

Environmental exposures across urban and rural communities in the Deep South

Birmingham Community Advisory Board Meeting

Sept 19, 2016, 2:00-2:45 pm

Harrison Park Community Center
1615 McMillon Ave SW, Birmingham, AL 35211

Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Keisha Brown, Mary Evans, Julia Gohlke, Josephine Okwudi, Molly Richardson, Sheila Tyson, Anna Scott and Connor Wu

New CAB members: A nurse from Princeton was suggested as a possibility. Sheila will contact Deborah Little, who has worked on environmental studies testing soil in North Birmingham with Lawson State and Birmingham Southern College. We will continue to think about this for the Spring 2017 meeting.

Recent developments in Birmingham: Mayor Bell drove through neighborhoods (~2 weeks ago) to promote a city-wide cleanup by the Birmingham Public Works Department. Sheila also mentioned current city spending on lead abatement and demolition of dilapidated houses.

Focus group de-briefing: In the focus group, potential participants were recruited by Friends of West End from Wynnona, Ensley, Mason City, West End, Green Acres, Central Park, Powderly, and Adamsville. Sheila mentioned wanting to further reach residents with the survey and then present a summary of those results to the Mayor. There was a desire to target East Lake or the eastern part of town: Crestwood, Fountain Heights, and Roebuck Parkway in future surveying or events.

Additional Surveys: On Sept. 30th, there will be a meeting in Gate City. Sheila is interested in circulating a survey about environmental problems to prioritize. There was a gas explosion 3-4 years ago. The gym has no air conditioning. There are no schools, medical services, or grocery shopping in the area. Lead paint is an issue. Streets and sidewalks are in poor condition.

Goals and timeline for remaining 3 years of the grant: We discussed charting our long-term goals with short-term steps and a timeline using the logic model framework circulated to CAB members previously. This will be in the form of a working logic model emphasizing measureable actions, outcomes, and impacts. We hope to achieve an overall impact of better living conditions through improving housing, water, and air.

For measurable outcomes, some ideas included number of houses torn down and number of lots cleaned up.

In terms of stakeholders to involve in activities, local companies such as Red Diamond Tea Company and the pharmaceutical company off Lakeshore Pkwy could be contacted for involvement with the local

schools. In addition, the 7 companies that own the gas tanks could be contacted to start a health initiative and/or contribute money to Lawson State for scholarships for local students.

Issues of trust and communication were discussed. For example, communication of air quality days, before air quality reaches the level of alarm was suggested. In addition, there are differences in what the local organization GASP and the Health Department convey in terms of health risks. It was noted Cory Masuka typically represents the Jefferson County Health Department at meetings, but that it might be better to have a meeting with Dr. Mark Wilson, the Health Officer, and GASP to discuss specifics about the differences in communications regarding health risks.

Other concerns that were discussed included the safety of the new bridge over the railroad tracks that is under construction in North Birmingham and also the bridge near the new port in Birmingham/ Ensley.

Separate meeting with CAB member Kirsten Bryant (GASP) on 9/20/16:

Attendees: Keisha Brown, Kirsten Bryant, Mary Evans, Julia Gohlke, Molly Richardson, Anna Scott and Connor Wu

Updates: Updates were given on the focus groups and CAB meeting that were held the previous day. Kirsten gave an update on GASP's recent activities and the North Birmingham site. In regards to the North Birmingham site, concerns over the high turnover of EPA representatives and ADEM/City of Birmingham lack of support for the National Priorities List recommendation were mentioned.

It was thought that there are ~1000 properties on hold for cleanup. Concerns were also raised that The North Birmingham Coalition (GASP is considered a resource partner), has not had a meeting since last Spring. Finally, concerns that results of a UAB study that collected spirometry and breath expiration are not being conveyed to participants was mentioned. To alleviate this concern, it was suggested that any future resident participation needs to include a handout with a timeline for mailing results and contact numbers. Results should be mailed to the individual's home and a summary of results (when appropriate)/ plans, should be presented to the broader community.

Discussion of potential activities: The CAB could lead a round table with the Health Dept. and GASP. An additional collaborative activity could include a project using personal air monitors to encourage citizen science in data collection. Potential air monitors would be Dylos Air Quality Monitor or Airbeam Wearable Monitor or the wristband monitor. Kirsten also mentioned their collaboration with Restoring Eden, an organization offering students an alternative spring break for Spring 2017. Students would conduct a detailed health assessment (door to door) in the Birmingham area. Keisha suggested residents are hesitant to be surveyed again without receiving results. She suggested a community meeting ahead of time to engage with the community. A festival or a 'funday' would also be a good opportunity to get the message out.