

Northern Green Zone Task Force

Meeting Notes

11/28/2018

Farview Park Recreation Center

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Meeting facilitated by James Trice and Sam Grant (Public Policy Project).

Attendees

Northern Green Zone Task Force: Guinevere Baptise-Johns, Yolonda Adams-Lee, Anita Urvina Davis, Joanne Goddard, Kitty Stratton, Linnae Nelson-Seys, Roxxanne O'Brien, Michael Chaney, Catherine Fleming, Princess Titus, Vanessa Willis, Jim Voll, Anthony Taylor, Lars Morris, Markeeta Keyes

Facilitators/Staff: James Trice, Sam Grant, Kelly Muellman, Kennedy Kruchoski, Mary Timm

Guests: Marry Maguire, Alexis Pennie, Andrew Bornhoft, Darrell Gerber, Say Yang, Jessica Garraway

Introductory comments from City of Minneapolis

Kelly Muellman provided an introduction to Green Zones and the City of Minneapolis Sustainability Division projects. The Sustainability Division works on environmental policy topics ranging from food policy and urban agriculture to deep energy and fossil fuel reduction. The Green Zones is a concerted effort to work on environmental projects and policies in disproportionately impacted, environmental justice communities in Minneapolis. The Sustainability Division hopes that the Green Zones initiative increases transparency of City Government and access to programs and resources, facilitates the exchange of information, and identifies projects and policies that the City and community can collaborate on together. There are 4 non-voting members of the task force who are City of Minneapolis employees.

Purpose/Charge of Northern Green Zone Task Force

Kelly read through the resolution that established the Northern Green Zone Task Force. All City Council members that represent North and Northeast Minneapolis are authors of the resolution, and wish to maintain open communication with the Northern Green Zone Task Force. The third "Whereas" of the resolution includes the goals for the Task Force. Seven of these goals were created by the Citywide Green Zone workgroup in 2016-2017, and the last 5 were brought forward by the Environmental Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC). All 12 goals represent the holistic and comprehensive nature of the Green Zones Initiative, bringing together the environment, human health, human wellbeing and the economy.

The charge of the Northern Green Zone Task Force is to identify City programs or policies that are missing, inadequate, or harmful to the residents of the Northern Green Zone, and to determine how members want to collaborate with the City to address those, in relation to the listed goals. The Task

Force needs to identify the specific steps that need to be taken to get the work done, create the initiatives, and decide when and how the City should be involved.

A question was asked about whether there is overlap between the Southside Green Zone goals and the Northern Green Zone goals. The Southside Green Zone broke up a similar list of goals into four topic areas (Equity, Anti-Displacement and Green Jobs, Health and Energy in Housing, Healthy Food Access, and Air, Water and Soil Quality), and came up with over 100 action items to achieve the goals. They are now in the process of transitioning into the new Southside Green Zone Council, where specific Work Plan activities will be prioritized and implemented.

A question was asked about the Northern Green Zone Task Force's relationship to the Minneapolis Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC). CEAC is an environmental advisory body that has existed since 1990 to make recommendations to the City staff and Council on policy, programs or projects that may have an impact on the environment. The initial support for Green Zones (from the City's side) came up through CEAC. CEAC will be able to lend support to the efforts of the Northern Green Zone Task Force.

The Northern Green Zone has \$40,000 to work with in 2019. The Task Force will be deciding how to spend the money. This can be discussed at future meetings.

Develop Group Norms

The group norms define how the Task Force will operate, and the intent is to have them posted at every meeting. These norms don't have to be finalized after this first meeting. It is expected that these norms will be added to and edited as the meetings continue.

- **Northern Green Zone Task Force meetings will start and end on time.** There will be a half hour window before each meeting starts for eating food and settling in. Food will be provided at every meeting.
- **Meetings will be recorded by audio and written notes.** Task Force members will pair up with note partners or buddies that can fill them in on whatever material they happen to miss. Email contact information of members will be shared with the Task Force. It is expected that task force members will be responsible for whatever information they miss.
- **Task Force members will be open to each other's truths, opinions, etc.,** and will attempt to see things from others' lenses, not just their own. Members will also know to not take comments personally.
- In regard to a time limit for speaking, **Task Force members will lean on the guidance of the meeting facilitators, and will self-monitor the amount of time that each person speaks.** Members will be respectful to other speakers, by not interrupting and taking turns to speak. Members will be mindful of letting people share what they feel they need to.
- The Task Force may create a self-governing body in the future. For example, CEAC appoints a chair and a vice-chair. It may also be helpful to identify subgroups for specific areas and topics.
- Members will **keep their phones on silent** for the duration of Task Force meetings, and will take calls outside of the room where the meeting is taking place.

- **Visitor/Community participation:** It should be decided how visitors and community participants will interact with the Task Force at these meetings. The “thumb method” is used by the Southside Green Zone Council to gauge community input, and can be described in later meetings. The Council would vote after receiving community input near the end of the meeting.

History of Green Zones

The history of the Green Zones Initiative as a whole, and of the Northern Green Zone specifically, was shared by task force members.

Say Yang from the Center for Earth, Energy and Democracy (CEED) presented on how the concept of Green Zones came to Minneapolis. The Green Zones Initiative came to the City of Minneapolis through the Climate Action Plan (CAP) as it was being finalized in 2013. CEED was part of an Environmental Justice workgroup that was advising the City throughout the development of the CAP. The Environmental Justice workgroup went through the CAP and identified where voices from communities most impacted by environmental issues should be included. This information can be found in Appendix C of the CAP. Models from environmental justice projects across the country were researched. Green Zones were happening out of environmental justice communities in California. The Environmental Justice workgroup was able to add a Green Zones Initiative to the CAP. Green Zones were chosen because they come from the communities most burdened by pollution and environmental impact. They allow for City resources to be allocated to over-burdened communities, hopefully reducing pollution in those areas.

In 2014, the State released a Health Equity report. Staff from the MN Department of Health (MDH) were assigned to complete a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), with the goal of identifying how policies, strategies, and different sectors all impact human health. Nexus community partners contracted with MDH to do engagement in the Phillips neighborhood, bringing together a variety of organizations including Land Stewardship Project, Isuroon, Waite House, Hope Community, and CEED. This HIA Steering Committee decided to focus on a Green Zones model for Minneapolis as the HIA. Over the past five years, the HIA steering team (now called the Community Steering Team) has hosted Green Zone workshops, finished the HIA, and has worked with the City of Minneapolis on Green Zones initiatives.

Guinevere Baptise-Johns, Yolanda Adams Lee, and Roxxanne O’Brien were members of the citywide Green Zones Workgroup initiated by the City in 2016. Guinevere shared that she had a positive experience with the group overall. She came to the group expecting immediate change. She would like to see the City start some kind of recycled home program, or a voucher program that allows homeowners and residents to buy/fix existing homes instead of selling them to developers. She has also been a strong advocate for rent control. These environmental issues present themselves in the home.

Yolanda shared next. She is passionate about health disparities (lead based paint, cancer, asthma, asbestos, target markets for tobacco, etc.), especially knowing how long the State has had this data about lead based paint in homes and the health impacts that it has on residents without the problem being addressed. That is a topic that she continues to bring up to the Green Zone.

Yolanda says that her experience has been humbling, and an intense learning experience. The City has provided what has been asked, and the community has felt heard. City Council has recognized the

requests of the community. Looking forward, she fears that there aren't enough young people engaged and willing to continue this work and get the results that the community deserves.

Roxanne shared next. She recognizes that the City investing in organizers from the impacted neighborhoods is a new development. She acknowledges that her skills are applicable to this context, and has a lot of relationships and social capital that she is offering to the group, along with her sincerity. She expected fast turnaround when she first became involved in the Green Zone. She has been a loud, passionate leader in the Northern Metals issue, and has opened a lot of eyes to the health impacts of those projects. She was placed on the Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC) by Keith Ellison, and was the only black woman in the group. It was difficult to have controversial conversations in that setting: those conversations can't be delicate. She was involved in putting pressure on City Council to move forward the resolution to create the Green Zones. She uses her relationships and information sources to move things forward and make sure that voices from her community are heard. Environmental justice and the Green Zones are about a compilation of all the social, economic, and environmental impacts that are being experienced. She recognizes a lot of youth in the community that are interested in this work, and needs more support moving forward, since she is also experiencing these issues that the group is trying to change.

Sam Grant and James Trice, the Northern Green Zone Task Force facilitators, are also representing the Environmental Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC). Additionally, six members of the EJCC were incorporated into the Green Zones Task Force. Sam provided an overview of the background of EJCC. Environmental issues have been seen as separate from other community issues, but social and environmental justice issues are intrinsically intertwined. The EJCC was established in November of 2017.

The Northern Green Zone Task Force's work will build on the 12 goals in the resolution, and those issues will form the basic architecture of what this group will do. Before the next meeting, members should think about which of these 12 goals matter most, and where the group should prioritize action. An action plan needs to be designed in order to see results. The underlying purpose of the Green Zone Task Force is to light that fire and get things moving, with the ability to enforce these actions.

Schedule next meeting/recurring time for meetings

The Northern Green Zone Task Force will meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., starting on January 9, 2019.

Next meeting: January 9th, 2019, 5:30-7:30 p.m.