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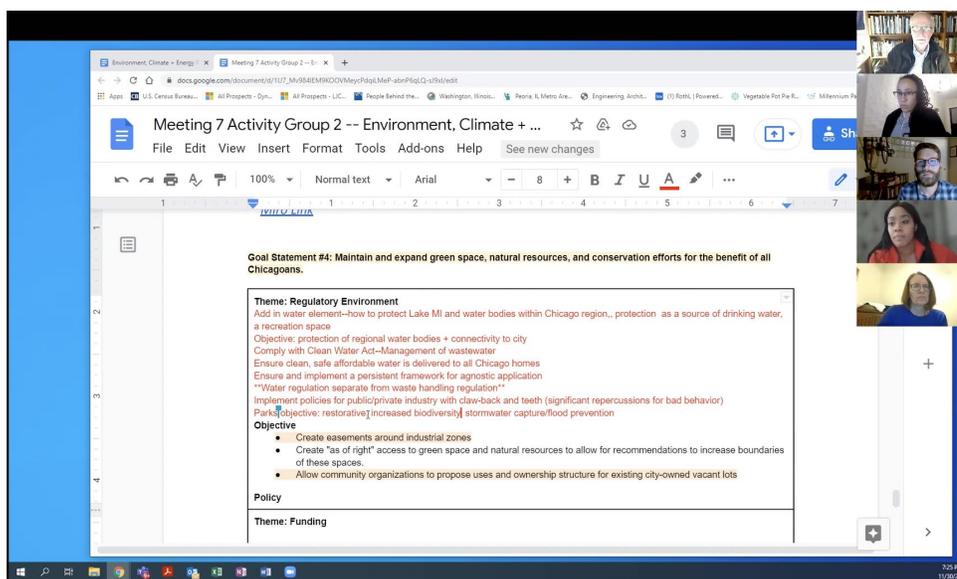
Environment, Climate + Energy Meeting #7

November 30, 2021, 6:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Leon Downs

ATTENDEES

- Lesley Roth
- Michele Davies
- Shannon Madden
- Iyana Simba
- Kimberly Worthington
- Bob Megquier
- Cat Mahari
- Sean Wiedel
- Grant Ullrich
- Angela Tovar
- Naomi Davis
- Rob Weinstock
- Kuldip Kumar
- Michael Strode
- Tomás de'Medici
- Matthew Zemanick
- Brian Daly
- Melissa Tate
- Bradley Roback
- Tomi Moore
- Marissa Strassel



MEETING GOAL

The primary goal of this meeting was to develop accessible, environmentally-focused policy objectives for communities that will suffer the effects of climate change the most.

WHERE WE ARE

Step 1

We Are*Setting the Stage*

Step 2

We Have and Need*Develop A Policy Toolkit*

Step 3

We Will*Set Policy Framework***KEY TAKEAWAYS****1**

Food system economies in underserved communities need to be funded and maintained for long-term viability. For example: planting greenery or vegetation that restores soil destroyed by human activities, paying folks to take care of the green spaces in their communities, and having secure, consistent support from the City.

2

A consistent theme is how policy objectives are often distorted or stunted by smaller elements of government (alderpeople, local officials, etc). The frameworks for cleaner, green infrastructure need to be citywide so that they're not vulnerable to transient political forces on district or ward levels.

3

It is important to implement climate resilience now. Proactive planning for the future is necessary for long-term durability of climate initiatives like preserving existing water sources, planting trees with appropriate gender balances so they can cross-pollinate, establishing citywide versus district-level water policies, raising restrictions on pollutant producers, increasing funding for education on consumer responsibility, etc.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

"How do we center and platform people in community, and not just those folks who are attached to specific organizational structures or frameworks, [...] those who are just in their neighborhood, just in their community, and how can we draw them into this conversation?"

Michael Strode | Kola Nut Collaborative, Founding Coordinator

“We waited all season long and never got access to city water for the public gardens we managed, including those producing food. We had to gerrymander and do all kinds of extraordinary stuff to get water to our communities. So my point here is the outcome is the ability of the community to feed itself, and what supports that, and what are the barriers? [...] Englewood has been fighting like hell for decades to get food system funding. Where is the food system economy on the South Side? Where is the major investment?”

Naomi Davis | Blacks In Green (BIG), Founder

“Transportation is a key component to this in so many different ways. We talk about walkability, decarbonization, reducing the impact of diesel truck traffic in our communities. Those are all things that show up in our objectives. But maybe representing transit in a more prominent way can be something that we can go back and consider.”

Angela Tovar | City of Chicago, Chief Sustainability Officer

“Evidently, there’s a fair amount of Black and brown neighborhoods that City Council is now competing over with Black and brown alderpeople trying to redistrict. So we’re going to see the same reductive, tired cycle of communities that are not truly in positions of power, competing amongst each other ... [We have to] find some ways to make sure that the implementation is elected-official agnostic, where there’s some type of persistent implementation regardless of redistricting, regardless of if there’s a new election, or if there’s a new alderperson.”

Tomás de’Medici | Resource Innovations, Outreach Specialist

NOTES

Artist-Organizer Report—Cat Mahari and Michael Strode

- The Environment, Climate + Energy (ECE) Hub Team worked on an event called “We Made You A Plate,” which was a “multimodal event held within an immersive environmental geodesic dome installation that centers collaborative community games, crafts, trauma informed somatic exercises and listening/response activities.” This event produced some

insights into the “social geographies” of participants (meaning the relationships between community members and the physical spaces in which they reside), the challenges and benefits of living in their communities, their understanding of green energy/industry, and how they imagined “productive,” environmentally-conscious futures to look like in their neighborhood.

Advisory Committee Report—Angela Tovar

- In its report, the Advisory Committee wants to explore how to prepare for a coming influx of climate migrants, safeguarding the water supply from privatization in the future, transit accessibility, cultivating a culture of general sustainability, and clarifying that there are clean alternatives to jobs that create pollution—“it shouldn’t be a choice between jobs or clean air in these communities.”

Breakout Groups and Round Robin Review

- Breakout Group 2 discussed two goal statements: the first being to “foster public/private partnership to implement circularity elements in our regional food, water, energy, and materials flows, to create a model for other cities.” This deals with how environmental objectives can be integrated with city business functions, permits, and relationships to other private and/or nonprofit organizations. It focuses on the economy of food and waste as related to producer/consumer responsibility; this would require policies around producers reclaiming old products, sustainability requirements for producers, recycling/waste management, and maintaining a self-sustaining system centered around green infrastructure—a “circular economy.”
- Participants discussed the “circular economy” and how to fit energy into conversations around circularity. A circular economy [by definition](#) is “a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing products as long as possible” in order to tackle global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution. The circular economy prioritizes squeezing as much life as possible out of products through use and reuse, reducing waste, and producer/consumer education of and participation in sustainability.
- The second goal was to “maintain and expand green space, natural resources, and conservation efforts for the benefit of all Chicagoans.” On this, participants spoke about expanding parks, gardens, productive green spaces, biodiverse urban landscaping, and similar initiatives.
- Participants wanted to tackle food sovereignty, but lacked the expertise to adequately discuss it. They then talked about food deserts and how access to healthier foods could be increased, since there is also [a relationship between pollution and the mass industry of fast food](#). From factory farming to the manufacture and transportation of packaged plastic goods, the pollutive cycle of food production as it is now should be interrupted.

RESOURCES

“THE WELL-TEMPERED CITY” BY JONATHAN F.P. ROSE

[A book that discusses how to design and transform cities to withstand the various pressures of climate change](#)

GREEN CHEMISTRY OPPORTUNITIES FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

[A dive into green infrastructure and the circular economy](#)

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

[An explanation of food sovereignty](#)

FOOD DESERTS IN THE UNITED STATES

[Exploring what food deserts are and how they came about](#)

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

[Adapting infrastructure for greater climate resilience](#)

TO FIGHT FOOD INSECURITY, CHICAGO LEADERS WORK ACROSS DIVIDES

[A look at food insecurity in Chicago](#)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REDUCES GREENHOUSE GASES AND CONSERVES ENERGY

[How public transit mitigates climate change](#)

FAST FOOD - FOOD EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

[The relationship between the mass industry of fast food and pollution](#)

NEXT STEPS

- At the next pillar meeting, scheduled for January 2022, the team will shift from drafting objectives to outlining and refining policies