Evanston Environment Board 2020 Meeting Schedule

Proposed Meeting Schedule

Meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month, unless otherwise indicated, beginning on Thursday, January 9, 2020. The agreed upon meeting start time is 6:30 PM. Below is a list of the scheduled meetings, all meetings will take place on the date indicated unless the Environment Board determines otherwise. Any meeting changes must be made in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

- Thursday, January 9, 2020
- Thursday, February 13, 2020 (Joint meeting with Equity and Empowerment Commission)
- Thursday, March 12, 2020
- Thursday, April 9, 2020
- Thursday, May 14, 2020
- Thursday, June 11, 2020
- Thursday, July 9, 2020
- Thursday, August 13, 2020
- Thursday, September 10, 2020
- Thursday, October 8, 2020
- Thursday, November 12, 2020
- Thursday, December 10, 2020
Memorandum

To: Chair and Members of the Environment Board  
Chair and Members of the Equity & Empowerment Commission

From: Johanna Leonard, Community Development Director  
Kumar Jensen, Chief Sustainability and Resilience Officer  
Kimberly Richardson, Deputy City Manager

Subject: Environmental Justice Resolution

Date: January 2, 2020

Recommended Action:
Staff recommends that the Environment Board and the Equity & Empowerment Commission provide feedback on the objectives and concepts highlighted for inclusion in a forthcoming environmental justice resolution. The Environment Board’s feedback and review is sought at its January 9, 2020 meeting; the Equity & Empowerment Commission’s feedback and review is sought at its January 16, 2020 meeting.

Discussion:
Staff is working with Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE) on the implementation of an environmental justice (EJ) policy for the City and incorporation of such policies and practices into other City policies and practices. The members of EJE have worked since 2014 following the creation of a sub-committee of the Evanston Environment Board around the following statement: Environmental justice is just as much about preventing negatives impacts on low-income and minority neighborhoods as it is ensuring that those same neighborhoods receive equal share of positive programs resources and have fair and meaningful involvement on those programs.

The Climate Action & Resilience Plan (CARP) also identifies the need to adopt an environmental justice ordinance as part of the strategy to build climate resilience as it relates to vulnerable populations. As noted on page 29 of the CARP, “Many climate hazards result in negative effects, which may include higher utility bills, increased probability of flooding, higher food costs, and other financial stresses. Vulnerable populations, by definition, are placed at a disadvantage when responding to and preparing for these effects. Addressing their needs is a matter of environmental and climate justice. A proactive approach to climate change is essential in protecting the community’s most valuable assets, its residents.” Under actions, the adoption of an environmental justice ordinance is listed.
Staff has divided the steps for the implementation of an EJ policy, and ultimately an EJ ordinance into the following steps:

1) Obtain current and timely feedback from the Environment Board and the Equity & Empowerment Commission at the January 2020 regular meetings on the definition of environmental justice and its objectives for Evanston’s implementation.

2) Following the January meetings of the aforementioned Boards/Commissions, staff will consolidate feedback into a draft resolution in support of and Evanston EJ policy and definition.

3) A joint Equity & Empowerment Commission and Environment Board meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2020 at 6:30p. At this meeting the groups will review the draft language of the EJ Resolution in a “working session” and provide live feedback on changes to be made during the meeting. Following the completion of the review and any changes, a motion will be made (if appropriate) to recommend moving the matter to the City Council.

4) The EJ resolution will be submitted to the Planning & Development Committee of the City Council at the next appropriate meeting for consideration and adoption by the City Council; the targeted timeline for this is spring 2020.

5) The resolution will identify priorities and additional areas of study or development of ordinances to strengthen EJ policies and practices in Evanston.

Environmental Justice in Evanston:

Staff seeks feedback on the following:

1) Evanston definition of Environmental Justice;
2) Evanston definition of public engagement; and
3) Objectives and policies for inclusion in an EJ Resolution (the framework that will provide the City’s implementation for EJ policies into other City policies).

The United States EPA states that, “Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys: 1) the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards; and 2) equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.”

EJE has proposed the following Environmental Justice (EJ) definition: “is when equity and empowerment are achieved for all community members such that every resident experiences the same degree of access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks and an opportunity to play an effective role in making decisions that affect the quality of life in this community.”
EJE has proposed the following definition for Public Engagement, “Public Engagement: Public engagement is the actively solicited involvement of the public by city government in issues that could have a significant impact on a resident, neighborhood, or segment of the community. The City would publicize such issues and give residents enough time to educate themselves, participate in meetings and provide input on the issue. In response, the City would give due consideration to all public comment provided by involved individuals, summarize and respond to major public comments, and make its best effort to incorporate their ideas, concerns and criticisms into the final decision-making.”

EJE has identified the following objectives for its EJ work. These objectives are contemplated for inclusion into the EJ resolution:

1. Ensure that no neighborhood or residential area in Evanston bear a disproportionate burden of environmental nuisances, hazards and risks, including:
   - Air, water or soil pollution
   - Noise or odor nuisances
   - Dangerous traffic patterns
   - Lead paint, asbestos and other toxins
   - Lead or other contaminants in drinking water
   - Other dangers, nuisances or disruptions

2. Ensure that environmental assets are equitably distributed across the City and that each neighborhood has desirable features that support health, well-being, and a sense of community, including:
   - Parks, open space, and natural areas
   - Community gardens
   - Access to the lakefront
   - Infrastructure investments, including streets, sidewalks, bike paths, community centers and other recreational assets

3. Ensure that all residents affected by land use or development decisions made by the City have the opportunity for meaningful involvement and effective participation. This may include:
   - Modifying the City’s decision-making process related to review, approval and regulation of private development projects
   - Developing Environmental Justice guidelines for project evaluation by City staff to ensure development projects enhance community health, well-being and the environment in affected neighborhoods

4. Implement guidelines for meaningful citizen involvement to ensure:
   - Access to information in accessible, non-technical terms with sufficient lead time to allow participation
   - Adequate outreach and public engagement
   - Scheduling informational meetings at times and locations convenient for affected residents
   - Soliciting comments in time for adequate consideration by decision-makers
• Developing responsiveness summaries to document how concerns were addressed in the decision process.

Additional Policies and Requirements for Inclusion in a draft EJ Resolution:
• Development of a public engagement policy that creates clear practices and procedures for defining meaningful public engagement when the City makes decisions.
• Development of policies and procedures to identify potential EJ violations in new and existing developments (new development review procedures).
• Strengthen existing ordinances to reflect EJ policies (e.g. noise ordinance, etc.)