

**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Public Health and Safety Working Group**

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 31, 2022

Meeting Time: 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Zoom Recording: [Public Health and Safety Working Group Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDANCE: GC3 Working Group Members in bold

Name:
Heather Aaron, Co-Chair
Alanis Allen, <i>DEEP Liaison</i>
Brenda Bergeron, Co-Chair
Laura Bozzi
Mindy Chambrelli
Louanne Cooley
Cynthia Costa
Evan Dantos
Michele Deluca
Meghan Doyle
Mariana Fragomeni
Elizabeth Gara
Christine Hahn-Dunn
Anne Hulick
Diane Lauricella
Lori Mathieu
David Murphy
Huan Ngo
Jennifer O'Brien
Yaprak Onat
Martha Page
Meghan Portfolio
Christopher Silver
Bridget Teevan
Steven Wallett
Aicha Woods, Equity and Environmental Justice Liaison
Joanna Wozniak-Brown
Kim Zigich

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome: Alanis Allen, DEEP Liaison

Ground Rules:

- Meeting is recorded and a link will be posted
- Announcement that the chat is public record, but may be used for questions and comments by working group members

- Working group members are asked to post their names and affiliation in the chat
- Reminder that the discussion portion is reserved for working group members
- Announcement that non-working group members should mute and turn video off until public comment

Welcome and Introduction of Co-chairs: *Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron, Dept. Of Public Health and Deputy Commissioner Brenda Bergeron, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security*

Presentation, Urban Heat Islands in Connecticut: *Yaprak Onat, Assistant Director of Research at UCONN CIRCA*

- Introduction:
 - Collecting resiliency opportunities in Fairfield County and New Haven
 - Grounded in the understanding that climate change does not affect people equally
 - Norwalk is expected to experience more frequent heat waves
- Temperature:
 - Average temperature will increase, and frequency of extreme heat days will also increase
 - Will impact frost days, as well
 - Heat related illness will increase
- Project purpose:
 - Heat sensory project
 - Goal is to better understand local environmental conditions and the impact of climate change on heat vulnerability
 - Involves mapping out vulnerable areas
 - Urban heat island occurs when the cities replace natural land cover with pavements, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat
 - Within the cities, it is not known if there are discrepancies between neighborhoods that could help illuminate equity issues
- Norwalk Heat Vulnerability:
 - Vulnerability index is determined by exposure and sensitivity minus adaptive capacity
 - To better understand the landscape in Norwalk, they measured temperature, relative humidity, and dew point, which identifies levels of moisture in the air
 - Dew point in particular affects how comfortable you feel outside
 - Heat index above 90 degrees can create serious heat-related problems
 - Placed sensor locations throughout Norwalk and divided the region into local climate zones
 - Considered income levels, social vulnerabilities, and demographic diversity
 - Collaborated with many government agencies and offices, including Norwalk Health Department
 - Deployed sensors for four months, throughout the summer
 - Sensors were attached to trees or poles

- Sample analysis demonstrated discrepancies between regions that created large differences between temperature and dew points
- Next on Data Analysis:
 - Understanding how urban heat index impacts residents through heat index variability at neighborhood levels
 - Understand trends between heat index and health impacts by examining ED visits and other data sources
 - These will inform adaptive responses

Presentation, Land Use Tools for Municipal Resilience: Heat: *Louanne Cooley, Legal Policy Fellow at UCONN Law School and CIRCA*

- To address heat, we need to consider immediate needs and long-term solutions
- We need to understand what the problem really – where is it hot? Why is it hot?
 - This informs the public health response
- The longer-term mitigation strategies will reduce GHG and slow climate warmings
- Simultaneously, we must adapt to increasing heat
 - Adaptation responses like increasing tree cover, vegetative protection zones, reflective materials, green and cool roofs, and other design standards can be addresses through zoning regulations
- Zoning is a powerful and flexible tool that municipalities can use
 - Other tools: building codes, tree ordinances, plans of conservation and development
- Zoning regulations to reduce impact of urban heat:
 - Regulations for landscaping
 - Mandate tree planning, maintenance, and care, including what kind of trees and where
 - Regulations for reflective surfaces: can reduce heat of large impervious surfaces
 - Light colored parking lots are 40% less hot
 - Roofing can also be done with reflective surfaces
 - Green roofs are also an important tool
 - Costs can vary and can be prohibitive in residential areas, but they can be utilized by municipal and commercial buildings
 - Protecting public spaces from weather conditions:
 - Requiring shade through trees or structures
 - Design standards or guidelines:
 - Form-based codes
 - Can require certain kinds of materials or reflectivity
 - Can include placement and use, as well

Presentation, Disaster Playbook: *Deputy Commissioner Brenda Bergeron, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security*

- Notes that she appreciated the framework presented by CIRCA
- A disaster playlist would create a checklist for municipalities or others bodies to encourage the consideration of mental health and provide guidance about dealing with mental health during disasters

- Looking to bring a group together to consolidate resources and information from relevant groups
- Climate change is exacerbating extreme weather and creating more opportunities for traumatic events

Presentation, Food Security and Mental Health: *Lori Mathieu, Public Health Branch Chief*

- Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron extends her thanks to the partners on the call and notes how critical the data presented by CIRCA is to inform the work of government agencies
- Formed a subcommittee for those interested in or have a background in food security in order to better integrate this with climate change
- There is a body of existing work
 - Report to GC3 in 2020 included one measure related to nutrition, food security, and food safety
 - Recommendation was to develop state and regional food security action plans
 - Was driven in part by COVID-19 pandemic and the gaps it exposed in food security
 - Notes that Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont have food security plans
 - Need to be considered through a climate change lens to ensure that regional food plans are resilient
 - Themes: equity, prioritizing community lifeline
- First meeting was held 10/24
 - Created in order to focus food security work within the Public Health and Safety working group and to ensure food security concerns remain grounded in climate change concerns
 - Created a mission statement they will share with the larger group
 - Discussed state food plans and what other states are doing in this arena
 - Also discussed considerations related to urban farming and the local food and agriculture movement

Discussion:

- Question for CIRCA related to where they intend to place heat sensors
 - Yaprak Onat: Attaching sensors in different parts of the city required a lot of coordination and a lengthy permitting process, so trying to utilize specific residents or individuals would be difficult. The compromise is just putting the sensors in residential areas.
- DC Heather Aaron for CIRCA: What is the long-term goal for the sensors? Over the next 5-10 years?
 - Yaprak Onat: Started this project in 2020 and learned a lot about capacity and which cities to target. Now, there is more capacity to collect information from different cities, so they want to expand the opportunity to more municipalities. They also want to compare satellite data to heat sensor data. They are hoping results can drive more equitable policies, as well.

- Laura Bozzi: One of the ways to protect health is to make people safe inside their homes. This is an intersection between housing, DEEP, and funding through the Green Bank. This is a great time to make sure that these initiatives have public health in mind.

Public Comments: *For full comments please see the Zoom recording and/or audio transcript*

None

Adjourn and Next Steps

Alanis announced the EEJ and Public Health and Safety meeting for Nov. 15th at 4:00 PM.

Chat Record:

00:15:56 Martha Page: Martha Page, Hartford

00:16:06 Heather Aaron: Good Morning Heather Aaron Deputy Commissioner DPH

00:16:31 Lori Mathieu: good morning, Lori Mathieu, Branch Chief, Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch at the CT DPH

00:16:52 Steven Wallett: Good morning all. Steven Wallett, Dept of Public Health, Drinking Water Section. Happy Halloween!

00:17:06 Jennifer O'Brien: Jennifer O'Brien, Community Foundation of ECT

00:17:35 Laura Bozzi: Good morning, Laura Bozzi from the Yale Center on Climate Change and Health

00:17:41 Meghan Doyle: Meghan Doyle, Sustainability Fellow at QU

00:17:48 Anne Hulick: Good morning. Anne Hulick, CT director Clean Water Action, nurse/environmental health advocate

00:18:05 Joanna Wozniak-Brown: Joanna Wozniak-Brown, CT Office of Policy & Management

00:18:15 Christopher Silver: Good morning, Chris Silver from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Im a Data Scientist

00:18:30 Elizabeth Gara: Elizabeth (Betsy) Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)

00:18:44 Cynthia Costa: Good morning, Cindy Costa from CT Dept. of Public Health Food Protection Program.

00:19:26 David Murphy: David Murphy, CIRCA, just visiting the meeting today. Not a working group member. Here to support Yaprak and Louanne.

00:21:15 Aicha Woods, FCCHO, EJ working group liason, (she/her/hers): Aicha Woods, EJ wg, FCCHO

00:24:45 Diane Lauricella: Good morning! Diane Lauricella, Norwalk Zero Waste Coalition, GC3 EJ Working Group. Sorry but I must leave early at 9:40 am for a doctor appt. thank you for this discussion!

00:33:27 Christine Hahn-Dunn: Good morning. Christine Hahn-Dunn, Epidemiologist at DPH, Environmental Health & Drinking Water Branch/ CDC BRACE Program

00:40:26 Yaprak Onat: The detailed information about the heat sensor project can be reached from "Learning From Heat Sensor Research and Implications for Future Climate Extremes" webinar <https://resilientconnecticut.uconn.edu/2022/09/07/september-27-ct-summer-heat-wave-webinar/>

00:49:14 Diane Lauricella: Thank you for the presentation. I have to leave early but my question is: CIRCA, will you plan to place heat sensors on residents and select workers ?

00:58:02 BergeronBre: Maybe include the Department of Agriculture in the small food security working group?

01:00:24 Anne Hulick: Great presentations. The discussion gives me hope!

01:01:29 Louanne Cooley: not to harp on zoning too much- but zoneing regs can enable and protect food options like front yard gardens, planing of fruit trees in public areas, etc. See the Sustainable Development Model Code for other food related zoning actions.
<https://sustainablecitycode.org>

01:07:44 Lori Mathieu: thank you Louanne

01:08:49 Mariana Fragomeni: Absolutely, indoor sickness is an important issue. The intersection of planning and design is highly important.

01:08:55 Mariana Fragomeni: Great point Laura!

01:08:57 Aicha Woods, FCCHO, EJ working group liason, (she/her/hers): Thank you
Laura for elevating access to safe affordable housing!

01:11:18 Anne Hulick: Thank you all!