



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Land Subcommittee**

**Thursday, Sept 5, 2024
1:00-3:00 PM**

Meeting Recording:

<https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/iPpCoD6optRYAz88Rc66JenD2rQoJHk9PLTD2zlaEM8QSdGQYC-yafaFH7j3dlrw.9sk0TriSJaFxWAXn>

Welcome

The Chair went over the ground rules, the goals of the land subcommittee, and the agenda.

Presentation – What are brownfields? What is Remediation?

Amanda Limacher, Brownfields Coordinator from CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and Binu Chandy, Director of the Office of Brownfield Remediation & Development at Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) provided presentations on brownfields and remediation.

A brownfield or underutilized site is where redevelopment, reuse, or expansion has not occurred due to the presence or potential presence of pollution. Additionally, DEEP's presentation provided a brief overview of multiple remediation programs and the environmental site assessment process. They also announced the new DEEP CERCLA 128(a) Grant Program.

DECD went over their Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development (OBRD) and the tools it provides including grants, low-interest loans, liability relief programs, and the Brownfield Land Bank Program.

Questions from the public:

- Kathy Czepiel: Curious about the liability relief program since that has been an issue with the Six Lakes effort.
 - Binu Chandy and Graham Stevens (Bureau Chief, CT DEEP) responded by providing more information about the liability relief programs.
 - Kathy followed up by raising awareness of groups not taking ownership of properties even after it is certified to be cleaned up.

- Graham acknowledged this concern and explained the covenant not to sue which is an agreement from the state of CT that they will clean up the site and will not take action against them if pollution (not initially found) is found. This does not prevent the federal government or other groups to sue. DEEP has the tools to facilitate good actors and clean up sites.
- Debbie Sims: On the Meriden Green Project how long did it take from beginning to completion?
 - Binu said this was done in 2-3 years.
 - Graham chimed in by saying it probably took longer since the location has undergone a massive transformation over the years since it was prone to flooding.

Panelists Present Brownfields Projects

Justin Farmer provided an overview of the Six Lakes Parks Coalition as well as next steps they have. Six Lakes is a 102.5-acre hidden oasis of quiet forest and ponds bordering the neighborhoods of Newhall and Whitneyville and the Farmington Canal Rail Trail.

Debbie Sims delivered a presentation titled Mount Trashmore to Mount Growmore: Community Driven Health, Environmental and Economic Revitalization. Born from the East End NRZ Market & Cafe and was created to address the issue of the food desert. Debbie covered the programs they have through the Mount Trashmore to Mount Growmore efforts. Suzi Ruhl, with the Child Study Center at Yale School of Medicine, shared about the Brownfields to Healthfields (B2H) effort.

Kamora Herrington presented on the Sterling Street Sanctuary and Nature Reserve. They offer a space that provides community service and education programs. They also have a labyrinth surrounded by an herb garden. They center Cultural Humility in their work.

Trust for Public Land (Walker Holmes and Honor Lawler) presented on supporting multiple efforts and their role helping with logistical challenges.

Knox Hartford (Patrick Doyle) talked about how Knox is the current holder of the land at Sterling St as a part of their role in this project.

Discussion and Q&A

- Janice Flemming-Butler, Founder of the Voices of Women of Color: DEEP and DECD should look at their grant structures and how they see/issue grants. Not everyone is interested in being a 501(c)3 and many residents do not work for municipalities. Jancie would like to see more innovative and creative ways around funding from state agencies and large nonprofits. Did not see any presentations from Hartford.

- Graham appreciated Janice’s comments and acknowledged how government is slow to grow and adapt. Graham said he wants to see what DEEP can do. For this particular grant program its federally derived making it harder to be innovative. DEEP has been shifting to bring in communities, tribes, and educational institutions since municipalities may not support them.
- Binu shared on behalf of DECD that their program is very statutory based which has limits on what they can do. Binu suggested Janice advocate their ideas to the legislature who can create those creative programs. DECD is doing its best to support community-based programs.
- Ashley Stewart: There are great projects with interests in brownfields clean up and urban lands. Would like the panelists to talk more about the hurdles, slow points, and what is missing to create more programs like the ones that were presented. Also shared appreciation for this forum.
 - Kamora: Echoed Ashley’s point around funding. She believes people do not believe in conservation if they believe the space needs to make economical sense.
 - Debbie Sims: Shared how they have a better relationship with the state than the city since they are the ones that help secure funds. Janice gave Debbie props for the work they have been doing and then mentioned how state agency should encourage larger nonprofits to have subcontractors that are smaller community organizations.
 - Patric Doyle: Important to preserve these spaces. Hopes others are as inspired as him by the panelists. Appreciates the nods towards the challenges.

List of Participants:

Alissa Bullard Bumstead	Normandy Avery	Marc Gonzalez
Sarah Huang	Aaron Goode	Jacquelyn Torres
Alex Rodriguez	joanna sebek	Kathy Czepiel
Kathleen Young	Lydia Kubiak	Lily Poling
Adrienne Houel	Paul Aresta	Kelsey Shields
Carl Gruszczak	Ashley Stewart	Sally Kruse
Caitlin Daddona	Melissa Fahnestock	Killian Duborg
Ricardo Rodriguez	Eric Boswell	Debbie Sims
Lily Engbith	Mike Caplan	Chase Lindemann
Tim O'Connor	Emily Bigl	Julianna McVeigh
Doris Johnson	Devin Brown	Teresa Eickel
David Wilson	Lindsay Suhr	Aicha Woods
Jon Schaefer	Karen Weeks	Diane Lauricella
Anstress Farwell	Mark Lewis	Kara Prunty
Mitchell Wiest	Jhoni Ada	Danielle Petretta

Yaw Darko
Ryan Boggio
Kassandra Vazquez-Felipe
Amanda Limacher
Jelani Fletcher
kamora herrington
Shalyn Zappulla
Justine Phillips-Gallucci
Ray Frigon
Binu Chandy
Reginald Fortcolin
Walker Holmes
Rahiem Eleazer
louisa barton
Patrick Doyle
Honor Lawler
Meena Mortazavi
MaryLu Sanders
Sheila Barney
Sally Kruse
Kimberly Bradley
Jonathon Savage
Janice Flemming-Butler
Elizabeth Hayes
Shannon M
Rebecca Augur
Tayarisha Batchelor
Maybeth Morales-Davis
Suzi Ruhl
Graham Stevens
Emma Cimino
Joy Yakie
Justin Farmer
Terry Adams
Pallavi Mande
Annie Decker
DJ Plis
Martha Kelly
Akiebia Hicks