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

Meeting Date: April 29, 2020

Meeting Time: 5:30-
7:20pm

Meeting Location:
Zoom Conference

ATTENDANCE

In addition to the below working group members and government staff, over 50 members of the public attended the meeting.

Working Group Member		Organization	Present
Lee Cruz	Co-Chair	The Community Foundation of Greater New	X
Marianne Engelman-Lado	Co-Chair	Yale School of Public Health	X
Alex Rodriguez		CT League of Conservation Voters	X
Brenda Greer		Pawcatuck Eastern Pequots	
Emily Basham		CT Green Bank	X
Gina Calabro		AIA CT	
John Humphries		CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs	X
Julie Jones		NAACP	
Kathleen Donovan		PSE&G	
Leticia Colon		Efficiency for All	X
Lynne Bonnett		Greater New Haven Green Fund	X
Michael Piscatelli		City of New Haven	
Orlando Velazco		CT Department of Public Health	X
Stanley Lord		NAACP	
Sena Wazer		Sunrise Movement	X
Sharon Lewis		CT Coalition for Environmental Justice	
Shubhada Kambli		City of Hartford	
Stephanye Clark		Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	X
Tyra Penn		Town of Thompson	X

Steve Schrag		Waterbury	
Deborah Thomas-Sims		Bridgeport Office of Neighborhood Revitalization	
Maisa Tisdale		Freeman Center	
Cynthia Jennings		CCEJ	X
Marissa Rivera		Disability Rights Connecticut	X
Mark Mitchell		George Mason University	X
Maryam Elahi		Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut	
Kenny Foscue		North Haven Clean Energy Task Force	X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Edith Pestana	Administrator	DEEP	X
James Albis	Senior Advisor to the Commissioner	DEEP	X

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

Introduction

Facilitated by Marianne Engelman-Lado, Yale School of Public Health

- After James discussed logistics, Lee convened the meeting and introduced himself.
- Marianne asked attending members to introduce themselves, identify their organizations, and identify their preferred sub-groups.
- The below members identified their preferred sub-groups.

Lee Cruz	Public Participation
Alex Rodriguez	Mitigation, Public Participation
Emily Cashum	Mitigation, Mapping Tool
John Humphries	Mitigation
Orlando Velazco	Mapping Tool
Sena Wazer	Mitigation, Public Participation
Stephanye Clark	Public Participation
Tyra Penn	Adaptation
Marissa Rivera	To Be Determined
Mark Mitchell	Adaptation

Next steps:

- Determine the preferred sub-groups of other members

Update on the Work of the GC3

James Albis, DEEP

- James provided an update on the GC3's work status. (See slide presentation.)

Next steps:

- Highlight next steps and action items
- Ensure that the chat from the Zoom meeting is preserved

Public Participation Documents

- Marianne Engelman-Lado provided a presentation on the content in draft public participation documents. (See slide presentation.)
- The draft public participation documents are available on the GC3 website for public comment. Link: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Draft-Public-Participation-Documents>
- These drafts have been shared with the co-chairs of working groups across the GC3 to inform their work.
- During the presentation, Lee Cruz also noted the use of social media and how that can help advertise the GC3's work. Mr. Cruz also noted that Zoom provides a video to train individuals on how to use the website, and he noted the GC3 EEJ email that the public may use to provide feedback.
- During the presentation, Leticia Colon noted that equity requires work and that the GC3 must prioritize that work.

Next steps:

- Have the public participation sub-group consider comments from the public, report those comments to the full working group, and incorporate feedback so as to finalize the public participation guidance.

Progress on Mitigation Working Group

Brenda Watson, Co-Chair for Progress on Mitigation Working Group

- Brenda Watson provided a presentation on the work of their working group and on how that work intersects with issues of equity. (See slide presentation.)

Public comments

Mary Pelletier

- Ms. Pelletier has concerns about urban rivers.
 - She asked about how to get issues that have been submitted in the past brought to the forefront.
 - James Albis provided a response, noting that the other working groups can, should, and will integrate urban issues into their planning.
 - Ms. Pelletier noted that would like for case studies and funding will go beyond coastal areas.
- Ms. Pelletier also, later, asked whether the GC3 is assuming that people will come because they find information online or whether the GC3 will be reaching out to a wide swath of community-based organizations.

Kathy Fay

- Ms. Fay asked: How will we know that groups have adhered to the Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making checklist?
 - Marianne Engelman-Lado provided a response noting that the draft public participation documents call for the development of a public participation plan by each working group and reporting on progress in implementation of each plan. The drafts require building accountability into this work for all parts of

- Ms. Fay also asked: Will there be a timeline for other groups to create public participation plans?

Orlando Velazco

- Mr. Velazco asked how people can catch up if they are unable to attend meetings.
 - Marianne Engelman-Lado indicated that videos will be uploaded to the GC3 website.
- Mr. Velazco also asked if community members could co-chair meetings.
 - Marianne Engelman-Lado noted that there would need to be a process to engage the community at all levels to execute this.
 - She also noted that community representatives are on many of the working groups, playing vital roles on those groups.

Cynthia Jennings

- Ms. Jennings noted that the state may have resources to provide to the community to help facilitate their participation in meetings. She noted that forums already exist and that the GC3 can use those forums to get out its message.

Alex Rodriguez

- Mr. Rodriguez asked Brenda Watson about the Mitigation Committee's plans for helping support people to navigate asbestos removal.

Laura Cahn

- Ms. Cahn noted that the Mitigation groups should focus on toxic output from lawn maintenance tools and similar devices.

Leticia Colon

- Ms. Colon noted that people in positions of power and decision-making often lack the knowledge or experience of communities that have been disadvantaged.
- Ms. Watson flagged that the government needs to invest resources to get people from disadvantaged communities to participate; otherwise, organizations that represent those individuals need to participate on their behalf and educate leaders.

Denise Savageau

- Ms. Savageau emphasized that she is pleased that the Mitigation group will make equity-based recommendations and call those recommendations out. But she wants to ensure that equity infuses all of the Mitigation group's recommendations not just those are "equity focused." She participates on the Natural Lands group and wants to use any framework or matrix that the Mitigation group has developed for their own work.

Kirsten Ek

- Ms. Ek asked if the state of Connecticut has a resettlement plan for people who live in coastal communities. Ms. Ek also asked whether such a plan will be equitable.
 - Mr. Mitchell noted that a goal of environmental justice would be to allow people to return after disasters.
 - Ms. Savageau noted that, in the case of sea level rise, it may make sense to buy people out of homes at good prices, resettle those people, and convert their neighborhoods to flood plains and public spaces.
- Ms. Ek also asked about how we can cope with Hartford's sludge in instances of major floods.

- Ms. Savageau noted that an infrastructure committee is looking at assets like that and seeking to move them out of flood plains.
- Lynne Bonnett asked if anaerobic digestion is being explored in the infrastructure group.
- Ms. Savageau stated that a group within the mitigation group should be exploring issues of anaerobic digestion.

NOTE: *Presentation slides and video and audio recordings of the meeting are available on GC3 web page: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Climate-Change/GC3/Subcommittee-and--working-groups>*