

## Quarterly Meeting of the Illinois Commission on Environmental Justice

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm)

### Meeting Notes

#### Attendees

- Chris Pressnall – Illinois EPA
- Paulina Lopez-Santos – Illinois EPA
- James Mensah – Illinois EPA
- Alane Herr – Illinois EPA
- Andrew Armstrong – Environmental Bureau - Springfield at Illinois Attorney General's Office
- Celina Villanueva – Illinois Senator, 12<sup>th</sup> District
- Deborah Williams – City of Springfield Office of Public Utilities
- Donovan Griffith – Illinois Manufacturers' Association
- Kelly Thompson – Illinois Environmental Regulatory Group
- Kim Wasserman – Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
- Stephanie Bilenko – Nuclear Energy Information Service
- Todd Fuller – Illinois Department of Human Services
- Victoria Wilson – Naturally Urban Environmental, Inc
- Cheryl Johnson - People for Community Recovery
- Tonyisha Harris – Action for the Climate Emergency
- Delia Barajas – Cicero Community Farm
- Luis Lopez – Illinois EPA

Introductions Chris Pressnall – Manager of the Environmental Justice Program, at the office of EJ at the IEPA.

Paulina Lopez-Santos – started a month ago at the IEPA as new EJ Policy Administrator.

James Mensah – Graduate intern from UIS, will be at the Office of EJ another year.

Victoria Wilson – President CEO of Naturally Urban Environments Inc. Serving on IEPA EJ Commission 2nd term and serving Cook County Environmental Sustainability subcommittee. Looking forward to getting work done.

Donovan Griffith – Vice president of Government Affairs for the Illinois Manufacturer's Association served for about 4-5 years representing business groups.

Kelly Thompson – Illinois Env. Reg Group. Exec Director since 2017 as project manager. New to Commission, about 5 months. Don't believe we have been appointed to the EJ Commission but looking forward to working with the group.

Todd Fuller – Statewide housing and employment first coordinator with the IDHS, as a statutory member of the commission. Started about 6 months before Covid.

Kim Wasserman – Executive Director at the LVEJO apologies for missing meeting at the beginning of the year. But back and ready to participate fully and looking forward to continuing to work with the commission.

State Senator Celina Villanueva – from the 12<sup>th</sup> district, happy to be here.

Chris Pressnall – Alane Herr and Luis Lopez from IEPA are also here to help take minutes. Stephanie or Andrew, I know you are not commissioners, but please feel free to come on and say hello.

Stephanie Bilenko with Nuclear Energy Information Service – Watchdogs for nuclear power plants for 42 years.

Andrew Armstrong – Chief of the Illinois Attorney General’s Springfield Env Bureau

Chris – Debbie, would you like to come on and say hello.

Deborah Williams – with the city of Springfield office of public utilities and monitor EJ issues for job, also chair subcommittee on these issues for ERG

Chris – someone joined with a 708 number.

708# Delia Barajas – with Cicero Community Farm in Cicero, Illinois

Chris – I think that is everyone.

### **Agenda Items**

Chris – Hoping to get additional appointments. Happy Chair Wasserman is back.

EJ Legislation update

Chris – there is not much to report. EJ legislation did not pass. Does anyone have any comments about the legislation?

Donovan – I’m with IMA. Want to let folks know that when we talk about EJ legislation there are several pieces of legislation. The IMA worked with the Illinois chamber of commerce, ERG, the Farm Bureau, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and introduced own EJ bill under senate bill 852 on behalf of business groups but none of them passed.

Chris – thank you for clarifying Donovan.

Delia Barajas – asked if EJ Legislation bill is for the whole state of Illinois.

Chris – yes, and if you’d like to talk more about it, we can set something up. Donovan mentioned an industry bill, which is the definitional portion of it. There was one that was introduced that had a definitional component, defining EJ areas, how certain projects were defined, like what types of permits, major sources, or potential major sources. There were threshold questions regarding what the bill would apply to. It is for all of Illinois. There was talk about using Illinois Solar for All as a definitional component. The IEPA has its mapping tool EJ Start, which uses low income and percentage of minorities, twice the statewide average and buffering by 1 mile on

a census block group level, is how IEPA approaches it. But IEPA is exploring adding more criteria to the map, as I also said in the last Commission call. Illinois Solar for All EJ mapping tool includes more data points that were pulled from US EPA's EJScreen. Illinois EPA is close to having an internal draft of a map, from the tech folks adding more factors. I don't think it changes things too much. Low income and minority data are good proxies for a lot of the other data. Nevertheless, we are looking at adding those. In all the legislation there are definitional components that have to be worked through too and be applicable statewide.

Donovan G.– asked what other data points are being added

Chris – This would take us back to our agenda items. We are looking at US EPA EJScreen, most of the data that they use in their tools is available for anyone to download and manipulate. There is a proliferation of screening tools in the US and individual states. US EPA screening tool does not designate EJ communities. We are looking at adding additional socioeconomic indicators like linguistic isolation, older persons, younger persons, and much like Solar for All, environmental and exposure indicators from US EPA EJScreen. US EJScreen also has, wildfires, and health information like asthma emergency visits. What we learned that not all the things you see on US EPA EJScreen currently are available in the data package. Many of the traditional things like Ozone, PM2.5, proximity to hazardous waste landfill, and the idea would be to crunch it like Solar for All and score it using more data points. The criticism is that we are not painting the whole picture with only two demographic data points.

Victoria W.– Could you please share data points links that you're referring to from the US EPA?

Donovan – please share that with all commissioners.

Delia B.– Cicero is in the middle of transforming zoning maps. We asked they include an EJ analysis. The zoning map will include less green space and more industrial areas. Does this EJ Legislation touch on home rule, like Cicero? How does this apply when municipalities have already approved zoning maps which will include more industrial areas, which in my opinion is a violation of Civil Rights Title VI legislation.

Chris – This makes me think of NEPA type of Env impact analysis. That would be an analog, perhaps not something applicable. There was something in the legislation that IEPA and IEC were working on the comprehensive bill that had a local siting aspect to not just deal with Land Pollution. Chicago is undertaking an expansive cumulative impact analysis project which is probably precisely what you're talking about. But when it comes to Title VI and doing an analysis, legally IEPA would not have authority over those local type of situations. If they are recipients of federal funding, maybe.

Delia – Then how are our EJ communities protected then? Besides Title VI? What can communities like Cicero do to stop increases of industries, manufacturing, and diesel trucks coming in if it's not part of the legislation or EJ act?

Chris – Donovan, do you have something?

Donovan – It might be helpful to have someone like Laura Roche (legislative shop) in the next meeting to explain these issues. We keep talking about one bill. I assume we're talking about House Bill 2520. We don't expect that bill to move as it was called for a vote twice this year and failed both times.

There are other pieces of legislation out there, Senator Villanueva who is on the call has a bill in the senate. We have Senate Bill 852 which has not seen success. None of these pieces of legislation moved and none of them are primed to move. We should talk in generalities. There is not a home rule exemption in any of the bills, and if there were I don't believe Cicero would apply as a home rule community. I believe that only applies to Chicago. If any bills went into effect, they would apply to Cicero. Whatever mapping process would be used would apply to Cicero. But it would be helpful to have someone from the legislation shop at IEPA go over this section.

Chris – That sounds like a good suggestion, duly noted.

Victoria Wilson – In summarization of that I think that is initially our focus. How do we provide support for communities who are facing those challenges? Having buffer zones, specifically. For corporations to be able to be socially, economically, and environmentally responsible and liable in the protection of communities that are very vulnerable and considered to be disinvested and disadvantaged communities of color. That is something several of us went to city hall for yesterday in regard to the turnover in the permits for General Iron. It boils down to community stakeholder ship and having a voice at the table when they make these decisions to allow industry to come into our corridors. But we as a commission have a responsibility and duty to propose the best practices to do so; permitting review, understanding community stakeholder ship and corporate responsibility so that we can make sure that our voices are heard and we're in compliance with the federal and state regulations, policy, and ordinances in accordance with the law. At the end of the day the state is never going to decline receiving taxation or income coming from corporate America, but there is a state of harmony needed to be understood, and that they must adopt a new standard of operation when it comes to being in a new green economy, and that's what we really need to focus on. My hope in this term is to be able to propose ordinances, legislation that we can push forward to our electives to communicate what our expectations are when industry comes through our corridors.

Donovan – agree that would be a good discussion, Chris, and I saw your survey on the direction that this commission needs to go, being created by law, the statute lays out what the functions of the commission can do.

Victoria Wilson – Lastly, Chris, I shared with you the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) that will be meeting next week. I encourage those who have time, I think the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> to sit and listen to what the White House is proposing regarding EJ. This is where we're going to take our footing from in regard to enforcement, in regard to these proposals that we're going to be suggesting. I have been actively following along for the last 18 months and hope you can participate as well.

Chris – Looks like the WHEJAC (different than the NEJAC) is receiving public comments on EJ activities, Justice 40 initiatives, the climate and economic justice screening tool, one of those tools that's proliferating and that one is controversial because it excludes race, Environmental Justice scorecard and EJ resources and tools that will be beneficial from federal agencies. Those are some of the topics that will be covered. Thank you for sharing, Victoria.

Chris – any other thoughts on the topic of legislation before we move on to talk about what IEPA is working on so far as EJ?

Tonyisha Harris – apologies for joining late, can we do a quick recap about what our action items are around supporting the EJ permitting act?

Chris – What Donovan was raising is that there are several bills, he pointed out that there are different pieces of legislation, none of them passed and as far as the commission supporting one or another, if that were to happen, which would be in the statutory realm of the commission, but we need a full commission, we need a quorum, we need to consider that. That could be like a subcommittee. We have been talking about getting more people, forming subcommittees. It is difficult for the commission to support any individual piece of legislation, that's just not practical. What people do individually, or the organizations you all represent, that is all fair game.

Tonyisha- Thank you.

Chris – as far as IEPA, EJ and Title VI we have been doing some work on strengthening our civil rights program. This includes developing a Language Access Plan (LAP) and Disability Access Plan and new forms for grievances – we have had one in the disability arena. People are finding them which is good to bring them to our attention. We are updating our LAP that has been out, including procedures for how our staff would update the language access procedures when somebody interacting with our agency needs those services, whether it's via the phone or a translated document, how our staff goes about it. We are not like some agencies that have more pressing or frequent contact with people with limited English proficiency. Paulina here to my left was pressed into action at a sampling event where some of the folks having yard sampled may want to speak in Spanish. We used to have 1 person in the OCR who was compensated for being bilingual, but now we have two more, both in the EJ office, Paulina and Luis who is also on this call today. We are increasing our language access, especially with Spanish, which is the largest non-English language spoken in Illinois. So we are happy we have three now, from where we were. Also looking at training staff on Title VI compliance. EJ and Title VI are easy to conflate. Title VI prohibits discrimination and that is applicable to IEPA (as a recipient of federal funding). We are focusing on doing a better job of delineating, training employees on our obligations. We are in a decent place but can always be better. Some states don't have this fleshed out, but we are trying to be better and delineate it more.

Chris – Any thoughts and comments about our Title VI efforts here at the IEPA.

Delia – Asking about how does EJ Commission intervene when Cicero brings more pollution to our community? How are EJ communities protected and how can we protect the folks that live in Cicero if permits are going to be given and federal money is going to the town of Cicero.

Chris – I don't know if there is a straight answer for that. Going back to the legislative language of the commission – I don't know if it's to delve into those particular issues, but when it comes to civil rights enforcement generally, I would say US EPA has reorganized their civil rights department to combine EJ and civil rights enforcement under one umbrella. I'm going to dodge your question because I don't really have an answer for you, but the things you're raising are conversations that are taking place in real time throughout the states and at the federal level. The question of the intersection of EJ and civil rights, and how do you protect communities. Ultimately it boils down to legality, laws etc. If it's Title VI it would have to be proved, or you would have to file a complaint/lawsuit.

Victoria Wilson – It's not cut and paste. We are all at the same point of frustration when it comes down to industry and unfortunately the rules of law vs how a municipality is ran. Learning from experience we as constituents of EJ communities do not really understand the importance of legislation law, and municipal powers vs county regulations vs federal government. We are failing to have community engagement in decisions regarding rezoning. Small municipalities are focused on having enough money to operate. They are not thinking in terms of stewardship. Even now with federal mandate of EJ communities as a civil issue, we are still in gray areas of definitions, studies, feasibility, protections that need to be put in place. Thus, the reason for these kinds of commissions. Prior to Covid-19 we did not see investment in these issues although we knew that the federal government was mandating this in regard to impact of ingestible/digestible inhalants and set a standard to that. As community members we have to put an active voice behind these things and say, "not in our back yard." This is why you see Environmental Justice organizations protesting but getting financial backing to protest and stop permitting actions by municipalities and industries, or vote people out of office. We do have to show up. We do not even have a quorum for this commission because of people's investment in these issues. How can we hold our legislators accountable if we don't have people who want to spend the time here to invest in making suggestions and solutions to the problems that are impacting our health and our next generation. How do we share our voices? How do we make our concerns known? How do we communicate to different languages about their responsibilities as stewards and hold persons who are positioned to be able to give the tangible solutions to our governor to get the money inside our community, so this doesn't happen. The frustration and being fed up, we are all there. When it comes to fighting big corporate, they have more money, so you have to do it legally. We have to learn the game. We have to support by providing recommendations for legislation and policy, permitting practices so we don't get caught in the hook again and become more susceptible to their actions or inactions.

Chris – Thank you. All these issues have a lot of considerations, thank you for raising that, Delia. It is certainly something we want to look into and learn more about. For the last update at IEPA we are thinking of putting up an EJ resources page on the site, like a one stop shop, whether it's federal mapping tools or information on various aspects of EJ. A lot of it would be on the federal

level because there is so much going on right now. We're in an unprecedented time when it comes to EJ but I'm curious about the folks here in the commission. I don't know if we asked that in our EJ Commission survey, but we have ideas of the resources we use and in our experience in dealing with members of the public, and what they look at, like TRI Toxic Releases Inventory, ECHO environmental compliance tool from US EPA, and increased capacity of ECHO, cross linking it with air monitoring data, which is brand new. There was a webinar yesterday and there will be one next week, the EJ aspect of that new tool. What resources should the IEPA be putting on their website that might be helpful?

Chris – Please also feel free to email or discuss online elsewhere if you don't have suggestions now.

Chris – Last discussion item: commissioner priority survey sent out to commissioners or commissioners that are still serving. This was an outgrowth of a discussion that Victoria, Tonyisha and I were having about the commission and its direction. Trying to breathe life into the commission. If you are a commissioner and you didn't get the survey, please let me know. We are hoping to take that and see what the commissioners concerns are; air, water, land, something else. Paulina what else were we asking?

Paulina: Water, air, land, funding (EJ grants), energy, interagency issues, and there is also an option to comment if there are any other ideas for subcommittee topics.

Chris – In the past when we were working on say, Solar for All, we had an interagency subcommittee, asking different agencies what they are doing in regard to EJ. Something we can pick up and do again.

Kim Wasserman – A couple of things, in regards to datasets or info that we might be able to share: working with City of Chicago to look at cumulative impacts in Chicago – happy to share list of data that we've looked at across the board so we can look at it and see what is important. I have to find out if I can share the other part, like reasoning for using or not using certain data, but I can share the original data sets or websites out there with everyone on the commission.

Chris – thank you, I know you have something else, but if you can say anything about the data after your second point, about that cumulative impact I would be all ears. That's a big deal.

Kim – I wanted to touch on something that Victoria talked about, and I have a clarifying question for Delia which I'll ask offline. But in regard to why this legislation is so important to us I wanted to say everything Victoria talked about is right on point. There is a growing need to have this conversation outside of Chicago. There is a lot of support within city limits, but there isn't that same conversation happening in the rest of the state. I've spoken to Chris offline about how to expand the commission's ability to meet virtually and start to go into communities and have these discussions, meet with folks on the ground, and talk about the work we're doing both legislatively and within a body because the fact is EJ is affecting a lot of people across the State who are having different EJ impacts; Champaign and everywhere, but they don't always know what we're doing and what's happening in Springfield. Part of this is an education process for communities to know that the fights they have on their hands are actually tied to EJ and that the

bills that have been worked on could help with what they're dealing with. The work in Chicago is strong, but it's up to organizations to tap into empty commission spots to bring people on and how to tap into our sister organizations and communities across the state to have conversations, because that is the only way we're going to have a chance in getting something passed in Springfield.

Happy to answer questions in that regard – otherwise I can switch over to cumulative impact update

What I can share with you, Chris, is that we have been working a little under a year now, particularly with the Chicago Dept of Public Health to look at data and indicators that we want to use for a cumulative impact assessment. We have a stakeholder group made up of different folks (inaudible audio) reviewing different data sets having conversations about duplicative data, data that is problematic, or is unsupported, and trying to narrow down what we want to look at that help make up the community impact assessment. There's a committee in education, there's a committee on policy. I only cochair the committee on data and methods (inaudible audio).

Donovan – Kim you are breaking up.

Kim – Am I still breaking up?

Chris – Sounds good now.

Kim – The other two committees are outreach and education, and policy is the other. There are separate cochairs for those, I only co-chair the Data and Methods.

We will spend summer finalizing what data set recommendations we want to give the subcommittee to start looking at for the assessment tool. One thing important to know, we are having conversations about ground-truthing. Our research and experience show you can't rely on data alone, but there also has to be engagement with local communities to voice lived experiences and have that be seen as expertise and part of the process when the data sets aren't picking up or don't reflect certain aspects. Was that ok or did I break up?

Chris – that was great.

Donovan – When you're talking about subcommittees and working group is that with your organization?

Chris – She's talking about the City of Chicago and their cumulative impact – working group.

Donovan – oh the working group under the, I got it.

Victoria – Absolutely agree when we were working on the City of Chicago decarbonization plan. That was how we were able to activate, which resulted in the climate infrastructure fund dollars being allocated. Sounds like we may have to go back to a rudimentary drawing board to be able to put the data with it to show where the money needs to be allocated to support programs, initiatives at the grassroots level. Kim hit it spot on, we do have to engage our other partners in communities, to get more engagement and understand pain points to be able to propose suggestions and solutions to problems. My hope is that we can get these subcommittees fleshed



out. And be able to narrow it down to get action items to be implemented in 2024. Not just another bill or another ordinance or legislative act, but tangible tools that will show a significant change. Unfortunately, it starts with education.

Kim Wasserman – apologies, leaving to chair cumulative impact meeting. Thank you.

Chris – thanks Kim. Any other open discussion items? Questions?

Victoria Wilson – Did we do a rollcall in regard to who was actually here from the commission?

Chris – No we didn't. I was looking at that

Donovan – I'm on the state's website and there are only two commissioners who are technically still commissioners right now. Kim and Cheryl, and their terms expire in September and after that no one will be an active member. We only have two members whose terms haven't expired.

Victoria – I thought we were waived.

Donovan – I keep showing up.

Cheryl – Did you say it ends in September?

Donovan – Yes

Cheryl – Ok.

Donovan – Chris I defer to you.

Chris – I hear what people are saying. The commission is an advisory body. I'm continuing to lobby on behalf of everyone here who wants to become commissioners. There are people who aren't on the call who want to be involved. I appreciate Donovan, Victoria, Dulce, Tonyisha who continue to show up even though the appointments aren't current. I encourage people to reapply... if we are going to start forming subcommittees, we need more commissioners.

Three commissioners joined in progress Cheryl, Tonyisha, and Dulce, I count maybe 8 commissioners. We need 24, we need more than half for a quorum, so that'd be 13. We are close, but not there.

Delia – shouldn't that be a priority? I'm wondering how much focus has been taken to the western suburbs where there are huge warehouses being built along the 55 and those issues what is happening in Maywood, Melrose Park, and Franklin Park. Do you know how many folks are participating in these meetings that are not from Chicago?

Chris – We don't have that many participating. I'm looking at the screen

Dulce – This is Dulce, I'm from Lake County, not from Chicago

Donovan – Darren Bailey was technically still a commissioner.

Victoria – that goes into the conversation we're having now; investment requires a lot of time and you are not being compensated for it. I have extended the invitation to several people. If you

have any recommendations forward them to Chris, we need 24 to get something done. With the passing of CEJA and FEJA there were dollars associated with that. And the federal government has relinquished dollars associated with EJ concerns, but the only way we can push that economic stimulation through this economy is by getting individuals from community organizations, serving on different boards and committees to be able to invest time here so we can get the money to the people to make an impact.

Donovan – Appointees have their counties they are from. A lot of them say none because we don't have active commissioners. I'll also point out we are running against the problem of the Justice 40 Commission. The law creating that commission is very similar/identical to this one. Two commissions that have similar goals. Justice 40 has not been signed into law yet.

Victoria – I don't understand why there is another commission. It seems counterproductive.

Donovan – It might make it more difficult to get commissioners onto this commission if individuals choose to go to the Justice 40 Commission.

Cheryl – Is the Justice 40 passed with a budget? Is it a funded commission?

Delia – Agree with Victoria. I have no problem being invested. I think Victoria made the comment that people don't come back maybe because their voices are not being heard. That is how I feel, but I continue to come. And as she said, education is a priority. EPA has tons of information, and we can never completely understand and read all that information. I think it would be helpful to come out to Cicero or other EJ communities in person. I have been trying to get a map for I don't know how long, in ECHO, but it's difficult. I have been committed for the last 10 years, mostly volunteer work, because I care. I think we should visit the folks in the west or south suburbs. I've lived here for 30 years, and I didn't know this was an EJ community. I'm committed but does it make sense to apply to be a commissioner if voices are not heard? I have to find out which western suburbs are EJ communities, because nobody informs us. I've only learned this through my experience in the community.

Donovan – I'm committed as well, even if we might be on opposite sides of things. I've grown up and lived most of my life in EJ communities. As far as Justice 40 oversight committee that was house bill 2487 for anyone who wants to look that up. Committee members are not paid. I'll point out that the first task of the Justice 40 oversight committee is to make findings, conclusions, recommendations regarding environmental justice in the state and uses of federal funds provided to the state for environmental justice. So, I think there's going to be a lot of overlap. You're going to be taking some of the same talent and some of the same people that want to give their all to this issue and hopefully we'll be able to still get a quorum here.

Victoria – That's my main concern. Donovan maybe you can help me understand. Who proposed it?

Dulce – I can answer that. This was brought up on our last meeting. We know that Ariel from IEC was working with some organizations, and she said that the authority for our commission here could be perceived as not extending to making recommendations for the federal funding and there are particular eligibility requirements tied to disadvantaged communities ... terminology

used by Justice 40 that depend on the subject matter like housing and transportation ... I'm reading verbatim what she said in her email. And so we know that IEC was working on this bill with other participants, some of the people here, Mike Atty, Diana Perez, Mayra Hernandez, Lorenzo Savage (all of whom I don't know) ... as Donovan stated, said that it pretty much would focus on reporting to the general assembly annually, keeping an eye on federal funding and flagging if funding can address certain issues.

Victoria – so they have been given a specific mandate based on the Justice 40 initiative. My question is, it does boil down to the IEPA in regard to Justice 40 or not?

Chris – It could be more than IEPA. It's a lot of different agencies. (Thank you, Dulce.) It's interesting that the EJ commission is supposed to have IDOT, Housing, Public Health, Natural Resources, those agencies are statutorily members.

Victoria – and they have to report to IEPA?

Chris – Not to us. If they are getting Justice 40 dollars, then they would report to the federal government.

Victoria – I don't see the distinction that will keep us from stepping on each other... Especially when we're talking about resources and tools. I don't know who the experts will be on this particular commission, but I find it to be another barrier to entry, for the issues that have been brought up on this commission. It's one of those things that's going to cause a righteous frustration. What will happen is that there will be an issue of workplace when we do propose something that will conflict with the Justice 40 commission. And because a utilization of funds may be identified as a way to provide technical administrative support to community organizations, grassroots organizations, municipalities, townships, or counties about how we can encourage them to spend in regard to Justice 40 initiatives for EJ communities. I am in the process of putting something together for Cook County in regard to southland for Justice 40 and everything from water, air, soil housing is all included in those budgetary spends, and to find out we have a separate commission that's on the same mission, same goal or agenda for oversight and management is a conflict of interest to me, versus them being absorbed and adopted here.

Donovan – When I think about the disadvantage of the Justice 40 Oversight committee, when it's formed, only state officials get voting rights on the committee. So, faith based organizations, community based organizations, even manufacturing orgs, we are all non-voting members. So, we can be on the committee but we don't actually get to vote on how they proceed on things and I think that's why this commission actually should be preferred over Justice 40 because once we do get people on here, you get a voting say on how those recommendations go out.

Chris – and that's what happened with IL Solar for All, people needed to get together and reach an agreement. Donovan's predecessor was involved in discussions. I know, Kelly, you had your hand up a while ago.

Kelly Thompson – no it was related to Justice 40. You guys started talking about it and I put my hand down.

Victoria – how do we get to the bottom of this issue to make sure that either a.) Someone can be absorbed into Justice 40, or b.) we can partner and collaborate with the Justice 40 commission because we have to be on the same page, with the same objective, and I don't know what that looks like. Is this a rabbit hole. It's beyond my years of experience and expertise in this position. What do we do to get an appointed person, or even be reflected on that particular commission to support what we're doing here. If they have a right to vote, they should be able to push what we propose.

Chris – Ok good. I'm glad that was brought up and we're talking about thinking that needs to be done in that respect. I think you did a good job of summarizing we need to figure out how the two committees will work together if at all. We were talking about geographic diversity, Michael Atty is downstate, I don't know about the others. We'd like to have Michael on our commission because we don't have someone from the East St. Louis area right now. That's one area of downstate. The Metro East area is a glaring need on this commission. Kim Wasserman and I have been talking about who to get from down there. But to be continued...

Chris – Any other open discussion items? And if not, we can talk about next meeting date?

James – Asked about education resources.

Chris – Kim was sending resources. James is asking if anyone else has any ideas or if they're aware of resources.

James – We talked about education and community engagement for EJ communities. Could we have some of those resources?

Chris – Yes, he's talking about education and resources. Before the pandemic we were building out these educational modules. We keep showing up and we keep telling them what we can and can't do, and that's frustrating to people. What we were going to do was build out modules for inspection, compliance, enforcement, permitting was a second module, and then resources was a third module. The idea was to come into communities and do a workshop, talk about what they asked for and what they might want to hear about. But the conversation made me think of doing a better job of communicating what we can and can't do, not only the IEPA but the office of EJ, and setting expectations. There is a larger educational component that I'm sure you were talking about Victoria, some things out of our purview. Other people can educate and organize on those issues, but we can talk about what's in our purview.

Victoria – In regard to us being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are dealing with baby boomers who are preparing to sit down, and individuals who do not have the same literacy across the state, especially in the southern regions of Illinois, there are literacy issues. Number 2 is navigation and ease of understanding of information that is being proposed by IEPA for digestion and application. It serves no one to have a 60-page module that they can't comprehend or understand. And not only that they don't have the authority or the rights to be able to impose or inflict those standards, rules regulations, and permits. A single home resident isn't pulling a permit from the IEPA, nor is a commercial landlord. How is that applicable to the people in the community? On the other side, municipalities, counties, and the state of Illinois are required to comply. But when

we're talking about community-based standards in regards to permit compliances and understanding the authority of the Illinois EPA, I can't go into that. The real focus is on the Environmental Justice piece, that's what we're here for and where I'd like to stay. If we go into the authority of the IEPA we will get lost. Which is why I think there has been an issue about where to sit Justice 40 in regard to the authority of the IEPA, even though you have an EJ division. The problem is how is this applicable for what is being proposed by this new legislation from the federal government to trickle down to the communities that are identified as disadvantaged communities of color, or socially, economically, environmentally impacted communities. The reality is that if we want to keep on sticking with the standards, looking at permitting process we're going to run in a circle. But if we try to propose simplified tools, and one of the things we've talked about is having the resources to get that information out there. Portals, in classroom STEM education, community awareness of obligations about how to deal with lead in drinking water, or how to deal with having concerns about toxic pollutants in your corridor, how you report that to your legislator, and how they then impose violations and fines on those corporations. That's more tangible for the people in Cicero who are more concerned about industrial development and corporations coming down there because now I know I can go to a simple few clicks to get to the information for who I need to report this to as a constituent in my region for someone who is being a bad steward. And holding my legislators, state reps, aldermen, and mayors accountable for these issues because now we have the power of knowledge and understanding our rights as citizens for protections. However, we can only make recommendations. There are substantial amounts of funds moving through the state under the bills. During Covid-19 when our book came out that money, and the way it was supposed to have moved throughout the state, it did not move, and they are still holding on to it. The air quality monitoring programs and systems that were supposed to be implemented in schools have not been prioritized. That's where we are right now even with Justice 40 and Build Back Better... we have a large thing on our hands now. We are becoming a part of the new green economy, which will result in more charging stations, solar panels put on roofs and urban land, which will result in a bigger impact. We haven't scratched the surface on that yet. We are worried about our drinking water and soil after someone has a major fire. And then it will become a new superfund site. This is our present reality.

Chris – Kelly?

Kelly Thompson – I think that the IEPA modules from what I understand you're saying that education and outreach to communities based on what IEPA does within each of their bureaus is that correct?

Chris – Yes.

Kelly – We were having this conversation. There is a lack of education and knowledge on both sides. Industry and communities. Having all parties understand what the charge of IEPA is and what each of the bureaus do, you don't have to understand the intricacies of the permitting process, but it's very complex. There are many rules and regulations. We are considering that from the industry perspective. There is a huge need working with communities. A lot of companies do a good job of reaching out to the community and having conversations. Not all,

but we have examples that would help. It would be a nice offer to help develop modules if it's something you're interested in.

Chris – Thank you for that offer. A while ago I wanted to use a company as a model but they did not want to be used. If we have companies and businesses who are willing to step up, we definitely should talk. Victoria is talking about larger issues as well, but this is multifaceted. There's the justice 40 money and the inflation reduction act, and there's still the day to day that the IEPA does and the regulated community and community involvement. We should definitely talk.

Kelly – In talking with some of ERG members, they are trying to navigate how to better engage with communities. They want to be better stewards and engage more. Those conversations are happening. Just know it is happening.

Chris – thank you for that... if there is not anything else, as far as the next meeting date. We are looking at July, August, September timeframe. We are on the tail end of the second quarter, so maybe we look at the tail end of the third quarter.

Victoria – I think the main thing would be what our follow up action items would be. Which would be getting appointees onto the commission. 2. Being able to be proactive to understand the difference between us and Justice 40, and last, fleshing out the surveys that were submitted for top priorities and reengaging everyone who said they were committed. And if you can produce a flyer that we can share with our network for appointments and how to go about the process in a simplified PDF or some links. I appreciate those who are proactive. There are feasible ways to do everything and as an agency the responsibilities and roles are heavy, but we want to be intentional because we have a short window of time to get the ball rolling. I will make myself available as needed.

Chris – thank you for that, I'm thinking

Paulina – to your point, Victoria, on the survey for the work products that we listed, one of the work products listed is a flyer/brochure that illustrates the vision and function of the commission whether that ranks high, once we get participation in the survey, that is something we as an office can put together once we have that. It'll help you with those invitations for people to apply for the commission. And Donovan, you said that the distinction between the Justice 40 and our commission is that in Justice 40 only state officials get voting rights, but not in our commission. That is something we can include as a factoid in that, which would be more of an immediate work product. I think we can work and circulate with you all and get your approval before we officially send it out. I just wanted to make that point.

Chris – That's a fantastic idea and we'll get to work on that and get approval from folks in the commission. As far as next date, September and maybe avoid Labor Day, 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, do any of those Wednesdays in September work better than others?

Victoria – is august not an option?

Chris – we could do august.

Victoria – August 16<sup>th</sup> or the 9<sup>th</sup>, or the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I just don't want to wait 90 days. When are they back in session in Springfield? When is summer break over?

Kelly – Veto session? October 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Also November 7<sup>th</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Victoria – and by that time they would have made the decision about the Justice 40 commission.

Kelly – I would assume yes. That bill passed and sent to the governor so we will find out by August if he signs it or not.

Victoria – that's why I proposed August, once he has made a final decision, we could get some clarity about our engagement on this side of things and what that relationship will look like so we can answer that by our next meeting. We would know how to strategize for October's veto session and get some engagement from the commissioners who serve to build relationships, which is very important to make our agenda known, based on the survey and be able to actively ask the legislators to make recommendations for other appointees that can jump on board with that.

Chris – how about August 23<sup>rd</sup>?

Victoria – Wednesdays are always good for me. Another date is fine as well.

Chris – let's try for the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I'm not hearing any objections. We have work to do. We'll sort through some of these action items, proposals, and get to work on the near-term things like the flyer. Thinking long term and talking with folks here about Justice 40 and I'll talk to Laura Chief of Staff about that and the relationship between EJ commission and Justice 40, should the governor sign the bill, which it sounds like he may very well do that. With that, it brings us to the conclusion, I thank everyone and continue to be hopeful that we have a little momentum, and we'll get more people and continue strengthening the commission and continue working on some of these issues. Thank you all enjoy your day and your summers and talk to you soon!