
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WORKING GROUP
MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 7-24-20
Meeting Time: 4-5:30 pm ET
Meeting Location:
zoom.us/j/91126373008

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Alexander Rodriguez	Community Organizer	CT League of Conservation Voters	X
Lee Cruz		Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven	X
Marianne Engelman-Lado	Professor	VT Law School, Yale School of Public Health, Yale School of the Environment	X
Steve Schrag		Waterbury Environmental Control Commission	X
Marissa		Office of Sustainability, UCONN-STORRS	X
Stephanye Clark	Program Officer	Community Foundation of Eastern CT	X
Denise Savageau		CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation	X
Kathy Fay		Neighborhood Housing Services in New Haven	X
James Albis	Senior Advisor	Commissioner's Office of DEEP	X
Diane Lauricella			X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Max Teirstein	Intern	CT DEEP EJ Program	X
Brian Basso	Intern	GC3	X
Rebecca French	Director	Office for Climate Planning for CT DEEP	X

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

Background on this Working Group

Marianne Engelman-Lado, Yale & VT Law School Faculty Member

- Provided background on Public participation recommendations on GC3 website for further feedback & input
 - Drafts shared with other working groups though they have yet to be finalized
 - This working group created to further build out and revise these recommendations
 - Will go back to the broader EEJ, which will share the recommendations with the broader GC3

Agenda

Facilitated by Alex Rodriguez, League of Conservation Voters

1. Continue Discussion on & Finalize [Draft Public Participation Guidance Document](#):
 - Previous meeting was essentially a read-aloud through the document
 - Would be useful to hire an interpreter/translator who spoke ASL, Spanish, and/or Portuguese
 - Item 4 p.6: Designating a central point of contact
 - Each sub-working group should not do outreach separately
 - Process of communicating potentially hazardous interest coming into communities is broken
 - Addition of this language: Using census tract data to appropriately account for demographics of the community.
 - Another addition: [via chat] Using multilingual and culturally conscious graphics to convey information about governmental/commercial/industrial interests
 - We will finalize the document once everyone has spoken their piece
 - Deadline for Draft Recommendations forthcoming, likely early September
 - Adaptation & Mitigation WGs are getting us their recommendations by August 12th
 - This committee should be on really trying to facilitate the public comment period

Public comments

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation

- Way the document is written doesn't encompass present context
 - "Alternative methods" of outreach are likely now the reality under the circumstances
 - Page 5: Alternatives to Communicating with LMI Groups
- If in-person meetings did happen under COVID-19 circumstances, there are details to standardize
 - Food—indoors, people have to take their masks off. Good idea?
 - PPE (esp. masks) would be necessary. Any other accommodations needed?
- Moving forward with COVID, it wouldn't change the document too much if we added language about dealing with pandemics. The remote aspect of life isn't going anywhere for a while, but we could theoretically take out COVID-specific language while keeping recommendations in the world of remote access.
- In the document under item 4—Designate a central point of contact. Burden on the subcommittees and on the community we are trying to help by trying to convince them to

come to all of the GC3's meetings. The equity WG can serve as the central point of contact for community members so people know where to go.

- From a public participation perspective, we can't expect each work group to do intensive outreach and it would overwhelm the community to demand as such
- There are unique things about the LMI community, but communicating science is a challenge everywhere. There is an institute on Long Island that deals with communicating science, could be useful resource.
 - Important to be very succinct and clear, not like scientific papers.
- This isn't about just communicating what we're doing it's about soliciting input. Need to be very clear about what information we need from them. How can they best inform us of their needs? Are we asking the right questions? Re: Climate change, we need to tell them what's going to happen in CT (heat, SLR and coastal flooding, heavy rain and drought events, etc.). They need to know what those scenarios mean where they're living and then ask very specific questions about their experiences—are they experiencing it already? On mitigation, important to ask specific questions about energy bill, electricity, etc. Put effort into developing templates to ask the right question to get the information we need that will help inform this process.
- The attendance at these meetings fluctuates always. We can share the google doc of these recommendations so that everyone can comment really specifically
 - Everyone should use "suggested edits" when commenting.

Marianne Engelman-Lado, Yale School of Public Health & VT Law School

- Go back to the framing of this discussion—looking for something that is evergreen
 - Recommending it as a guideline for next year and to be implemented on a permanent basis re: all climate work
- Denise is right—the initial guidance document and then remote document were done separately, and don't cover the important details. Should the remote guidance document not only be "how do we communicate remotely" but also "what does public participation look like in the COVID era"
- [via chat] We may want to be even more explicit about language access and the need for interpretation. Note that the current document includes assessments of what languages are spoken and then "Providing access to unabridged documents in appropriate languages through repositories (e.g., public websites, etc.)."
- [via chat] Perhaps change the language from "Work with stakeholders to identify community leaders" to say "Work with diverse stakeholders to identify community leaders including but not limited to community residents and members of community-based organizations, and assess..."
- Deliverable of having a guidance document to govern or guide the GC3's activities, and then there is helping with the public comment period and engaging people involved in the GC3. As we finish the documents and head into the fall and think about how we in this subcommittee can assist the working groups to engage more groups. What does that involve? How can we do it? What can they do? What should we do?
 - What is more efficient to do together so communities have the opportunity to give input without being overwhelmed?
- [via chat] To follow up on Denise's comment, perhaps "Work with stakeholders to identify community leaders and assess overall accessibility needs within the community (e.g., what languages are spoken within the community, what communication accommodations are needed, the level of access to transportation, etc.), taking into account census data on languages spoken in the relevant geographic area." "... taking into account census data on languages spoken in a given geographic area" would be new language.

- I wouldn't use the word "tract" because it can get even more specific than that level. Additionally, we don't have to use the decennial census, we can use the more recent American Community Survey. There is no perfectly accurate data on language proficiency but there are sources that take census data and map out linguistic proficiency in localities
- Can do a scan of the document for "language" and slip in the point about informing approaches with respect to language with the available data
- [via chat] Alex, there's a third change suggested by Steve, that we should be explicit about who the stakeholders are. Rather than "Work with stakeholders to identify community leaders" to say "Work with diverse stakeholders to identify community leaders including but not limited to community residents and members of community-based organizations, and assess..." ??

Steve Schrag, Waterbury Environmental Control Commission

- Public is always the last to find out that there's a project in their community. On page 3, it should clarify what "start of planning stage" is because the community usually doesn't find out until well into the initial stage of planning. I'm not sure what "common data" means. What's being shared with the community and how?
- DEEP uses elected officials as community leaders. Sometimes DEEP chooses key stakeholders that don't actually know the community well.
- Remarkable level of disrespect for the community. Documents talk about the need for validating people's feelings, as people are often told they don't have the expertise to understand an issue.
- Does not disagree that in the age of COVID we have to look at remote events, but putting information only on the web ignores the fact that there is an enormous digital divide. Lots of people don't have the bandwidth, hardware, or know-how to do this stuff.
- In-person meetings—often there is no written agenda, no documents are shared. The most important thing to do is to solicit direct feedback on the event.
- Teaches hazardous materials. Education methods are just as important as the content. Using posters would be appropriate to consider in education about climate change, even if it isn't appropriate in this document

James Albis, Commissioner's Office of DEEP

- We are specifically talking about the GC3's processes, not CT DEEP's more broadly. Many of Steve's points apply to both DEEP and GC3, but that distinction is important.

Dianne Lauricella

- Suggested the addition of a sentence about dependent on the site for the project, that the people in charge of putting together these public participation program that they look at the census which would inform them of the kinds of interpreters they'd need for outreach and for the event itself
 - Census tract data could be useful—it's only updated every 10 years, but occasionally there are updates.
- Wanted to stress the use of graphics—can be really successful in summarizing everything so readers don't get mired in the alphabet soup of acronyms. Important to clearly lay things out

Lee Cruz, Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven

- Has found infographics to be extremely helpful when well thought out and involve people from multiple cultures to help with visualization. Can go a long way to translate the same

poster across multiple languages and cultures. Putting up those flyers in laundromats, beauty salons, wherever people are.

- Lee has encountered the Long Island Center for the Communication of Science and vouched for the high quality of information there. Feels strongly about the importance of in-person meeting—hard to build trust through Zoom.
 - Evidence indicates that educating barbers is a good way of disseminating information to men, esp. Black & Latinx men

2. Review & Finalize Public Participation [Checklist](#)

- Let's all weigh in remotely on the Public Participation Guidance and Checklist documents by Friday 8/31

Public comments

Marianne Engelman-Lado, VT Law School, Yale School of Public Health (if applicable)

- Thinking behind this additional document was this helpful to have an easy-to-apply document that derives from the guidance but exists in checklist form
 - Next stage of the work needs to be hyperlocal. What does public participation mean when doing work of planning and implementing climate action plans?
- Could solicit and email vote on finalization once people have looked.
- Change: Given the remote era we're in, in addition to the use of online tools, if we are able to meet in person, other accommodations should be made. Who will draft this change? People will want to look at it before it's finalized

Dianne Lauricella

- Graphics would also be useful here

Steve Schrag, Waterbury Environmental Control Commission

- “Clearly and frequently shared data.” What does “data” mean? If we’re doing work on resiliency in Waterbury, what data would you share?
 - **Marianne Engelman-Lado:** What should it mean? Doesn’t have to be what was drafted here. What data should we be saying needs to be shared?
 - If you want people to move on a program, should clearly and frequently share information that is not only used to measure progress but also so that they know how to implement what it is we are pushing.
- Last section, “After holding a forum or meeting, establish and advertise procedures to follow-up with concrete action.” Decided at the meeting, or afterwards?
 - Appreciates the emphasis on concrete action
- Requested some more time to consider this document before finalizing.

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation

- Should end with an emphasis on next steps. Incorporate this planning into the meeting so people leave knowing what they should be doing next for the project.

3. Finalization of Remote Engagement Guidance Document

- Remote Engagement document should be finalized by two Fridays from now—August 7th

4. Open Floor

Public comments

Rebecca French, Office for Climate Planning for CT DEEP (if applicable)

- Timeline: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lelec8->

[EYkou17IU99DuvBtyC2selAZj/view?usp=sharing](#)

- Public comment period (September 12th-October 19th):
 - Ongoing public comment, but this is a more formal period where the working groups have drafted reports and those reports will be posted on the GC3 website for official comment
 - During that time, Ms. French would like to facilitate meetings for the working groups
 - Week of September 21st and then ending Monday October 5th, every 2 days there is a working group presentation about their report. Online engagement checklist will be considered and integrated into reports.
 - 7 reports being drafted, several of those have multiple sections
 - Looking for this group to conduct some events to educate the public and ask questions
 - Events should, at a minimum, bookend the GC3 working group presentations
 - Kickoff events that are broad-brush, go over what GC3 is, because reports are often granular and potentially too hefty for people who are just engaging with the process for the first time
 - At end, 2 separate forums (Mitigation and Adaptation & Resilience) where members from multiple working groups are available for a more informal Q&A
- Can share a slide deck with anyone interested re: timeline
- How might information-gathering inform the phase 2 of this process—what have we missed through this process because we didn't have the town halls we wanted to host early on? Phase 2 process is still unplanned, but worth keeping the long-term in mind.
- Presentations will be recorded, can be used at any time as a resource to help them understand the material without having to read a long document.

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation

- One idea is to actually try to have some quick workshops in August with the idea being that we can still get information from the community on the issues and then pass those comments along to the working groups as they revise their drafts. Can then have a second series to comment on what they've done. Solicit basic information from folks fairly quickly.
 - Rough draft of PowerPoint presentation:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jNccM26FaXwrmZHFcsX17O2UoxU11RYdvd4b_DpRFcQ/edit?usp=sharing

5. Closing

- Next meeting: TBA, but aiming for August 7th.

Public Comments**Kathy Fay**

- It's always too late, no matter when we start. But sometimes we have to question our assumptions about the timeline that it takes to get things set up in communities. In the neighborhood where Kathy works, they're not waiting for someone from DEEP to come and tell them to stop everything they're doing to leave some comments. The folks Kathy works with are busy and organized, and to get a few minutes on an agenda can often take a month or two.

Next steps:

- Everyone should weigh in remotely on the Public Participation Guidance and Checklist documents

- by Friday 8/31
- Remote Engagement document should be finalized by two Fridays from now—August 7th