**Commission on Environmental & Sustainable Communities (CEJSC)**

Montgomery Park, Baltimore, MD

Aeris Conference Room

September 27, 2016

**Minutes**

**In Attendance**

* Commissioners: Rebecca Rehr, Lisa Nissley, Richards Fairbanks, Steve Levitsky, Vernice Miller-Travis, Charles Glass, Delegate Clarence Lam, J Moye Cornick, John Quinn
* Participants: Duane Johnson, Angelo Bianco, Odessa Neale, Anne Dradley, Laura Rogers, Julie Garbrielli, Stephanie Williams

**Introduction**

Vernice Miller-Travis started the meeting by welcoming everyone and asking everyone to introduce themselves.

Vernice gave a brief update on the July Retreat at Salisbury State University.

**Local Government**

The Baltimore Office of Sustainability gave an update on their sustainability plan. The plan was started in 2009.

* First plan was divided into 7 chapters, 29 goals, 131 strategies
* Served as an umbrella document to organize citywide goals for disparate but related issues into one document.
* Enabled people working on a wide range of issues to be part of the same team pulling toward a common set of goals.

The Question was ask **WHY UPDATE THE PLAN NOW?** The plan needs to be updated because:

* Plan is seven years old
* Much has changed since 2009
* We are developing the updated plan with a consciousness of the racial inequities in Baltimore that exist because of a history of discriminatory public policies and practices, such as real estate redlining, restrictive housing covenants, a transportation system that favors people with cars, etc.
* To update the plan, we are seeking input from a demographic representation of the city, primarily through the use of sustainability ambassadors.
* Since the first plan was released, many sub-plans have emerged with detailed strategies and actions to advance Sustainability Plan goals.
* The updated Sustainability Plan should embrace the goals and strategies put forth in those plans.

Ms. Neale talked about the engagement process:

**Resident Engagement Process**

* Gather resident input by utilizing a team of over 100 trained Sustainability Ambassadors.

**Institutional Engagement**

* Convene issue-based groups
* Convene businesses and institutions

Ms. Neale said that the resident engagement process is under way, and that they are gathering input through 10 teams of ambassadors who are talking to residents all across the city.

We are complementing the ambassador work with a series of issue-focused and other stakeholder meetings…including transportation.

**Timeline for the Plan update is from April 2016-April 2017 which includes:**

* ANNUAL TOWN HALL EVENT - Launch plan update process.
* Engage residents with trained ambassadors.
* Engage businesses, institutions and other stakeholders in meetings hosted by partner organizations.
* Host Community Forum to review input from engagement process.
* Begin utilizing feedback for plan development
* Develop draft plan

Review priorities with stakeholders

Final draft of plan for public comment.

* Present Plan to Planning Commission and City Council
* Release updated Sustainability Plan at Annual Town Hall meeting.

What have been accomplished so far with plan?

* *One PLUS One*
* *Citywide Street Sweeping*
* *Trash can for every household*
* *Food Desert Retail Strategy developed in 2015*
* *Virtual Supermarket provides online grocery ordering at 5 sites*
* *Local Urban Agriculture Plan*
* *Baltimore Energy Challenge trained over 200 energy captains, helped residents on average achieve 4% energy savings*

There were some discussions about how to include equity into the sustainability plan. Vernice said the city needs a definition for equity. Vernice gave an update on equity in Baltimore City and said that it’s sought of troubling that the issue wasn’t discussed in 2009 planning. Vernice said Baltimore with a 63% population of African Americans and 5 % Latino population is sought startling that it’s no definition of what we mean by equitable and environmental justice.

Rebecca Rehr talked about how the federal government defined environmental justice. Rebecca said what Baltimore City is doing with their sustainability plan is commendable because you’re creating a model by which other government agencies can follow.

Rebecca spoke about equality in equity in Baltimore City stating that we know one part of Baltimore may not need what another part may need.

Vernice explained why she hates the word equity from health access to disease and to the rate of mortality in Baltimore City.

Rebecca said the Commission what’s to package and write about the good work that Baltimore City is doing and report that to the Governor’s office.

John Quinn said one thing Baltimore City has been able to do is advance inclusion, John asked how has the office of sustainability been able to train people to go out into the community? He said they been to all of the schools, every community in the city and have sent out plenty of mailings. He said inclusion is what gives you the path to what you’re after and Baltimore City is doing an outstanding job.

Ms. Neale asked the Commission what organizations should be referenced as implementation partners.

* Vernice said the group that is conducting research with the Baltimore City Eco System study would be a good partner.
* Steve Levitsky said having districts create their own individual plans would be a good idea.
* Angelo Bianco suggested partnering with larger institutions around the city that might want to give some guidance.
* Vernice also suggested Morgan State University School of Community and Public Health and the Office of the President, the Morgan Mile Initiative, Blue Water Baltimore and Clean Action.

Ms. Neale asked the Commission what equity issues need to be address.

* Dick Fairbanks said schools.
* Vernice said schools drinking water and the physical plant or conditions of the schools.

Ms. Neale asked the Commission is it any plans out there that the Office of Sustainability should be looking at.

* Vernice said there the Redline Compact Plan consisting of all communities along the Redline.
* The West Baltimore Moving Forward Plan

The Commission encouraged the Office of Sustainability to come back and give an update on the plan in the coming months.

**Commission Vacancies**

The Commission wants an update on vacancies on the Commission, especially the Chair and Vice Chair.

Rebecca suggested having the two elected officials write a letter to the Appointment Office requesting for a Chair for the Commission.

Rebecca nominated Ms. Natalie Burke for Chair of the Commission.

Dick Fairbanks nominated Ms. Destiny Wolford as a Commission member.

**CEJSC Annual Report**

Vernice suggested getting the CEJSC annual report completed following the template and maybe in the future changing the format.

**Case Studies Discussion**

3 focal areas were selected: Baltimore City Office of Sustainability and Equity Plan, Eastern Shore and Brandywine.

Steve Levitsky brought up the idea of only during two case studies instead of three.

Charles Glass asked is there funding for the case study, Vernice said no. Rebecca said she don’t know if it could never be funding. Vernice said that the Commission and MDE applied for a grant but they didn’t get it.

Vernice said that she would step up and head the case study for Brandywine. She suggested Steve for the Eastern Shore and Rebecca for Baltimore City.

Charles Glass from MDOT offered his staff as a resource to the Commission. Angelo said couldn’t the Commission partner with Universities.

For the next meeting Vernice, Rebecca and Steve will share how they will proceed with the case studies, what kind of partnership opportunities there are and are there resources to move forward.

**October Meeting Change**

Duane will send out a Doodle Poll to see what day will be good for a conference call for the October meeting.

**Local Government Update**

No follow up from MACo.

Andy Fellow is working on the first draft for the MML article.

Vernice suggested having key stakeholders at the November meeting to talk about cumulative impact working group status.

**Climate Commission Update**

Climate Commission Mitigating Working Group has put in funding that could be used to fulfilling the Mitigation Working Group focus on enhance outreach around the work of the Climate Commission.

Education, Communication and Outreach (ECO) Working Group along with Environmental Justice Commission are coordinating together to do outreach overburden communities.

**Others News**

Vernice announced that US EPA Office of Environmental Justice Headquarters is having National Resource and Training Summit from October 25-26.

Stephanie Williams gave an update on the new regulations for the Open Meeting Law.

Duane will send out June, July and August minutes by Friday for edits.

**Public Comments**

None

Next Meeting Schedule for October 25, 2016

1800 Washington Blvd Baltimore, MD 21230