

Howard County Council

Racial Equity Task Force



Meeting: Public Health and Environmental Policy Subgroup Meeting

Start Time: February 17, 2021 6:08 PM

End Time: February 17, 2021 8:00 PM

Task Force Member Attendees:

Yvonne Commodore-Mensah	Delora Ifekauche
Chiara D'Amore	Buffy Illum
Nia Leak	TiQuoria Jackson
Paula Goodwin	Michael Allen (absent)
Jean Silver-Isenstadt	Myiesha Padder (absent)
Yvette Oquendo	

Presenter, Council, and Facilitator Attendees:

Tim Lattimer, CA Climate Change Advisory Committee
Dr. Christine Conn, Howard County's Environmental Sustainability Board
Brooke Abercrombie, Howard County's Environmental Sustainability Board
Kim Drake, Howard County's Environmental Sustainability Board
Karla Morrison-Brooks, Groundwork Partners
Colette Gelwicks, County Council
Brenda Smith, County Council

Materials:

[Agenda](#)

[Presentation – Dr. Conn, Environmental Sustainability Board](#)

Approved Minutes:

Dr. Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, Subgroup Chairperson, opened the meeting with a roll call and confirmed that a quorum of subgroup members was present. An opening discussion question was posed to attendees. Dr. Commodore-Mensah moved to approve the meeting minutes from the Public Health and Environmental Policy Subgroup Meeting on January 27, 2021. Dr. Chiara D'Amore, Task Force member, seconded the approval of the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Mr. Tim Lattimer, Chair of Columbia Association's Climate Change Advisory Committee gave a presentation to subgroup members. He discussed the concept of environmental justice and introduced the idea of "enforce, engage, empower" as part of consideration for local remedies. Mr. Lattimer shared some opportunities for improvement in Howard County, e.g., environmental impact reviews of projects, zoning actions, and public participation.

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Racial-Equity-Task-Force](https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/About-Us/Commissions-Task-Forces-and-Special-Reports/Racial-Equity-Task-Force)

Dr. Christine Conn, Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Board, began her presentation by introducing two subcommittee members, Brooke Abercrombie and Kim Drake, who joined the meeting to respond to questions. Dr. Conn provided an overview of the Environmental Sustainability Board and some of the work the Board has accomplished in the past years. She also provided an introduction to the Environmental Diversity, Justice and Equity (EDJE) Subcommittee that she also Chairs. She described the engagement pillars the subcommittee has identified where they see significant opportunities. Dr. Conn also shared two mapping resources that might be helpful for the work the task force members are doing.

Following the presentations, Karla Morrison-Brooks, facilitator, opened the floor for questions. Subgroup members asked for additional information on: the history of environmental partnerships with the school system; the definition of “Environmental Justice Community”; whether anyone is tracking policing in green space; the Climate Vulnerability Assessment pilot being conducted by the Columbia Association Climate Change Advisory Committee; and whether the Park Equity Mapper shared by Dr. Conn can be combined with HoCoDash.

Dr. Commodore-Mensah presented her research findings related to COVID-19 metrics. She discussed some of the racial and ethnic disparities she identified in the data related to cases, hospital utilization, death, testing, and vaccinations. She also shared her thoughts regarding determinants of COVID-19 racial and ethnic disparities, and then concluded her presentation with some preliminary recommendations.

In the discussion that followed, subgroup members expressed appreciation for the presentation and discussed additional concerns. The importance of communication regardless of the disease or health condition was highlighted.

Ms. Morrison-Brooks provided subgroup members with Task Force updates regarding upcoming events like the public hearing and the Council’s March Monthly Meeting, testimony, and next steps for the subgroups.

Dr. Commodore-Mensah thanked members of the subgroup for participating and adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.