

Minutes of the Sixty-Eighth Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

DATE: September 9, 2025

TIME: 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Aloysius Nelson, Chair Sigma Pi Phi (the Boulé)
Yolanda Adams Board of Education Member, Kenosha Unified School District
Annabell Bustillos..... Bilingual Outreach Advocate, BeLeaf Survivors
Brad Holz..... Board Member, Independence First
Keith Martin..... Construction Representative Senior, Wisconsin Department of Administration
Kermiath McClendon..... Impact Investment Manager, Greater Milwaukee Foundation
GeorgeAnn Stinson..... President, African American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Racine

Members Excused

Huda Alkaff Founder & Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims
N. Lynnette McNeely..... Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP
Andrea Mendez Barrutia..... Director, Milwaukee Chapter of Techqueria
Jackie Schellinger Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge

Members Unexcused

Gina Sanchez Jaurez Director, Center for Financial Stability, La Casa de Esperanza

Commissioners Present

Dewayne Johnson Waukesha County
Robert Pitts..... Kenosha County
Natalia Minkel-Dumit..... Ozaukee County

Commission Staff Present

Eric Lynde..... Special Projects Director
Benjamin McKay Deputy Director
Nakeisha Payne..... Chief Community Engagement Specialist
Jennifer Sarnecki..... Deputy Chief Transportation Planner
Dana M. Shinnars..... Senior Transportation Planner

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Nelson called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. McKay announced that Commissioners were invited to attend today's meeting to listen and participate in the discussion on the Guidance Document and potential name change of the Task Force. Mr. McKay led introductions for Commissioners and Task Force members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON JUNE 10, 2025

Mr. Nelson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2025, meeting ([link](#)). Mr. Holz moved, and Ms. Stinson seconded the approval of the meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPDATES TO THE TASK FORCE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Mr. Nelson introduced the agenda item and invited Mr. Lynde and Mr. McKay to share more information. Commissioner Pitts asked for the background on why the Task Force is considering a name change. Mr. McKay stated that staff and Task Force members have been tracking communications and having discussions about the Task Force name since early this year. Mr. McKay also explained that this subject has been discussed at Commission meetings, and the Executive Committee directed staff to invite Commissioners to this Task Force meeting to discuss the Guidance Document and a potential name change. He provided a history of the Task Force and its role in Commission work. Mr. McKay then explained the Task Force was created by the Commission in 2006 based on Executive Order 12898, which has since been rescinded.

Mr. McKay said that the Commission was notified in July that the federal government will no longer enforce contractual obligations that are inconsistent with vacated executive orders. He stated that Commission staff discussed the communication with United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and Wisconsin Department of Transportation representatives who advised that the Overall Work Program (OWP) should no longer include Federally funded work related to environmental justice.

Mr. McKay summarized discussions at the March and June Task Force meetings in which members discussed focusing on Title VI requirements and awaiting further information before pursuing a name change. He reiterated that given recent communication, staff recommend changing the Task Force name. Mr. McKay noted that staff and Task Force members have had previous conversations about adopting a name that resonates more with the general public because not everyone is familiar with the term environmental justice.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the mission of the Task Force is important, and the Commissioners believe its work should be continued.

Mr. Lynde shared the Task Force Guidance Document ([link](#)), which guides the work of the Task Force. He stated that the document was most recently updated in April 2023 and is reviewed by the Task Force every two years for updates. The following discussion occurred after the Guidance Document review:

1. Ms. McClendon asked for clarification on the Commission and Task Force roles in ensuring equity and stated that it is important that everyone has a seat at the table. Ms. Adams agreed with Mr. McClendon. Mr. McKay said that the Task Force helps ensure that the benefits of regional planning activities are shared proportionally across all populations. He stated that the Commission is an advisory agency and not an advocacy organization. Mr. Lynde added that staff view the federal changes as an opportunity to review terminology the Task Force uses, but that the principles of engaging with underrepresented populations in the planning process can remain in place.

2. Mr. Nelson commented that the name may change, but the mission of the Task Force should continue. He noted that staff developed four potential name options for Task Force consideration.
3. Commissioner Johnson commented that the Guidance Document is a living document that can evolve over time and be changed in the future. Mr. McKay agreed and noted that the Task Force is due to review the Guidance Document on the two-year schedule regardless of the current context. Mr. Lynde noted that staff are open to other updates to the Guidance Document from members.
4. Mr. McKay stated that the Commission will be unable to use federal transportation funding for activities that deal with environmental justice moving forward, so reviewing the Task Force Guidance Document and changing terminology is important to fund Commission work.
5. Mr. McClendon reflected that the term environmental justice seems to be a safe and well-defined term. He said that it was unfortunate that a change was necessary. Mr. McKay stated that the activities of the Task Force can still focus on community engagement methods and reviewing regional plans as they are developed. In addition, staff will continue to use sound planning principles in Commission work.
6. Mr. Nelson said that community members are often confused by the word ‘environmental.’ Other members agreed that ‘environmental’ has caused confusion.

At the request of Mr. Nelson, Mr. Lynde presented four name options that staff developed. The names include Planning for Livability, Access, and Community Engagement (PLACE) Task Force; Community Impact Task Force; Community Benefits Task Force; and Community Engagement Task Force. Mr. Nelson suggested the Community Engagement and Benefits Task Force. Members agreed that this name captures the group discussion and the work of the Task Force.

Mr. McKay stated that staff can review and suggest changes to the Guidance Document for the December meeting. Mr. Nelson called for a motion to rename the Task Force the Community Engagement and Benefits Task Force and to direct staff to update Commission materials accordingly. Mr. McClendon moved, and Ms. Stinson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

REVIEW OF EJTF ACTION ITEM LIST

At Mr. Nelson’s request, Ms. Sarnecki reviewed the action item list ([link](#)). She discussed two recently closed action items, including engaging with the Milwaukee County Youth Commission on behalf of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) and work with student engagement, which is ongoing.

OVERVIEW OF COMPOSITION OF APPLICANTS FOR RECENTLY FILLED COMMISSION POSITIONS

Mr. McKay stated that he will provide an update on recently filled positions at the December meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Mr. McClendon asked for more in-depth strategies on engagement with the community within the Guidance Document. Mr. Nelson agreed and noted that Ms. Payne can provide additional information on her role. Mr. McKay noted that the Commission has a Public Participation Plan that documents strategies and

policies for engagement. Staff are currently working on an update to the document and will share with the Task Force when it is available for public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. McClendon thanked Ms. Payne for attending a Milwaukee Community Foundation event.

Ms. Payne shared that the grand opening for the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood will be on October 1, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. Mr. Nelson added that the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is also intended to help keep young people in the Kenosha community after graduating from local colleges and universities.

NEXT MEETING DATES

Mr. Nelson indicated that the next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2025, which may be a hybrid meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Holz moved, and Mr. McClendon seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Nelson adjourned the meeting at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana M. Shinnars
Recording Secretary
