

## Minutes of EJAB

**Meeting Date:** April 1, 2008

**Call to order:** The quarterly meeting of the Environmental Justice Advisory Board was held in the Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market St, Harrisburg, PA on April 1, 2008

The meeting convened at 8:35 am, Arthur Frank presiding.

**Members in attendance:**

Erlinda Aguiar	Mark White
Rocky Brown	Arthur Frank
Clea Hollis	Mario Browne
Ayanna King	Ann Morrison
Luvennise Gamble	Patrick O'Neill
Mary Vuccola	

**Members absent (excused):**

Robbie Ali	Hazem Hijazi
Monica Fisher	KV Singh
Michael Walker	Eli Brill
C Nolan Howell	

**Members absent (unexcused):**

Laureen Boles  
Jerry Balter  
Rocky Boone

**Non-members:**

Marylou Barton	Holly Cairns
Nora Carreras	Janis Dean (CAC)
Doan Barefield	Christina Simeone
Alice Wright	Jerome Field (PPL)
Norman Bristol-Colon (GACLA)	Jennie Morgan Velez (GACLA)
Rebecca Dunlap (Susquehanna Restoration Initiative)	
Scot Roberts (MRM)	Robert Altenburg (Policy)

## Welcome and Introductions

Arthur Frank, Chair asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Patrick O'Neil to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2007 meeting.
- Seconded by: Clea Hollis
  - All in favor: motion carried

## OEA Staff Reports

Arthur Frank asked for a brief overview of the OEA Staff reports.

- Holly spoke about the public participation meeting for Erie's Renewable Energy proposed facility in Erie, PA. Luvenise Gamble talked about the community's concerns and not understanding the tire-to-waste process. Arthur proposed asking PA Environmental Research Consortium (PERC) to study the feasibility of the tire-to-waste facility proposals since there is limited amount of science and information on these facilities. Ayanna will contact Don Brown and make that request.

## Briefing from Norman Bristol-Colon, Executive Director for the Governor's Commission on Latino Affairs (GACLA)

Dr. Frank introduced Mr. Bristol-Colon to the Board.

- Mr. Bristol-Colon thanked Ayanna King for inviting him. He said the Governor has charged the 18 Commissioners with making recommendations, policies, and legislations to enhance the Latino community in the Commonwealth of PA. The Commissioners serve as liaisons to the Latino community and as resources to other agencies and commissions. In addition, the Commissioners assist local communities in developing strategies and programs to enhance their social and economic status.
- The Latino community is the fastest growing community in the Commonwealth and in the Nation. There are 44 million in the U.S., not including the 4 million U.S. Citizens in Puerto Rico. In PA, there are 527, 000 Latinos according the U.S. census. By the end of the Rendell administration there will be approximately 1 million residents in the Commonwealth. Allentown, Bethlehem, York and Lancaster have the largest increase of Latinos to date.
- In 2005 the GACLA hosted the PA Summit on Latino Health. This was the first administration to address the health issues of Latinos in the Commonwealth. As a result of the forum, the Department of Health formed the Health Equity Office to address not only the needs of Latinos but also African Americans and Asians. Last week the GACLA put on the Second Annual Latina Symposium. In May,

they will host the PA Summit on Latino Health and the PA Summit on Latino Small Business Micro-enterprise and Economic Development in September.

**Briefing from Rebecca Dunlap, Project Manager for West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Initiative**

Dr. Frank introduced Ms. Dunlap to the Board.

- Ms. Dunlap began by telling the Board she was invited by Ayanna King, Nora Carreras and Mary Vuccola, to discuss the environmental justice problems that are occurring in the Northcentral PA. July 2007, the Office of Environmental Advocate was invited to the Northcentral region to meet with community members to discuss the concerns of that region. The outcome from the meeting established that Northcentral community members are very concerned about environmental justice issues in that region. DEP's eMap acknowledge Williamsport, Lockhaven, and State College as environmental justice communities but the group felt that there are some smaller towns that are being overlooked and not being addressed due to the eMap system being based off census tracks.
- In 2003, the Governor launched The PA Wild Initiative to promote the growth of ecotourism in the Northcentral PA. DCED has invested over \$14.6 million dollars in grants and \$ 13.8 in loans, DCNR has invested over \$10 million for upgrading park infrastructure. \$1.78 million from DEP's Growing Greener grants. All of these efforts are to be applauded but the historical abuse of natural resources in this region has depleted some of the wildlife that is being promoted.
- Ms. Dunlap elaborated on the history of the Northcentral region: In 1692, 90% of the Commonwealth was covered with white pine and eastern hemlock or mixed hard woods. By early 1800 lumbering began, by the 1850 when the civil war started demands increased and by 1870 the lumbering industry shifted to the northern part of the State. At that time, Williamsport became the lumber capital of the World. After 1880, the lumbering community collapsed and by 1920 the forest were gone. The next wave of resource extraction came through was coal mining. Over the last 200 years coal was so prevalent in the Northcentral region it provided one quarter of the entire nation's coal. Unfortunately these towns fell with the great depression. Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) results of unregulated coal mining activity before the 1977 Surface Mining Control Reclamation Act (SMCRA Act). Around 1977 is the time when people embrace the idea of clean water and healthy watersheds. Due to the unregulated mining prior to 1977 the Northcentral region has an abundance of pollution problems. 58% of all the pollution is from acid mine drainage, over 1,100 miles of dead streams. Many of the streams are red in color because of the iron. People are living right next to these red dead streams. Whereas; the Commonwealth is promoting ecotourism people aren't able to fish in the streams. In addition, the Commonwealth is spending \$12 million dollars to bring water to residents and businesses that otherwise wouldn't have clean water.

- In Clearfield County a study was done to see if Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) was impacting property value. If the property was within 200 feet of an impaired stream with acid mine drainage the property value decreased by \$25,000 an acre. Clearfield County is losing \$4 million in property value. In the Town of Monument there are approximately fifty homes that reside along Beech Creek, Beech Creek is completely dead because of AMD. The Fish and Boat Commission has estimated that the west branch of the Susquehanna is losing an estimated \$16-\$22 million a year.
- In PA, there are over 100,000 different gas and oil wells. The majority of the wells are in the Western part of the State. McKean County had over 11,000 permits issued in 2007. Clearfield County had about 301, Centre County about 60, and Clinton had about 40. Overall Clearfield County had 5,000 different wells, Centre County about 1,200 and Clinton County about 90 different gas wells. Monument Run is one of the last clean surface water streams coming into this town. Penn State University recently conducted a Beech Creek Watershed Cold Water Conservation Plan, in the plan they explained the potential risk of gas well drilling. The plan identified the risk for contamination of groundwater and surface water through improperly maintained gas infrastructure.
- Patrick O'Neill commented that in the original Environmental Justice Workgroup report, Beverly Braverman addressed some of the issues regarding the coal mining industry. Mr. O'Neill believes there is not sufficient MRM Staff to accomplish the needs of the coal communities.

#### **Briefing from Jayanth Devasundaram, Department of Health's Environmental Health Tracking Program**

Dr. Frank introduced Dr. Devasundaram. The Chair mentioned that Dr. Devasundaram is overseeing the Environmental Health Tracking Program. Dr. Frank, Mark White, and Ayanna King have worked with Dr. Devasundaram on this program.

- The Department of Health, Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Environmental Protection are in partnership for this Program. The Program was established to address the lack of environmental health data, relating to the environment. This National program consisting of 17 states and 1 city, 4 universities. The Program is two years in the making. The entire project is divided into multiple workgroups: standards and measures development, program marketing, outreach, content, photo analyst visualization, and support. There are weekly conference calls to update each workgroup. Dr. Devasundaram explained the various levels of data and coding that will take place to make this program successful.

#### **Public Comment Period**

Jerome Field of PPL asked; If DEP would be coming out with environmental justice regulations or guidelines?

Christina Simeone, Office of Policy commented that the Secretary has authorized the OEA to draft environmental justice language to be possibly included into new and existing DEP regulations.

### **Discussion - Environmental Justice Proposal**

- Tabled due to time restraints, this agenda item and will be added to the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting for discussion.

### **Conference Planning**

- Ayanna King introduced Mark Kain and Ellen Kaiser from the Foundation for Enhancing Communities. The Board is partnering with the Foundation to be the receiver/payer of the funds for the conference. Ann Morrison asked if the conference was canceled for any reason what would happen to the monies that was sent to the Foundation and if there is a residual balance, can the Advisory Board make the determination on how to allocate the balance? Mark said the Foundation will bill accordingly for work they performed and that he needed to check with their lawyer regarding any left over funds, on the second question the funder would need to be contacted to see if the Foundation can hold onto the funds for the next event.
- The Conference is scheduled for April 26-28, 2009, with a theme of *PA First Statewide Environmental Justice Conference: Building Healthy and Improving Communities for All!* The Sheraton has been selected for the location. There will be a registration cost between \$50-\$75.00 pp. Space for approximately 20-25 vendors /exhibitors will cost between \$100-\$150 dollars. DEP will allocate \$15,000 towards the conference expenses. There are seven committees: Programming, Advertisement, Fundraising, Logistics and Conference Materials, Site Search (completed), Data collection, Scholarship and Community Outreach. OEA staff and Board Members have been selected to the different committees based on their skills set. Members from the fundraising committee will solicit funds from the following state agencies; Dept of Transportation, Welfare, Health, Education and Community and Economic Development. In addition, the group has identified multiple funding sources for the conference. The goal is to have all funds raised by the end of the year.
- Nora Carreras spoke to the group regarding the logo contest. Drexel University will provide the funds for the three prizes. She anticipates having something back from the schools by the beginning of May. Mario Browne mentioned that sometimes the Superintendent from the school districts will match the funds to give the student or students a larger reward.
- All Board Members are asked to send any contacts for the conference database to Doan.

### New/Unfinished Business, Questions, and Comment Period

- Arthur made a request to have a technical person from the Department to educate the Board on the permitting process during the August meeting.
- Erlinda Aguiar mentioned to the Board she had handouts from LaSalle University for a summer program sponsored by them for middle and high school students.
- Mario Browne mentioned that April is National Minority Health Month, conceived by Booker T. Washington in 1915. He also mentioned that PBS will be airing Unnatural Causes: Is Inequity Making Us Sick? Please visit [www.unnaturalcauses.org](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org) for additional information.

Motion to adjourn meeting by: Rocky Brown

Seconded by: Mario Browne

All in favor: motion carried

Adjourned at 2:45 pm