris.....Director, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Center for  
Community Engagement and Health Partnerships in Milwaukee  
Fabi Maldonado ..... Racine County Supervisor, District 2  
Sandra Rubin..... Equal Opportunity Specialist (retired), Milwaukee HUD  
Field Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity  
Jackie Schellinger ..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge

Guests and Staff Present

Deborah Blanks..... Partner, Kairo Communications  
Dennis Grzezinski..... Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski  
Dominic Holt ..... Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Coordinator,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Eric Lynde.....Chief Special Projects Planner, SEWRPC  
Benjamin McKay ..... Deputy Director, SEWRPC  
Kevin Muhs..... Executive Director, SEWRPC  
Dana Nielsen ..... Intern, Office of Rural Prosperity, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation  
Nakeisha Payne..... Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC  
Karyn Rotker..... Senior Staff Attorney, ACLU of Wisconsin  
Mia Rudolph-Schulta..... Environmental Sustainability Program Coordinator, City of Milwaukee  
Jennifer Sarnecki..... Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC  
Katie Sturmer..... Regional Natural Resources Educator, UW-Extension  
Bruce Wiggins ..... Interested Citizen  
Pearly Wong..... Bureau of Environmental Analysis and Sustainability,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Nelson called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) to order at 4:35 p.m., conducted a brief introduction, and welcomed those in attendance.

## **APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 23, 2022, MEETING MINUTES**

Upon the assembly of a quorum, Mr. Nelson asked if there were any questions or comments on the June 23, 2022, meeting minutes (available [here](#)). Mr. Nelson then asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Brown-Martin moved, and Ms. McNeely seconded the approval of the June 23, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

## **DISCUSSION OF WISCONSIN ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY TOOL (WEET)**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Ms. Alkaff, a member of the WEET Advisory Committee, introduced the agenda item and noted that the team is seeking additional input to make the tool more robust. Mr. Holt, staff from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, continued with a presentation about WEET (available [here](#)). The following discussion occurred during Mr. Holt's presentation:

1. Ms. Brown-Martin inquired about the data source shown on slide two and Mr. Holt indicated that the slide is depicting examples of the topics that might generally be covered by WEET and noted that there are over two dozen data indicators currently under review. Ms. Brown-Martin requested that the following topics and data be considered for inclusion in WEET at the statewide level: access to transportation; percent of population in poverty; areas with limited access to food; number of food deserts; radius for health care access; percent of children in school without access to three meals a day indicated by free or reduced meals; number of people statewide who do not have access to a vehicle or transportation; water quality; and age of housing structures to indicate potential presence of lead in paint or asbestos around pipes. Mr. Wiggins indicated in the meeting chat that he agreed food insecurity is important and should be mapped.
2. Ms. McNeely stated that the presence of lead pipes in the City of Milwaukee is a major concern and that poor air quality and the prevalence of asthma are of particular concern for individuals living in the 53206 zip code. In response to Ms. McNeely's questions regarding the anticipated outcome and use of the tool, Mr. Holt noted that one goal is to obtain accurate data and that the current plan includes future outreach with community members and organizations to learn about WEET and how it can be used, including how it might assist with grant funding applications. Mr. Holt indicated that the WEET team is continuing to identify data sources to include in the tool and that the team will analyze data at the state level, with the goal of analyzing data at smaller geographies.
3. In response to a question from Ms. Mendez Barrutia regarding how data will be shared with the public, Mr. Holt noted that, as part of the publication of WEET, it is anticipated that information will be shared that provides definitions of the data and how it can be used. Ms. Mendez Barrutia requested that indoor air quality be added to WEET. Mr. Holt and Ms. Nelson noted that indoor air quality is not currently included but the request will be considered by the technical team.
4. Ms. Alkaff requested that PFAS, arsenic, lead, and indoor mold data be included in WEET.

5. In response to a question from Mr. Nelson about the demographics of participants in the WEET development process, Mr. Holt indicated that the initial outreach did not generate interest among communities of color and low-income populations. As a result, the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, which provides feedback on data and study topics, includes members from diverse communities and geographies. The current outreach process also includes direct outreach with communities representing more diverse populations and the team is currently doing direct outreach with community partners to learn and hear more.
6. Mr. Nelson and Ms. McNeely indicated that grant money should be focused on communities most in need. Ms. McNeely noted that the process and approach for providing financial assistance is not agile enough to support the populations most in need and recommended that this could be included as part of WEET.
7. Ms. McNeely recommended the team consider including in WEET data about gun violence, and if there are environmental factors such as prevalence of lead in the body, that could increase the propensity toward gun violence.
8. Ms. Rotker noted that the Environmental Protection Agency's EJ Screen tool (available [here](#)) includes people of color and recommended that WEET include people with disabilities, race, tree cover, homelessness, and substandard housing.

#### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH DIVISION OUTREACH UPDATE**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Ms. Payne gave a presentation that provided an update on outreach being conducted by the Commission's Public Involvement and Outreach Division (available [here](#)). The following discussion occurred during Ms. Payne's presentation:

1. Mr. Nelson thanked Ms. Payne for her work, and highlighted SEWRPC's participation specifically in the Juneteenth event in Racine where he was able to connect with many high school students.

#### **UPDATE ON EJTF BACKGROUND DOCUMENT**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Mr. Lynde gave an update on Commission staff's efforts to update the EJTF "background document," including considering input from previous EJTF meetings. The following discussion occurred during Mr. Lynde's update:

1. Mr. Nelson noted that the title "Background Document" does not clearly describe the contents of the document and suggested incorporating "Guiding Principles" or similar into the document. Mr. Lynde indicated that staff had discussed changing the title to "Guidance Document" and that "guiding principles" could be a key section within the document.

#### **REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE ACTION ITEM LIST**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Ms. Sarnecki reviewed the current action item list, which was linked within the agenda for review (available [here](#)). The following discussion occurred during Ms. Sarnecki's presentation:

1. Ms. Alkaff inquired if requests made via email are included in the action item list and indicated that she requested a presentation on PFAS by email. Mr. Lynde and Mr. McKay noted that Commission staff recently completed a white paper on PFAS (available [here](#)) and would be available to present the findings. Ms. Sarnecki indicated that staff has typically tracked requests

that have been made during EJTF meetings but noted that it would be helpful to clarify the process. Mr. Nelson stated that any request for agenda topics made outside of EJTF meetings should be noted at a subsequent EJTF meeting for consideration.

2. Ms. Alkaff requested data on gentrification and its impact in the Region.
3. Ms. Adams requested adding ex-offenders to future discussions related to the housing needs of marginalized groups.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following comment occurred in response to Mr. Nelson's request for comments:

1. Ms. Rotker indicated that the EJTF Background Document was developed in a time when there was less trust and noted that there has been progress at SEWRPC in terms of environmental justice.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any announcements or correspondence. There were none.

## **NEXT MEETING DATES**

Mr. Nelson indicated that Commission staff will contact EJTF members to identify the specific date for the next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Nelson requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. McNeely moved, and Ms. Brown-Martin seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer B. Sarnecki  
Recording Secretary

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