
**Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3)
Equity and Environmental Justice and Adaptation
Breakout Session
MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date: October 13, 2020
Meeting Time: 5:30-6:30 pm
Meeting Location: Zoom**

ATTENDANCE

| Attendee | Organization | | Present |
|--------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Gloria Feimann | Senior Center, Branford CT | | √ |
| Alec Shub | DEEP | | √ |
| Kevin Grigg | Fuss and O'Neill | | √ |
| Kimberly Stoner | | | √ |
| Mark Mitchell | Chair of Adaptation Subcommittee of EEJ | | √ |
| Aicha Woods | City of New Haven Director of city plan | | √ |
| Ming-May Hu | | | √ |
| Kathleen Fay | Neighborhood housing services of new haven | | √ |
| David Sutherland | Nature Conservancy | | √ |
| Andrew Lopez | | | √ |
| Levon Bigelow | Graduate Student UCONN | | √ |
| Allen Kratz | Resilience Works LLC | | √ |
| Mary Pelletier | Park Watershed | | √ |
| Joseph Marrone | Arcadis | | √ |
| Denise Savageau | Conncticut Council Soil Water Conservation | | √ |
| Kevin McCarthy | Legislative Analyst | | √ |
| Brian Thompson | CT DEEP | | √ |
| Robert LaFrance | Audubon CT | | √ |
| Joanna Wozniak- Brown | UCONN CIRCA | | √ |
| Chris Donnelly | DEEP | | √ |
| Patrick Comins | Audubon CT | | √ |
| Joey Wraithwall | Nature Conservancy | | √ |
| Robert Bell | CDT | | √ |
| Alexia Godron | Yale Student | | √ |
| Anthony Cherolis | Center for Latino Progress | | √ |
| Anthony Allen | Save the Sound | | √ |
| David Michel | State Rep | | √ |
| James O'Donnell | UCONN CIRCA | | √ |

AGENDA & NOTES

Equity and Environmental Justice and Adaptation Breakout Session

Breakout session moderated by Mark Mitchell, Chair of Adaptation Subcommittee of Equity and Environmental Justice working group

Mark Mitchell opened the conversation to questions and comments on the working group recommendations.

Mary Pelletier

- How are the local adaptation plans going to be related to local plans of conservation and development?

Mark Mitchell

- The group did not specify how the plans would be incorporated into other plans but there was some discussion about including them part of the plan of conservation and development
- However, they would include the requirement that they be done more frequent than every 10 years and also have a focus on impacting the residents that are most impacted
- Part of the work that needs to be done in 2021 is to develop the guidelines on how this should be done to include community residents

Mary Pelletier

- How about the relationship of a climate adaptation plan to what something like Sustainable CT is putting out there?
- My recommendation is that you utilize all of those already existing structures
- How do you address the need to innovate given that you also have to bring the public along?

Mark Mitchell

- One of the things we need to talk about is educating people before we get their input

Denise Savageau

- Part of preparedness planning must include communications during and before storm events
- There has to be a focus on communication ahead of time
- We are good at emergency response the day of the event and the day after but when you do not have power for a week, vulnerable communities are at a very high risk
- We need to reclaim the floodplains as open space, rather than displacing communities and gentrifying those areas

Joey Wraithwall

- In California there's a requirement that all hazard mitigation plans cover climate adaptation
- SB379 in California could be a good model to look at
- This is a good tool for accessing pre and post hazard funds from FEMA

Anthony Cherolis

- Green infrastructure is going to be important in regards to equity and environmental justice
- Increasing tree canopy and reducing contaminated stormwater runoff
- There is money that could be going to carbon capture, tree canopy increase yet instead, we are putting this money into digging underground storage tunnels and gray infrastructure
- These projects have not considered co-benefits with equity and environmental justice

Kimberly Stoner

- There's a great deal of emphasis on local planning
- There are state agencies that can impose on the local communities without having public participation and input from vulnerable communities, such as the CT Siting Council

- It is important to put in the report that this type of participation needs to happen on the regional and local level as well as the state level

Anthony Allen

- We need to invest in a way that can bring development but does not bring displacement
- We think a lot about coastal communities but it's also important to think about inland communities and the flooding that will increase there

Kathleen Fay

- One of the principals needs to be questioning restrictions on funding, especially when funds are being restricted only to use for building gray infrastructure
- It is important to question and push back on funding decisions and decision-making bodies that do not serve vulnerable communities
- Additionally, community choice aggregation is a great locally controlled vehicle

Aicha Woods

- I recommend that there must be adequate funding and technical support for local municipalities to carry out these recommendations
- Sometimes there is not the capacity at the municipal level to do the type of community engagement that they would like to
- Create more vehicles for getting communication and receiving comments from the public and specifically the people most impacted by these issues

Mark Mitchell

- There are recommendations for there to be more community grants every year for public education on the GC3 process so that they can know enough to provide input to the process
- Aicha, do you think that adaptation plans should be updated every 5 years?

Aicha Woods

- 10 years is definitely too long
- It needs to be revised more often and include the climate adaptation plan. More of an iterative process would be helpful, where there could be minor updates to the plan between full updates.
- Either a shorter time period or a more fluid process would be beneficial

Denise Savageau

- Mitigation and adaptation. We can't have separate plans. Things need to be joined as one plan because there is so much crossover on these issues.
- A goal for 2021 needs to be that we have one plan
- This is a good opportunity for the group from Equity and Environmental Justice to push

Robert LaFrance

- Connecticut Conservation Core could be used as a model of thinking about involving youth to organize
- It would be a good way to bring together a community of people who are looking for work with people who have planning backgrounds
- A pilot program to use as a model would be a good way to get a project off the ground

There was an additional suggestion that there be Environmental Justice input into the MDC's plans for water and sewage management.

Mark Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:20 pm.

NOTE: Slides and presentations are available on GC3 web page: www.ct.gov/deep/gc3

Chat Record

- 17:41:46 From Anthony Cherolis : Is this chat specific to the Adaptation breakout?
- 17:42:05 From Alec Shub : Yes it is
- 17:44:50 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : Forgot to say I was on the Infrastructure & Land Use working group and the Public Health & Safety working group.
- 17:46:40 From Anthony Cherolis : From an adaptation side, I'm quite interested in the topic of "managed retreat" for low lying coastal communities, and how that could be done cost effectively and informed by who already commands the most resources and political power in our state. My worry as a resident in a low income community is that we're going to be spending an inordinate amount of our state's adaptation attention and funds trying to save and maintain coastal 2nd homes for wealthy households while our cities turn into scorching heat islands.
- 17:49:26 From Anthony Cherolis : If one looks at how Connecticut spent funds post Hurricane Sandy, most of that went to those wealthy coastal homes and communities. I would hate for that approach to be our go-to approach for how the state plans for and spends adaptation funds. Building giant sea walls and putting 2nd homes on stilts isn't an equitable or efficient climate change adaptation approach.
- 17:50:00 From Andrew Lopez : <https://sustainablect.org/about/participating-communities/>
- 17:52:45 From Anthony Cherolis : I'd like to speak
- 17:52:45 From Rep. David Michel : Adaptation in infrastructure, should include for recommendations to diminish the impervious area of new construction, stormwater mitigation BMPs to be mandated, If any new construction project takes away trees then there should be replanting of equal or better carbon absorption and shade..
- 17:54:10 From Andrew Lopez : CT DOT controls a number of roads in New London that are stormwater nightmares, directly discharging polluted runoff directly into Long Island Sound. Would love to see that addressed with pollinator friendly bioswales and stormwater retention plantings along roadways
- 17:54:40 From Andrew Lopez : Ditto bike lanes in towns on state controlled roads
- 17:54:59 From Anthony Cherolis : Huzzah for green infrastructure and bio-swales.
- 17:55:01 From Patrick Comins : Absolutely!
- 17:55:23 From Patrick Comins : Re Denise's comments about protecting open space buffers
- 17:56:19 From Anthony Cherolis : Getting bicycle infrastructure on state roads shouldn't be so darn hard.
- 17:56:30 From Anthony Cherolis : We have so many state routes cutting through town centers and cities.
- 17:56:49 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : Most municipalities already have NHMPs and are required by state legislation to have comprehensive plans. Neither require climate change with the exception of some coastal impacts.
- 17:57:10 From Kathleen Fay : Also when considering flooding hazard planning, it is important to pay attention to where toxins are more likely to spill into the floodwaters.
- 17:58:33 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : *neither require climate change consideration as of now.
- 17:59:22 From Denise Savageau : Requiring HMP to include climate change is a good thing
- 17:59:46 From Rep. David Michel : yes
- 18:00:38 From Joanna Wozniak-Brown : Yes, definitely, as should the POCDs. NHMPs are 5 year time frames and POCDs are 10 year. There should also be a vehicle to be thinking about 30-50 years.
- 18:01:06 From Anthony Cherolis : This MDC plan (approved by CT DEEP) is trash relative to green infrastructure and climate adaptation - <https://themdc.org/long-term-control-plan-update/>

18:02:13 From Anthony Cherolis : There is massive funding available for reducing stormwater contamination and almost zero being spent on green infrastructure in the Hartford metro area. MDC ignored calls for green infrastructure that were clearly documented in many of the public comments submitted.

18:04:25 From Joseph Marrone : thanks for some good discussion everyone - unfortunately need to drop.

18:04:48 From Anthony Cherolis : Green infrastructure, maintenance plans and funding (with jobs) for that green infra, and tree canopy increase are particularly important in low income urban communities that are currently overburdened with air pollution issues - and losing a lot of trees with drought and climate change. I wrote a 2018 article on how the MDC plan totally ignored ghg emissions, air pollution reduction, and equity/EJ co-benefits ---
<http://allfamoustogether.blogspot.com/2018/12/lets-get-wet-green-infrastructure-ftw.html>

18:04:55 From Denise Savageau : Environmental health = community health so adaptation policies for EEJ need to go hand in hand

18:06:55 From Mary Pelletier : Please note that I recommended green infrastructure for stormwater run-off at every single MDC Citizens Advisory Committee meeting from 2004-2014. A green infrastructure sub-committee was created, however the MDC choose to follow the recommendation pushed by Jennifer Cassidy, to simply install a green infrastructure feature on their property (at the south side of the MDC headquarters on Main Street. There needs to be unified citizen - and community group - interest in green infrastructure for stormwater runoff. At the time that MDC was making decisions established organizations such as Hartford 2000, Metro Hartford Alliance, and others choose to advance other local interests. For example the West End Civic Association spent years encouraging Mayors Perez and Segarra to insist that MDC LTCP funding be spent on blue stone sidewalks. The long list reasons community groups declined to support green infrastructure underscore the need for educational programs that help communities understand the design.

18:07:22 From Andrew Lopez : Amen!

18:07:29 From Andrew Lopez : CCA needed in CT

18:08:08 From Anthony Allen : In New Haven, green infrastructure is exceedingly effective due to sandy soils. That unfortunately is not the case in Hartford, where soil composition and depth to bedrock is different and less conducive to green infrastructure. That's my understanding - AND, there are many types of green infrastructure and I struggle to think that it can't be part of the solution there as it has been in New Haven!

18:08:23 From Anthony Cherolis : @Mary - Huzzah. You've been putting in that important work for a long time. I can attest to that. MDC has worked against meaningful green infrastructure for a long time, and we've seen no support from CT DEEP on this topic. Now that we're heading into a climate emergency, perhaps we can wake them up?

18:10:01 From Denise Savageau : There are adaptation benefits to energy generation especially from distributed generations. For example increasing rooftop solar in urban areas can reduce heat island effect.

18:10:29 From Kevin McCarthy : Anthony Allen, I suspect soil types vary within municipalities. I wouldn't be surprised in green infrastructure would work near the Park River in Hartford.

18:10:38 From Anthony Cherolis : @Anthony Allen - MDC wouldn't even consider a 10% spend of the \$2 billion on green infrastructure, depaving, green roofs, tree planting and maintenance, etc. The co-benefits of ground level green infrastructure would be transformational in many Hartford environmental and economic justice communities.

18:11:18 From Anthony Cherolis : MDC and CT DEEP had no way to evaluate and weren't interested in evaluating co-benefits.

18:11:38 From Anthony Cherolis : ***** They chose to work in a silo.

18:12:01 From Kathleen Fay : And energy efficiency work and electrification with heat pumps instead of fossil fuel heating (which also creates cooling) are good for helping vulnerable communities weather extreme heat events

18:12:40 From Mary Pelletier : Park Watershed is recommending that the GC3 identify 4-6 comprehensive pilot areas that flow through urban-suburban communities. Asking that the GC3 advance a pilot project would help motivate an iterative process of policy and implementation

18:13:11 From Anthony Cherolis : @Katheen - We'd love to have more programs that get solar on existing apartment buildings and multi-family housing (and rentals) in Hartford. Right now, most of those programs serve home owners (middle and upper income) best.

18:14:22 From Anthony Allen : @Kevin and @Anthony absolutely! Many types of green infrastructure that don't rely heavily (or at all) on soil infiltration rates, and certainly areas of Hartford where I imagine rain gardens and bioswales would work as well... it's just going to look different for every city. Save the Sound is continuing to look at new green infrastructure technologies to pilot in the region, in addition to the many that already exist, and we'd love to see more happen in Hartford!

18:14:34 From Rep. David Michel : I have been working on some language for stormwater management upgrades throughout the state, including reducing %age of impermeability on new construction projects, banning EIFS, etc. I will be resuming after elections. Don't hesitate to reach out..The legislature should be able to help with the support of the Governor's team and the DEEP. Obviously the governor is working on Climate change..and we can fuse legislative work together..before or after introductions of bills.

18:15:08 From Joey Wraithwall : Sorry to repeat my comments in multiple venues, but in California a foundation-funded Climate Justice Working Group was convened to meet with state agency staff to review and report on key recommendations during the development of the state adaptation strategy, ultimately providing the structure of the State's Climate Justice chapter that showed how climate equity concerns appeared through the 11 other chapters in the plan. The Climate Justice Working Group members were compensated for their time, and meeting costs and travel were covered over the course of 18 months. Some state agencies held additional workshops (on public health and other topics) that compensated community groups for facilitation and services for inclusion (translation, childcare, and others).

18:16:07 From Anthony Cherolis : Hartford already has great zoning for new build and green infrastructure. The problem is that we need \$\$ to go back and add green infrastructure into our existing streets and buildings. The first thing we should do is de-pave all those state lots (free parking for state of CT employees) in Hartford. Ha!

18:16:12 From Kathleen Fay : @Anthony C. Yes, this is true statewide. I am working on a program called I Heart My Home CT that has a strong emphasis on energy work on 2-4 family homes, because the communities NHS of New Haven serves reside mostly in 2-4 family buildings...

18:18:05 From Mary Pelletier : Park Watershed has worked with other partners, most notably North Central Conservation District (with F&O) to install three bioretention basins/green infrastructure features (2014-2015) to capture stormwater runoff from three large state parking lots. This work has been funded through the federal Clean Water Act. Park Watershed also installed a green infrastructure feature at the Classical Magnet School in 2008. We are currently maintaining these features and welcome volunteers interested

18:19:33 From Anthony Cherolis : We need youth and adult jobs programs in CT's low income urban communities. CT Conservation Corp is a great idea. How can we further that and get it funded as a pilot in 2021?

18:20:02 From Patrick Comins : Thank you.

18:20:36 From Anthony Cherolis : Our unemployment is through the roof right now post COVID. Folks are very worried about the next couple of months and into 2021. Jobs, rent, food. They're not thinking about clean air.

18:21:04 From Kathleen Fay : And don't forget to save the chat please
18:21:25 From Kathleen Fay : Thank you