September 18, 2019 Sustainability Commission Minutes

4:00-6:00 PM

417 East Fayette Street, 8th Floor

Commissioners In attendance: Lisa Ferretto, Earl Johnson, Ben Zaitchik, Avis Ransom, Kurt Sommer, Becca Bakre, Miriam Avins, Donzell Brown, Inez Robb, Councilmember Ryan Dorsey, Michael Furbish, Greg Sawtell, Chris Ryer

Recording of meeting available: <https://livestream.com/accounts/17371294>

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. June and August meeting minutes approved
3. The Plan’s Big Audacious Commitments discussed.
4. Commissioner Earl Johnson discussed his work and its relationship to the 2019 Plan.

Earl runs a small urban farm in Oliver: Bethel Farm Lab. He teaches people what food looks like and when to pick it. People pick food as they need it. The Plan is his life. It touches on things that are important to him: neighbors, neighborhoods, urban farming and waste & recycling. It does a good job connecting the dots: connecting people to one other, engaging neighbors - knowing them, having dinner with them. This makes Baltimore a better place. And, it’s the best way to clean up Baltimore - to know one another. NextDoor is one way to connect neighbors who might not spend time outdoors.

1. Disrupting the Mainstream:  Commissioners shared thoughts on the Anti-Racism Training report, including:
   1. The Plan is a vehicle for disrupting the mainstream.
   2. Being transparent, inclusive, intentional
   3. Addressing socio-economic stress – Intentional strategies to purchase locally and hire locally. Break away from doing what is easiest.
   4. Pattern – practice of earnest inquiry. Not just listening but who is expressing the questions, who’s issue are they? How are the voices of the marginalized surfaced? How are they responded to? Information perspectives are made invisible by the mainstream. 1st step is to recognize there is a mainstream and it its massive implications for people’s lives.
   5. Letting fear of giving up power. Learning to recognize this.
   6. Inquire: who else is on the panel.
   7. Choosing to do what is uncomfortable /unfamiliar to give room for the marginalized, even if you forgo your privilege
   8. Mob mentality is pushed on social media and disconnecting from that can be difficult.
   9. Talking about different levels of how race plays out – 1. Interpersonal level (one person to another) 2. institutional level (policies that impact lots of people)
2. Paths to Power – The plan was adopted by City Council and signed by the Mayor. We have the power to influence, convene and connect. We must be innovative to make changes.
3. Pitch Your Topic (Commissioners)

-Lisa Ferretto – Resiliency

Long term issues like climate change and immediate concerns such as flooding impact health and equity and many areas of the Plan.

-Ben Zaitchek - Housing vacancies and greenspace

Sustainable development of neighborhoods, cross cutting many topics in the plan. It’s current. (There is a taskforce (Greg) that is working on this)

-Earl Johnson – Trash

It impacts everything. Resiliency, crime, teaching residents how to dispose of trash/recycle, quality of life. The Commission can educate communities.

-Avis Ransom – Transportation and Landuse

These two can be transformative for the city and are cross cutting – jobs. Transportation is an equity issue and it is long term although things are constantly changing.

-Kurt Summer – Waste&Trash and Economy

How do you inform communities on strategies? It’s very relevant with Plans, incinerator, landfill. Put dollars in communities’ pockets

-Michael Furbish– Waste

Across all sectors of our demographics waste is a commonality. There is an urgency and it cuts across many topics. Long term. Currently it’s political.

-Rebbecca Bakre– Waste

Building trust between disenfranchised communities and their leaders. Can connect to student leadership.

-Donzell Brown – Waste

Composting, urban farming, teaching kids,

-Greg Sawtell– Team Waste

2 years unitl the end of Wheelabrator’s contract. Environmental justice issue. $55M in health damages in concentrated neighborhoods. 80% of the materials are reusable, recyclable, compostable. Jobs. System change is needed. It’s on us.

-Inez Robb – Interconnectedness is the most important aspect

-Councilman Ryan Dorsey – Landuse and Transportation

They are inseparable. The city has failed for a long time. Lack a public understanding of the policies and how they are perpetuating conditions. We have a great opportunity for improvement now with an update to the Zoning Code. A new building is required to have one offstreet parking space for every unit. Parking lot is rolled into the cost of groceries. This nexus is driving quality of life in the city.

Miriam Avins– Baltimore as a living environment

The ways in which trees and soil serve us. We should keep a focus on Baltimore as a living land

(Public Comments

* + Waste and Trash
  + Altering the form of city government. Less mayoral power and a city administrator
  + Thanks for taking equity seriously
  + The Middlebranch is the last remaining functioning estuary in a city. It’s different than the harbor and adds an equity issue.

It was agreed to focus on two main topics, with Commissioners agreeing to participate in working groups for each:

* Waste: Earl, Greg, Michael, Donzell, Inez, Kurt, Becca
  + Solid Waste masterplan
  + BRESCO
  + End of life of the landfill
  + Zero Waste Consultant
* Transportation/Landuse – Avis, Ryan, Ben, Lisa
  + Held initial meetings regarding transportation and zoning (ready to regroup). Will be working on this in the fall

8. Meeting Adjourned

Upcoming Events of Interest

Baltimore Racial Justice Action – Classes for white people begin November 2, 2019 <https://bmoreantiracist.org/work/for-individuals/white-people>

## [FALL 2019 WORKSHOP FOR WHITE PEOPLE](https://bmoreantiracist.org/events/workshops-for-white-people/fall-2019-general-workshop-for-white-people)

### SAT, NOV 2ND — SAT, JAN 11TH

**Workshop dates**

1. Sat, Nov 2nd 12:00pm — 5:30pm
2. Sat, Nov 16th 12:00pm — 5:30pm
3. Sat, Dec 7th 12:00pm — 5:30pm
4. Sat, Dec 14th 12:00pm — 5:30pm
5. Sat, Jan 4th 12:30pm — 5:30pm
6. Sat, Jan 11th 12:30pm — 5:30pm

**Location:**[**116 E. 25th St., Baltimore, MD 21218**](https://www.google.com/maps?q=116%20E.%2025th%20St.,%20Baltimore,%20MD%2021218)

**Building Racial Justice in Baltimore 32-hour Workshop Series**

This workshop series is BRJA’s introductory class for white people. Participants will explore the historical development as well as the contemporary implications of racism in the United States, as well as our own racialization as white people. Participants will work with learning partners to develop an anti-racist action plan to help them deepen their own understanding and to grow their practice of taking conscious action for racial justice in their own circles of influence. Participation will require a commitment of 32 hours of classroom time, plus 2-4 hours between sessions for reading and meeting with a learning partner.