

## **Environmental Justice Council (EJC)**

### **Meeting #12**

**Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting location:** Mashpee Senior Center, 26 Frank Hicks Drive, Mashpee, Massachusetts

**Meeting documents:** [Agenda](#), [Slides](#)

#### **Council members present:**

- Kalila Barnett (remote)
- Melissa Ferretti (in-person)
- Madeline Fraser Cook (remote)
- Cheryll Holley (remote)
- Caroline Hon (remote)
- Namrita Kapur (remote)
- Lydia Lowe (remote)
- Peter Maathey (remote)
- Sofia Owen (in-person)
- Ari Zorn (remote)

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

- María Belén Power, EJC Undersecretary (in-person)
- Carline Lemoine, Deputy Director of Environmental Justice for External Stakeholder Coordination (remote)
- Crystal Johnson, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Justice (remote)

### **1. Welcome and Overview of Meeting Logistics**

**Kecil John** provided an overview of the meeting logistics, including the use of the question and answer (Q&A) box and the availability of interpreters. **María Belén Power** welcomed all attendees.

## 2. Agenda Overview

**María Belén Power** thanked the Mashpee Senior Center for hosting this meeting and the EJC for providing in-person and virtual options for the community. The EJC discussed the possibility of providing transportation stipends and childcare to reduce barriers and increase participation. **María Belén Power** reviewed the agenda and introduced **Chairman Weeden (Chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe)**, who gave opening remarks.

## 3. Roll Call/Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

**María Belén Power** conducted a roll call of the EJC members. At the start of the meeting, the following council members were present: **Kalila Barnett, Melissa Ferretti, Madeline Fraser Cook, Cheryl Holley, Caroline Hon, Namrita Kapur, Lydia Lowe, Peter Maathey, Sofia Owen, and Ari Zorn.**

The following council members were not present: **Miles Gresham, Marcos Luna, Jen Salinetto, and Patricia Spence.**

**María Belén** opened the floor for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. **Melissa Ferretti** motioned to approve. **Namrita Kapur** seconded the motion. All present council members accepted the minutes.

## 4. First Public Question and Answer Session

The public participants asked a question about the Massachusetts definition of an environmental justice population.

- Criteria for defining an environmental justice population included: income, language proficiency, racial and cultural identity, and race and income combined.

**Comments from the Q&A are listed below.**

#	Question	Asker Name	Answer
1	Cape Cod has many seniors who are searching for affordable apartments or senior assisted living facilities to rent. Will they be included in the definition of the environmental justice population since the rent exceeds 30% of their income?	David Dow	There is a threshold for income in terms of the definition. If a community is not considered an environmental justice community, but they would like to be considered under law, they can petition the secretary.

## 5. Briefing on the Commission on Energy and Infrastructure Siting and Permitting

**Undersecretary Mike Judge** gave an update on the Commission on Energy and Infrastructure Siting and Permitting. He also mentioned that it is critical that communities have input in these siting and permitting processes and that their voices are heard early on.

### *Background Information on the Commission*

- The commission was established in September 2023 under Executive Order 620.
- The commission comprises 28 people. The stakeholders involved include the Massachusetts state government (the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Economic Development, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development), as well as municipalities, environmental justice organizations, environmental advocates, agricultural producers, commercial and clean energy developers, and utilities.
- The commission is responsible for advising the governor on 1) accelerating the deployment of clean energy infrastructure through siting and permitting reform, 2) facilitating community input into the siting and permitting of clean energy infrastructure, and 3) ensuring that the benefits are shared equitably among all residents of the Commonwealth.

### *Tasks the Commission Is Responsible for Completing By 2030*

- Construction of more than 8,000 megawatts of new solar generating capacity
- Construction of 3,200 megawatts of new offshore wind generation capacity
- Construction of a new clean energy transmission line from Canada to New England

### *The public participants and the EJC posed questions and discussed the following topics*

- The importance of interaction between the commission and outside environmental justice organizations.
- Ensuring that community members have opportunities to weigh in on important processes.
- The importance of having several public engagement sessions.

## 6. Briefing on the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Priorities for 2024

**Commissioner Rubin and Commissioner VanNostrand** provided an update on DPU's six priorities for 2024: 1) to increase transparency, 2) improve public participation, 3) adhere to environmental justice principles, 4) affordability, 5) clean energy, and 6) equity. DPU will be sharing these priorities with other stakeholders and the public in the coming months.

### **Key Takeaways from the DPU's Six Priorities**

- DPU is obligated to balance the interests of the utilities and their shareholders.
- DPU will be hiring a Director of Environmental Justice and Public Participation by Spring 2024.
- DPU is working on increasing the number of technical conferences, expanding language access, and increasing educational opportunities for the public.
- DPU will also be requiring climate compliance plans for gas utilities beginning in April 2025. Gas utilities will need to show DPU that they are on a path to net-zero emissions.

*The EJC posed questions and discussed the following topics*

- DPU will be requiring gas companies/utilities to demonstrate how they will get to net-zero.
- All updated priorities will be made public and will get public feedback before anything is made official.
- Public comments can be any length, made by anyone, and can be any format.
- DPU is considering adding performance incentives to its metrics.

## **7. Second Public Question and Answer Session**

The EJC did not have time for a second round of questions.

## **8. Next Steps and Adjourn**

**María Belén Power** reminded council members of the next meeting date on March 14, 2024, in Worcester, Massachusetts. The meeting will be hybrid (held in-person with a virtual option). The next meeting, if there is time, will address developing council bylaws.

**María Belén Power** motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.