

Environmental Justice Council (EJC)
Meeting #7
Tuesday, December 13, 2022
6:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Meeting location: Zoom webinar

Meeting documents: [Agenda](#), [slides](#), [meeting minutes](#)

Council members present:

- Marcos Luna
- Cheryll Holley
- Peter Maathey
- Ari Zorn
- Caroline Hon
- Melissa Ferretti
- Lydia Lowe
- Patricia Spence
- Madeline Fraser Cook

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) staff present:

- Rishi Reddi
- Vallery Cardoso
- Carline Lemoine

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics

Rishi Reddi welcomed panelists and attendees. She provided an overview of the meeting logistics, including use of the question and answer (Q&A) box and the availability of interpreters. Rishi also asked members of the council to put their names in the chat.

Roll Call/Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Rishi called out the names of EJC members in attendance. At the start of the meeting, the following council members were present: Marcos Luna, Cheryll Holley, Peter Maathey, Ari Zorn, Caroline Hon, Melissa Ferretti, Lydia Lowe, Patricia Spence, and Madeline Fraser Cook.

Rishi asked for feedback or amendments to the November 21, 2022, meeting minutes. No feedback or amendments were proposed.

Rishi opened the floor for a motion to adopt the minutes. Lydia Lowe motioned to adopt. Melissa Ferretti seconded the motion. Rishi took a vote by roll call. All present council members accepted the minutes.

Announcements

Rishi announced that the upcoming first hybrid EJC meeting will be on January 25, 2023. Rishi asked council members to email suggestions as to where the meeting location should be.

Rishi announced the first public listening session for the EJ strategy will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Springfield, with more details available on the EEA website.

Draft EEA EJ Strategy: Public Comments

Questions and comments from the public came verbally and through the Q&A box on Zoom. The following are summarized comments from the public:

Catherine Rodriguez: I'm interested in how to engage state and municipal officials to work with EJ communities.

Noemy Rodriguez: To provide some background information on an environmental injustice in East Boston, the community did not know what dangers were associated with an electrical substation due to language injustice.

David Dow: Can you provide clarification on how the Massachusetts EJ Council defines EJ communities vs. EJ populations?

Rishi Reddi: "EJ populations" is defined in the statute that passed in March 2021 with which we are working. "EJ communities," however, is not a term defined by statute or EJ policy. We use the term in relation to municipalities that have EJ populations within them. This council is working to define EJ populations.

Lydia Lowe: It is important for our state agencies and our state EJ task force to play an outreach role with municipalities to get out there and have people listening and have an impact on improving our communities' lives.

John Andrade: The state needs to intervene in environmental injustices being currently committed, similar to those in Presidential Heights. It is important as a part of the strategy to have state and federal laws work together. Agencies that serve EJ communities would need to enforce state and federal laws and engage with EJ communities regularly in order to move forward.

Vladimir Perez: There needs to be a better way for residents to be in touch with agencies, especially in regard to language justice.

Rob Zidek: Are planned affordable housing units under Chapter 40b or 40r considered EJ communities by default? If so, how do we meaningfully involve our future EJ neighbors in these decisions prior to their living here, such as contacting advocates? How can we include EJ perspectives in the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)? For example, when affordable housing developments are proposed next to existing or concurrently developed high-traffic areas, can we get Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) involved early in these discussions?

David Dow: There needs to be better coordination between diverse EJ engagement actions.

Pat Spence: How are EJ communities meaningfully involved? Environmental justice actions need to be accessible to everyone.

Marcos Luna: Public meetings are a meaningful way to engage with the community. Agencies need to learn how to fit in with the community as opposed to the community learning how to work with the agency.

Madeline Ferretti: How do we ensure the good ideas given during these meetings have been followed up on and implemented so we are achieving the goal of that policy?

David Dow: The Cape Cod Commission, the towns of Falmouth and Mashpee, and the Climate Change Collaborative Faith Community Environmental Network engage with local EJ populations on the climate crisis.

Ari Zorn: A common issue among EJ communities is to know who to reach out to with meaningful engagement.

Bonnie Bane: Shared thanks for the help of the EJ Council.

EJ Council Discussion on Draft EEA EJ Strategy: Developing EJ Council Comments

Rishi shared a compiled document of the EJ Council member comments, available on the EJ Council meeting webpage, which will be translated and publicly available on the website soon. Rishi opened the meeting for council members to discuss the comments submitted. Rishi suggested the council discuss

issues around metrics. How would we keep track of EJ progress? What baseline we are starting from? She also suggested the council discuss community engagement.

Ari Zorn: The fair and equitable disbursement of EJ funds to EJ communities is important.

Marcos Luna: It is an interesting and great idea to start funding communities to participate. This could be done by providing targeted technical assistance grants or assistance to help a community through a permitting process.

Lydia Lowe: Do agencies have the staff and capacity to handle this? The training of staff at Massachusetts state agencies is important to understand the EJ strategy. What is the budget associated with community engagement?

Rishi Reddi: What is the cultural change that agencies might need? For example, is it a permitting agency? Will the agency be interacting with communities to find out what their permitting needs are?

Madeline Ferretti: For the agencies to truly do this work, someone must lead the community engagement efforts. It takes intentional planning at the agency level to have community engagement be someone's job. It is necessary to support this with funding.

Patricia Spence: I second Madeline's comment. Sometimes the best way to connect is through in-person engagement. Senior communities might not be reached through social media or technology, and it is important to connect with them given the historical information within senior communities.

Rishi Reddi opened the discussion for comments on metrics (e.g., funding, trainings, demographic data, public hearings).

Marcos Luna: Ways to measure the outcomes of projects being pursued include funding allocation, enforcement actions or siting decisions, and background information.

Rishi Reddi: These points are qualitative and complex.

Marcos Luna: I think projects could be quantifiable because a lot involve an action or decision that can be described and located.

Cheryll Holley: Echoing Marcos. Outputs are great, but if there is no change, then it is not helping those communities at all.

Rishi Reddi: When we are talking about enforcement and outcomes, would we look at how the outcomes are distributed on a map? What is the quality of these enforcement actions?

Caroline Hon: How might we think about coming back to defining what outcomes we want to achieve and ensuring it is an equitable process? We could consider scheduling, translations, and map metrics as possible metrics. What are the main things we are trying to make happen and how do metrics relate?

Rishi Reddi opened discussion on an agency comparison matrix and asked if some agencies are deficient.

Rishi Reddi: There are three agencies that I think need to be pulled in: the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Department of Transportation (DOT).

Rishi Reddi: Could we use this matrix? Does it make sense to go through this and ask why all agencies can't achieve this?

Ari Zorn: I agree with Rishi; this will create accountability.

Rishi Reddi would like to talk about Madeline's comment about the need for staff and develop a plan for addressing the seven pages of comments.

Madeline Ferretti suggested the EJ Council split into subgroups, but that the council needs to be mindful of open meeting law.

Rishi Reddi accepted the suggestion to split into subgroups based on topics. There will be a public comment session on January 27. The EJ Council could not submit a formal comment, but the subcommittees will look in greater detail at the comments provided to advise the secretary according to its statutory mandate.

Lydia Lowe suggested splitting into smaller groups with mini advisory groups and suggested submitting comments.

Marcos Luna agreed on submitting comments and suggested that the council issue a response in time for comments.

Rishi Reddi polled EJ Council members. All members voted yes on dividing into smaller groups.

Rishi Reddi: The EJ Council will split into groups over email.

Questions Received Through Zoom's Q&A Box

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer	Answerer Name
1	No escucho nada me pueden ayudar.	Vladimir Perez	Dejenos saber si todavía necesita apoyo!	Martha (Spanish interpreter)
1	No escucho nada me pueden ayudar.	Vladimir Perez	Ya se arregló, Vladimir? Ahora me escucha en la canal de español?	Martha (Spanish interpreter)
2	How does the Massachusetts EJ Council decide which EJ communities and EJ populations (that are affected by climate change, nutrient pollution, toxic chemical exposure, and municipal solid wastes) are managed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs?	David Dow	Live answered	EEA
3	I have been engaged with the Superfund/Safe Drinking Water Act cleanup at Joint Base Cape Cod for over 25 years. This effort is being addressed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Environmental Management Commission, and Barnstable County and town governments, which have their own EJ engagement policies with local residents on the frontlines.	David Dow	Live answered	EEA
4	There needs to be better coordination between these diverse EJ engagement actions.	David Dow	Thank you for your comments and your regular engagement with our EJ Council.	EEA
5	The Cape Cod Commission and the towns of Falmouth and Mashpee also address EJ concerns.	David Dow	Live answered	EEA

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer	Answerer Name
6	The Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative and the Faith Community Environmental Network engage with local EJ populations on the climate crisis.	David Dow	Live answered	EEA
7	Not a question but a response to what Ari shared—I found the staff of this organization so helpful when I needed to file a Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act comment letter for the wind port in Salem. Thank you for making yourselves available. Credit to Buddy Andrade for directing the Salem Alliance for the Environment on where to go. It's a whisper network right now.	Bonnie Bain	Hi Bonnie, before I read this out loud, which organization helped you file the complaint?	EEA
8	So sorry all! I am bathing my toddler. Rishi's staff I believe	Bonnie Bain	Thank you!	EEA
9	Good job ALL, thank you Bonnie.	John Andrade	Thank you for joining us today, Buddy!	EEA
10	Patricia on point.	John Andrade	Live answered	EEA
11	Public Health!!	John Andrade	Live answered	EEA

Next Steps and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.