



DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Thursday October 13, 2022

Quarterly Business Meeting

At 3:00pm, Chairman Dr. Jim Johnson called the meeting to order, read the ethics statement.

Board members present:

Jeff Anstead

Veronica Carter

Randee Haven-O'Donnell

Chairman Dr. Jim Johnson

Vice-Chair Dr. Marian Johnson-Thompson

Carolina Fonseca Jimenez

Dr. Danelle Lobdell

Marilynn Marsh-Robinson

Rev. Dr. Rodney Sadler Jr.

Carlos Velazquez

Sherri White-Williamson

Board members absent:

William Barber, III

Naeema Muhammad

Dr. Deepak Kumar

Elke Weil

La'Meshia Whittington

Old Business

Hearing no proposed adjustments to February 28, 2022, meeting minutes, a motion made by Sherri White-Williamson to accept the meeting minutes as printed, which was seconded by Ms. Carter.

Hearing no proposed adjustments to May 19, 2022, and August 11, 2022, meeting minutes, a motion made by Ms. Carter to accept the meeting minutes as printed, which was seconded by Dr. Johnson-Thompson.

Hearing no proposed adjustments to August 11, 2022, meeting minutes, a motion made by Dr. Johnson-Thompson to accept the meeting minutes as printed, which was seconded by Ms. Marsh-Robinson.

New Business

I. Welcoming Remarks, Elizabeth Biser, Secretary, DEQ (5 min)

Secretary Biser began the opening remarks with the visit to Warren County for EPA's announcement of the new Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights. DEQ is acknowledging Hispanic Heritage Month and is fostering new partnerships with organizations that serve Hispanic and Latino/a populations to expand outreach and improve language access. October 10th was Indigenous Peoples Day and next month will be Native American Heritage Month. Secretary Biser stressed the importance of continuing to develop government-to-government dialogue with Native American Tribes in North Carolina; as well as the importance of elevating diverse voices, especially in the pursuit of Environmental Justice. DEQ visited Ivanhoe, NC to celebrate the funding of water infrastructure projects. Secretary Biser summarized the upcoming funding programs for lead service line replacement.

II. Equitable Access to Healthy Outdoor Recreation: The Other Side of the Environmental Justice Coin, Reid Wilson, Secretary, DNCR (20 min)

Secretary Wilson presented on incorporating Environmental Justice at the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR).

Rev. Dr. Sadler asked if DNCR has been in contact with county community centers and to what extent has DNCR reached out to churches and faith-based communities.

Jeff Michael responded that DNCR recently met with ministers from Charlotte, NC to begin building partnerships with faith-based communities. DNCR looks at communities at the census tract level as well as municipalities.

Rev. Dr. Sadler offered to help DNCR with this endeavor and asked how DNCR can make state parks more welcoming to all people. Rev. Dr. Sadler provided the example, not allowing confederate flags within 1 mile from a state park.

Secretary Wilson responded possibly a DOT issue but will investigate and follow-up.

Ms. Carter asked about using DNCR staff and expertise to help with a 501C3 to expand a Gullah Geechee trail/park/greenway/blueway from the boarder of Warren County and Brunswick County up to Jacksonville, NC.

Secretary Wilson responded they will follow-up to decide whether to discuss with local legislators to possibly create an official state greenway. Dewayne added for Ms. Carter to call him and can offer advice on next steps.

Ms. White-Williamson asked about efforts what made in rural areas of North Carolina.

Secretary Wilson responded the rural areas without a state park is a priority, but it is also challenging.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked how the establishment of new parks is incorporating preservation and conservation best practices.

Secretary Wilson responded over the years, more than \$1 billion from the Land and Water Fund has gone to mainly protect forest and stream banks. These protected areas serve as carbon sinks, pollution buffers, flood mitigators. Funds from the Land and Water Fund has also gone to flood disaster avoidance projects.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked what the conversations with DOT are to encourage more natural trails.

Secretary Wilson responded that we strive to stick to natural surface trails but also must keep in mind accessibility.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked what is being done about recreation surface water and the safety of the water quality.

Secretary Wilson responded that DNCR's focus is preservation versus restoration and water quality improvement.

Chairman Johnson asked if any of the new funding opportunities were going into parks for the improvement of underserved community health. Chairman Johnson also asked what the major regulatory policy barriers are for DNCR.

Secretary Wilson responded this was a great suggestion and will follow-up.

Chairman Dr. Jim Johnson responded happy to discuss this further in the future.

Secretary Wilson responded about barriers that each grant program includes a requirement for scoring financial benefits which can be difficult for projects in an underserved community.

III. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative EJ Report, Renee Kramer, EJ Coordinator, DEQ (20 min)

Renee Kramer and Katherine Quinlan presented on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) EJ Report. Ms. Quinlan explained the background of RGGI and the RGGI process for North Carolina. Ms. Kramer explained the EJ Report for RGGI concluding with the recommendations for outreach.

Mr. Anstead observed on the County Health Rankings table, Native American Counties, specifically Richmond and Halifax County, had the highest health rankings, indicated the worst outcomes for health.

Rev. Dr. Sadler asked why the revenue process for RGGI in North Carolina is this way.

Ms. Quinlan responded that is the way the Petition Rule was written by the third-party petitioners and the Environmental Management Commission voted to allow it to move forward to rule-making as written.

Rev. Dr. Sadler is there any way we can request an alternative.

Ms. Quinlan responded there will be a public comment process. Randy Strait (DEQ, Air Quality Division) added that reason the Petition Rule was written this way is because North Carolina does not have state legislation to authorize the state to participate in RGGI like the other states.

Rev. Dr. Sadler asked where the revenue is going in the other RGGI states.

Ms. Kramer responded that ~13% of RGGI revenues have been invested into disadvantaged/underserved/EJ communities. Ms. Kramer offered to follow-up with more information.

IV. Lead Service Lines Initiative, Shadi Eskaf, DEQ (30 min)

Dr. Rebecca Sadosky presented on the lead service line inventory and presence in North Carolina.

Mr. Eskaf presented on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding opportunities related to lead service line replacement.

Ms. Carter asked does this funding cover the homeowner's side of the pipes as well as the utility's side.

Mr. Eskaf responded yes; the funding covers the service line on both sides of the meter but does not include the plumbing that's inside the house.

Mr. Anstead asked are Tribal communities eligible for this funding to potentially replace lead service lines.

Mr. Eskaf responded eligible funding recipients include local government units, non-profits, water utilities, and investor-owned utilities.

Mr. Anstead replied that his tribe would be eligible because they are classified as a local government entity.

Mr. Eskaf responded yes; as a local government you would be eligible. The BIL would be providing funding to the public water system that tribal communities may be located within and therefore benefit from.

Chairman Johnson asked the board members to only ask one question per person and submit the rest to Mr. Eskaf after the meeting.

Mr. Velazquez commented about the 5-year plan, that a lot can change with population within 2 to 5 years. Mr. Velazquez asked if there are any educational materials being sent to home buyers, particularly Hispanic or Latino/a households, before purchasing a house. Additionally, is there a phone number Spanish speakers can call to receive information is Spanish?

Mr. Eskaf clarified that the 5 years means there is 5 years of funding not necessarily a 5-year project. The drinking water allocation from the EPA is based on the infrastructure needs determined by a survey submitted by each state. Mr. Eskaf referred to public affairs to answer the outreach materials to homeowners question.

Chairman Johnson opened the floor to all questions from members of the board instead of sending emails after the meeting.

Ms. Carter asked how the utilities will be monitored in how they use their funding and work with homeowners.

Mr. Eskaf responded DWI has handled Principal Forgiveness Loans before and local governments are familiar with this process.

Dr. Johnson-Thompson asked to explain again the service line sections that are covered when a utility receives funding.

Mr. Eskaf responded if the homeowner's portion of the service line (the line between the water main and the home) is known to have lead, the funding must be used to cover both sides of the meter but does not include the plumbing that's inside the house.

Rev. Dr. Sadler asked if this will help the water lines of school system's where lead was detected in the water.

Mr. Eskaf responded that DWI is exploring with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) what can be done for schools with lead in their water by either seeing if the schools or eligible for this funding or other funding opportunities to address this problem.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked if there are funding opportunities that municipalities can apply for to help communities replace lead pipes inside the home.

Mr. Eskaf responded not with funding provided by BIL.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked are there other funding opportunities that can address lead pipes inside the home?

Mr. Eskaf responded that is part of the discussions with DHHS.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell asked what the State of North Carolina is doing to help municipalities completely replace lead pipes, similar to weatherization programs.

Mr. Eskaf responded that he is unaware of any programs that exist.

Ms. Haven-O'Donnell suggested to be proactive and start conversations around addressing the replacement of lead pipes inside houses and buildings.

Mr. Eskaf agreed that it is a good idea to explore this further.

Mr. Anstead asked to make sure that minority contractors are used in these projects.

Mr. Eskaf responded we plan to use some of the SRF set asides to direct where the contract services funding goes.

Rev. Dr. Sadler asked to find out if there is a need in communities to assist in the replacement of lead pipes inside houses and buildings.

Ms. Kramer responded yes; the EJ Program Team and DWI will be having further conversations about this in the future.

Dr. Sadosky added that the lead service line inventories are made publicly available so DWI will be able to conduct geospatial analyses to assist further discussions.

Jimmie Bellamy and Zach Pierce, Governor Coopers Policy Office will be presenting at a future board meeting on EO 246: Updates on the EJ engagement process and on the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Analysis.

At 4:40 pm, Mr. Anstead made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. White-Williamson.