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## Environment, Climate & Energy Meeting #5

October 12, 2021, 06:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Benjy Sachs

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### MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

### ATTENDEES

- Brian Daly
- Kimberly Worthington
- Lesley Roth
- Mike Tomas
- Grant Ullrich
- Kyra Woods
- Marissa Strassel
- Matthew Zemanick
- Bradley Roback
- Naomi Davis
- Angela Tovar
- Rohit Agarwal
- Anne Nicklin
- Rob Weinstock
- Shannon Madden
- Tomás de'Medici
- Anthony Tindall
- Iyana Simba



## MEETING GOAL

*Review the guiding questions and racial disparities data from the previous meetings and begin to brainstorm objectives and policy ideas to answer these questions and problems.*

## 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

Several participants talked about ensuring that the work done in this meeting is followed through on rather than simply giving the city the appearance of community approval through “equity washing.”

2

Group members also expressed their concerns about environmental improvements going hand in hand with gentrification. Improvements should be made for the good of existing communities, rather than to encourage newcomers and developers to enter.

3

Many group members stressed the need for the city to take an active rather than passive role. Inequities were created by past choices of how to allocate resources; addressing these inequities will require conscious choices to undo these patterns.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“The data can tell us one thing about the inequitable distribution of amenities and burdens in our city right now ... that was the product of conscious decisions about where to put resources and the only way to undo that is to make conscious decisions about putting resources different places now.”*

**Rob Weinstock** | University of Chicago Law School, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law

*“Treat all resource reallocation (i.e. waste) as a communal resource that has to be shared / deaccessioned.”*

**Anne Nicklin** | Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse, Director of Workforce Training and Deconstruction Services / UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, Adjunct professor

*“Incorporate indigenous land stewardship into our park district and fully fund local nations to do this work.”*

**Matthew Zemanick** | Lebanon Lutheran Church, Pastor

*“Maybe use an Alaska type of system, where each resident of Chicago has their ‘as of right’ access to green space, natural resources, etc., and allow for the consolidation of individual rights into clumps that those residents can activate as they determine. Allow it to nudge property lines, infrastructure. Give the pressure power.”*

**Kimberly Worthington** | City of Chicago Department of Procurement Services; Deputy Commissioner Environmental, Health and Safety Management

*“Focus on corporate usage and corporate sense of responsibility for carbon emissions—far more impactful than households.”*

**Shannon Madden** | Crowe, Senior Manager

## NOTES

### Kickoff and Introductions

- Opening reflection: Consider what you're seeing and hearing lately on climate and the environment.
- The group reviews Chicago's racial inequity data demonstrating the surgical-like segregation of the city and the resulting negative effects (such as the geographic life expectancy gap). The prompt to consider is: What can we learn from the data and our own lived experiences to help guide our work moving forward?

### Overview

- The group has a discussion about humanizing and contextualizing the systemic inequity data presented in the previous meeting.
- The group answers a series of short answer questions through the Menti platform.

### Menti Short Answer Submission

- Question #1: How do we incorporate environmental justice principles and resource distribution to reverse historic disinvestment and environmental degradation in underserved communities?
  - "Do a gap analysis—get input from each community on its needs and direct resources accordingly." — Shannon Madden, senior manager at Crowe, a consulting firm that provides services to governments and nonprofits.
  - "Expand transit infrastructure as a climate mitigation strategy, paying particular attention to Black and Latino communities that are in transit deserts." — Rev. Matthew Zemanick, pastor at Lebanon Lutheran Church in Chicago's Hegewisch neighborhood.
  - "Go beyond remediating past harms—invest in better outcomes, services, and infrastructure that will open up more positive future outcomes for affected communities." — Brian Daly, Senior Planner at Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).
  - "Broad and flexible grant programs with technical support for small businesses, houses of worship and other community organizations to support positive efforts within this pillar. The church wants to plant a community garden—then give them a city-owned vacant lot and support in developing it. Local coffee shop or salon commits to letting people sit in the AC during a heatwave—reimburse their energy bill, etc." — Rob Weinstock, assistant clinical professor of law at University of Chicago's law school.
  - "Establish a complete accounting of the historic disinvestment and intentional damage and allocate an initial budget. Until the baseline is reached and zeroed out there's no other investment anywhere." — Anne Nicklin, director of Workforce Training and Deconstruction Services at Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse, and adjunct professor at UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs.

- “Utilize neighborhood planning to identify wants and needs to address disinvestment and degradation—each one is unique.” – Kimberly Worthington, Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Health and Safety Management for City of Chicago’s Department of Procurement Services.
- “Incorporate indigenous land stewardship into our park district and fully fund local nations to do this work.” – Rev. Matthew Zemanick.
- “Reverse TIF porting so that rich neighborhood TIFs are being delivered across town to actually blighted communities—or eliminate TIF financing.” – Naomi Davis, founder and executive director of Blacks in Green.
- “Tax ‘friends of’ organizations for local parks and schools such that wealthy northside organizations must send some portion of funds raised elsewhere in the city.” – Rob Weinstock.
- “Establish quantitative targets for positive outcomes in environmental justice communities (health indicators, job access, transportation access, etc.) and establish policy and budgetary mechanisms for targeting investment to achieve those targets.” – Brian Daly.
- “Treat all resource reallocation (i.e. waste) as a communal resource that has to be shared / deaccessioned.” – Anne Nicklin.
- Question #2: How do we foster public and private partnership to implement circularity elements in our regional food, water, energy and materials flows, creating a model for other cities?
  - “Contract requirements around planned obsolescence.” – Matthew Zemanick.
  - “Leverage existing partnerships first, like the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus with its recent climate action plan.” – Shannon Madden.
  - “Design and construct food system hubs in priority communities to build locally-owned vendors and supply chains.” – Naomi Davis.
  - “Support local businesses through the City’s buying power—i.e. a local compost content requirement for public landscaping.” – Rob Weinstock.
  - “If looking for public or private partnerships, start by partnering with existing local businesses that are already pursuing these goals.” – Brian Daly.
  - “Employ indigenous nations in the region to implement food sovereignty techniques.” – Rev. Matthew Zemanick.
  - “Work on state laws around producer responsibility to take back products.” – Kimberly Worthington.
- Question #3: How do we maintain and expand green space, natural resources, and conservation efforts for the benefit of all Chicagoans?
  - “Easements around industrial zoning. Fully funded remediation in environmental justice communities.” – Rev. Matthew Zemanick.

- “Use data to determine who is underserved by open space (more than a 10 minute walk from a park?) and then prohibit funding new open space in areas that already meet the threshold until all areas meet it.” – Rob Weinstock.
- “Use racial audit lens to ensure greater investment in disinvested neighborhoods.” – Naomi Davis.
- “Expand on Open Space Impact Fee to fund green space.” – Kimberly Worthington.
- “Programs to repair the harm and estrangement from green spaces in environmental justice communities, particularly communities of color. Employ indigenous land stewardship.” – Rev. Matthew Zemanick.
- “Turn over vacant lots to community organizations.” – Rob Weinstock.
- “Maybe use an Alaska type of system, where each resident of Chicago has their ‘as of right’ access to green space, natural resources, etc., and allow for the consolidation of individual rights into clumps that those residents can activate as they determine. Allow it to nudge property lines, infrastructure. Give the pressure power.” – Kimberly Worthington.
- Question #4: How do we mitigate and then eliminate sources of carbon emissions in alignment with national and global climate goals?
  - “Utilize building codes, contract requirements and incentives.” – Kimberly Worthington.
  - “We have \$2 billion in TIF funds for cross-town developments but somehow no money for planting trees in heat island areas?” – Naomi Davis.
  - “Subsidies for energy efficiency upgrades in environmental justice communities.” – Rev. Matthew Zemanick.
  - “Start by taking count of the captured carbon in old growth lumber in most buildings, give that credit to the owners, and incentivize them to keep those materials out of the landfill and incinerator (which would release the atmospheric carbon).” – Anne Nicklin.
  - “Focus on corporate usage and corporate sense of responsibility for carbon emissions—far more impactful than households.” – Shannon Madden.
  - “Sharply control or eliminate the use of cement in all private and public developments. Cementitious concrete is the largest single source of emissions per [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report].” – Anne Nicklin.
  - “Require any new delivery fleets to be all electric for last-mile facilities (if they’re allowed in the city at all).” – Rob Weinstock.
- Question #5: How will this plan leverage available state and federal resources to tackle

climate?

- “Lobby federal government to reduce Department of Defense (DoD)’s funding.” – Matthew Zemanick, adding that the DoD is the world’s largest carbon emitter.
- “Invest in our local industry, Chicago common brick, lumber yards and remilling, etc., create good, local jobs. Use [Department of the Environment, Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture] sources to subsidize the creation of large scale local manufacturing for explicitly local use.” – Anne Nicklin.

## RESOURCES

### **Sustainable Square Mile Handbook**

[By Naomi Davis of Blacks in Green, in collaboration with the National Resource Defense Council](#)

### ***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

[In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.](#)

### ***Exit 0: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago* by Christine Walley**

[Description of the book](#)

### **Article that was shared about Detroit redevelopment**

[A Detroit law promised residents a voice in redevelopment projects. Many say their concerns remain unheard](#)

### **OneNYC 2050**

[OneNYC 2050 is a strategy to secure our city's future against the challenges of today and tomorrow. With bold actions to confront our climate crisis, achieve equity, and strengthen our democracy, we are building a strong and fair city.](#)

### **Chicago Open Space Impact Fee**

[The Open Space Impact Fee program helps create public open spaces in Chicago.](#)



#### NEXT STEPS

- Participants will fill out a survey regarding the possible extension of the meeting schedule from 9 to 14, which would carry on into June 2022.
- Participants will share this [survey](#) with their networks to solicit as much public input as possible.