

**Environmental Justice Focus Group Meeting Notes  
Detroit, Michigan  
May 20, 2009**

- Greetings and introductory comments and opening slides by Director Steven Chester of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
- Question Facilitators:
  - Steven Chester, MDEQ
  - Harold Core, Public Information Officer, Michigan Department of Civil Rights
  - Brad Van Guilder, Organizer, Ecology Center

After the presentation, a series of questions were posed to community members regarding environmental justice issues.

1. **What are the most significant health and pollution-related impacts affecting your community?**
  - a) Odor.
  - b) Cannot open windows to get fresh air because of odors that come into home; need to use air conditioning.
  - c) Water coming up from combined sewer overflow construction in the community caused more odors.
  - d) Detroit Water and Sewerage facility-odors are unbearable at the Delray Neighborhood House and in the surrounding community, odors are from dewatering process, also yellow plume from facility needs to be abated.
  - e) Consuming fish from nearby water bodies/pollutants. People fish in the Detroit River at Dearborn and Jefferson; do not know if the water is polluted and if the fish are safe to eat.
  - f) Particulates/fugitive dust from Peerless Metals on ground and houses nearby.
  - g) Concentrated industry → (not all will recognize the symbol) cumulative impact of carcinogenic emissions from multiple industries surrounding the 48217 community.
  - h) Consuming food from gardens that might be affected by particulate fallout from industry.

- i) Water, Land & Air → contamination is killing people in the area.
- j) Asthma, HBP, other health concerns.
- k) Traffic – Bridge-pollution from trucks and dust from construction of the Gateway Project.
- l) Stagnant water-drains in streets do not work properly.
- m) Trash/illegal dumping-not adequate pick ups.
- n) Effects on aging population-Detroit Area Agency on Aging have done a study on effects of pollution on older people and it is clear that Detroit has a higher morbidity than other parts of the state.
- o) Contaminated land-Delray had a lot of industries dating back to 1880s, do not know if any surveys have been done to determine if there is widespread land contamination (Example - like from smelters in other parts of the City).

**2. What are the factors (social, economic, other) that have caused or contributed to these health and pollution-related impacts?**

- a) Economics valued over people-Detroit City Council has put 48217 in jeopardy by putting economics over people. Any time a company comes forward and says “jobs” they fail to consider environmental impacts.
- b) City needs to require more environment impact analysis.
- c) Disconnect between departments in City government-one department working toward environmental improvements and another taking actions that negatively impact environmental conditions.
- d) MDEQ needs more education and interaction with public.
- e) MDEQ needs to do a more comprehensive study on cumulative impacts from all contaminants before granting permits.
- f) Government agencies do not look beyond regulations.
- g) Zoning issues-City allows industries to come in solely based on zoning without considering impacts to residents or community concerns that are raised (Example: Systematic Recycling; not taking into consideration quality of life impacts).

- h) Corruption.
- i) No “systemic” thinking.
- j) Inadequate testing of new products.
- k) Racism.
- l) No health care providers. In 48217 there are no practicing physicians or hospitals; loss of black hospitals in the 1970s resulted in a loss of a lot of cultural observation cancer clusters.
- m) Will not fund essential studies –tried to get State health officials to do cancer study in 48217 and person said there is no evidence that a study is warranted. On one block in 48217, 17 people have died of cancer.
- n) Delray/Southwest Detroit is not a priority for environmental enforcement.
- o) Off-set concept is unjust-purchasing of emissions credits from other industries does not make sense.
- p) Lack of political power.
- q) Concern with students at Southwest High School/Bridge traffic. The plaza is going to be almost on top of the high school. This would not happen in an affluent community.
- r) Classism/Racism-Example: DRIC Bridge selection site in Delray because more affluent communities protested against it being located in their areas; Detroit politicians did not stand up for the Delray community and were not engaged in the issue.
- s) Lack of enforcement of laws and regulations.

**2a. What could be done to eliminate or minimize these health and pollution-related impacts?**

- a) Educate MDEQ staff.
- b) Monitors – need more (real time) – what is in particulates? Increased funding for monitoring-Why would you cut monitoring in area as polluted as Southwest Detroit?

- c) Educate people-provide monitors at houses so people can tell different emissions and odors, need to be trained in how to read monitors.
- d) Do not trust company's monitoring results.
- e) Companies can do more → controls, mitigation, "green tech", and remediation. Marathon should be looking into clean fuels.
- f) Move folks out of community-buy everyone out and relocate them.
- g) Prioritize EJ areas for enforcement-get better cooperation from state, federal and local governments to get more enforcement and money into the area.
- h) Need results- people come to meetings for years and nothing changes.
- i) Remediation and containment of pollution.
- j) Does budget stop us from doing our jobs!?

**3. What does it mean to you to have a healthy, safe and livable community?**

- a) Life-in one square block there are 10 people who died of cancer and 6 survivors. We need a comprehensive plan to sustain life.
- b) Subsequent generations/quality of life.
- c) Reasonable response time to reports of incidents.
- d) Plan to help sustain life.
- e) Empower citizens = let citizens know the truth and be a part of the solution info, resources; those who are most affected by environmental problems need to be called to the table of decision-making and kept at the table through the process and stay involved.
- f) Truth-residents need to know the truth about pollution from local industries; accountability.
- g) Personal visits by government to EJ areas.
- h) Lee Varner, Jorge Acevedo → they respond!
- i) Ground so polluted – cannot install playground.

- j) Know EJ injustice.
  - k) Want same air quality as East Detroit/Pointes.
  - l) Meaningful Involvement.
  - m) Social Justice <==> Environmental Justice-when you think about 40,000 households in city without water this has major implications; a house without running water can be grounds for removing children; social justice and environmental justice are intertwined.
  - n) Need "officials" at this table.
  - o) Education/Awareness-needs to be effort to inform people, State agencies need to do more outreach not just address the same people all of the time-go to schools, churches and other settings to reach people.
  - p) General cleanliness → encourages good behavior.
  - q) More \$\$ - if mandated.
  - r) How long will (it? this?) be ignored?
  - s) Fair Treatment.-have not been getting fair treatment, MDEQ has been violating fair treatment.
  - t) No need for so many meetings.-in suburbs people do not have to go to 2-3 meetings a week to try to protect their quality of life.
4. **What state and local agencies are most involved with health and environmental issues in your community?**
- a) None.
  - b) Very little involvement.
  - c) The City of Detroit, Department of Environmental Affairs has been helping community with Leaking Underground Storage Tanks - working on issues of abandoned gas station and exposed wells for over two years-process in other cities is much faster to address problems; local agencies are stymied because process takes too much time.
  - d) City council/City.
  - e) Remediation and Redevelopment Division/MDEQ.

- f) Communication/Actions slower in Detroit.
- g) MDEQ-complaint process is not effective, complaints were called in about compost facility and inspector said he could not trace to site even though very distinct smell, Drive-by odors are ignored by MDEQ; When try to get people to call in complaints they say “why, nothing will happen it is not going to do any good, nobody will do anything, nobody cares about Delray.”
- h) Southeast Detroit Environmental Vision, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, and Sierra Club.

**4a. What State agencies should be involved in environmental justice issues.**

Responses:

- a) Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Health Department, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), MDEQ, industries.

**4b. What level of communication or community outreach is occurring presently between the community and these state and local agencies? How could this be improved?**

- a) More local level opportunities to get answers, more responsiveness when Wayne County was involved with air issues.
- b) Agencies need to do more outreach in community, more clarification of who to contact about different problems.
- c) Multi-agency liaison.
- d) Manual-want a manual with an index that helps understand problems (Example: “if involvement would help something smells like rotten eggs...” if you see an orange plume.)
- e) Training of local residents-Wayne County used to give scholarships for local people to go to smoke school, education on different types of pollution and what it means.
- f) Use health clinics like CHASS as a place for education on issues.
- g) Same story – different people.

- h) White Cross Campaign – identified cancer clusters – get support for health studies.
- i) Communication/Process flow example – Pb testing. (PBB?)
- j) Must train staff in diversity issues/communication. Do we know who must train?

**5. What should a state environmental justice plan include to address the health and pollution-related impacts in your community?**

- a) Health studies.
- b) Contaminant impact studies.
- c) Petition process – prior to projects and on-going.
- d) Rescind permits – process to do – “conditional approval”.
- e) Violations need to result in permit termination.
- f) Permit language hard to understand for layperson, there should be a way to write permits so that people being impacted can understand them.
- g) Technical assistance grants to provide community with professional expertise to review permits would be very beneficial (Ex: DRIC study was 1200 pages and over 10 technical reports, community had 30 days to respond, who can understand all of this?)
- h) Meaningful involvement; citizens “vote”.
- i) Earlier notification, notices in community groups’ newsletters.
- j) Marathon’s “Environmental Impact Statement” made community look great – MDEQ should have performed this analysis. Companies should not do the analysis, an impartial agency looking out for the community should.
- k) Sierra Club had to challenge the permit for Marathon.
- l) Reinststitute the polluter pay law instead of taxpayers having to pay.

**5b. Extra Question: How can agencies build trust?**

- a) Stop listening to lobbyists, corporations.

- b) Political pressures – eliminate.
  - c) Do not trust politicians.
  - d) Honest, transparent.
  - e) Make companies pay for outreach costs.
  - f) Public hearings – less formal not so intimidating, reduce scientific language, community needs someone to believe them.
  - g) Want trust/belief to be mutual.
  - h) Health Liaison to go into communities.
6. **What other advice or comments do you wish to provide to assist us in developing a statewide environmental justice plan?**
- a) Inform more people – outside of same cast of characters.
  - b) Go door-to-door.
  - c) School and church meetings.
  - d) Languages – Spanish, Arabic.
  - e) TV screen – captions.
  - f) Community broadcasters.
  - g) Take people out of industrial area, should have to buy people out.
  - h) Make industries green.
  - i) Plan to buy people out.
  - j) Better interaction between state/local so all info shared at each level.
  - k) Plan specific to Detroit-State Plan cannot be one-size fits all, perhaps having local offices with local focus.
  - l) DEQ “outreach committee” – interns – schools.
  - m) Work with Universities to assist with outreach efforts.

**Environmental Justice Focus Group Meeting Notes  
Coleman Temple Church of God in Christ  
Saginaw, Michigan  
June 11, 2009**

Greetings by Pastor Hurley J. Coleman, Greater Coleman Temple Cogic Interfaith Organization

- Introductory comments and slides by Director Steven Chester of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Question Facilitators:
  - Harold Core, Public Information Officer, Michigan Department of Civil Rights
  - Brad Van Guilder, Organizer, Ecology Center
  - Pat Spitzley, Chief at the Office of Legal Services, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
  - Pamela Smith, Program Manager Saginaw Lead Hazard Control Program, Saginaw County Department of Public Health
  - Bryant Wilke, Director, Environmental Health Services, Saginaw County Department of Public Health

After the presentation, a series of questions were posed to community members regarding environmental justice issues.

1. **What are the most significant health and pollution-related impacts affecting your community?**
  - a) Fish consumption from the contaminated Saginaw and Tittabawassee Rivers. Walleye competition promotes fish consumption in these areas where people should not eat the fish.
  - b) Lead poisoning from houses and the outdoor environment.
  - c) Mold in houses. We need more testing to determine what type of mold to assist with property transactions.
  - d) Abandoned houses which are health hazards and attract vermin mold, etc.
  - e) Active and abandoned industrial sites which contribute to polluted air, soil, and other nuisances.
  - f) Asthma, which is exacerbated in certain areas and at certain times of the year.

- g) Inadequate health care.
- h) Inadequate access to fresh food. There is only one full-line grocery store on the east side of Saginaw where you can buy fresh fruit and vegetables.
- i) Contaminated home grown food due to contaminated soil.
- j) Demolition of homes. There is inadequate notice to folks in the area of potential airborne contaminants (lead, etc.) as a result of the demolition.
- k) Street repairs result in dust/air pollution.
- l) Lack of intentional environmental and public health education efforts to EJ communities.
- m) Inadequate inspection of migrant housing.

**2. What are the factors (social, economic, other) that have caused or contributed to these health and pollution-related impacts?**

- a) It is difficult for most of us to determine if laws have been unfairly enforced because we do not know what those laws are.
- b) Most laws are presented in such a way that to enforce them adversely affects the economy. Hence, most folks will not support strong enforcement.
- c) There is a lack of education regarding what economic/environmental justice mean together, i.e., how they are inter-related.
- d) People in this county and in Lansing are making decisions regarding where facilities are being sited. There should be local input regarding these decisions. For example, a medical waste incinerator was prevented from being sited in a poor community in this area because folks found out about it early and mobilized to stop it. That is not what normally happens. Recently a half-way house was approved before the neighborhood was aware and they did not have the political clout to stop it.
- e) Foundry cupolas are cleaned at night intentionally when no one could see. I do not blame the workers. It is hard to be a whistle-blower. We need to strengthen the Whistle-Blower Act.
- f) There must be a sense of urgency to get these things done, and our community is not crying out about these problems as they should be.
- g) There should be a “gate-keeper” to decide these things.

- h) The General Motors facility created fallout that damaged the paint on cars. They would fix the cars, and most folks were satisfied with that. But the source of the problem was never fixed, so people's health was still adversely affected.
- i) Brownfield redevelopments are not necessarily beneficial to the broad general public. I commend the city for recent improvements in their decision-making in this area.
- j) We need more education to eliminate these pollution impacts. How to do this and fund this is the difficult question.

**3. What does it mean to you to have a healthy, safe, and livable community?**

- a) It means that I can leave my door unlocked; I have access to health care; I have swimmable, fishable rivers, fresh air to breathe, well-kept lawns, etc.
- b) Must be "we", not what "you" or "I" want. Injustice someplace is injustice everyplace.
- c) People who live in healthy communities cannot identify with people who live in unhealthy communities.
- d) We have a neighborhood watch. We discuss abandoned homes, pit bulls, which vacant homes/lots need grass cutting, etc. If there is a need, we do it. We get together and cut the grass and do what needs to be done. We need continuing community discussion to solve our problems.
- e) We have been guilty of allowing so much neglect to take place. What should be natural has become unnatural. Livable, healthy communities cannot be a cliché but rather a true value people are willing to fight for.
- f) People have learned to live with chemical and other pollution. As economic times get worse, people are even more inclined to look the other way.
- g) We need to demand more from our elected officials on environmental issues such as we do for police protection, etc.
- h) Somebody needs to get up and scream that this is just not right.
- i) What is the DEQ doing with respect to education outreach in schools?
- j) Environmental Justice (EJ) goes beyond the rules and laws. We need to pursue balance in equitable approaches to solving environmental problems. Most people affected will not ever be at this table. We must go to them!

k) We must address at risk youth, gang violence, etc.

**4. What state and local agencies are most involved with health and environmental issues in your community?**

a) We have a good relationship with our local health departments.

b) Most folks identify with local rather than state agencies.

c) There is very little direct involvement or communication with DEQ and other state agencies. Most contact is via newspaper.

d) Those who did have contact with DEQ have found staff accessible, knowledgeable and willing to come into the community.

e) I hope DEQ folks would have a greater EJ presence in the Saginaw area as a result of these outreach efforts.

f) We have a responsibility in Saginaw to speak up more. But we need to continue this dialogue. The people suffering most are not here today. We must make DEQ accountable.

g) Need more honest, direct communication. It is difficult to do this with politicians and bureaucrats.

h) We have lots of laws and rules but what we need is application. Most people think there is no use in this. We must believe that something will come of this.

i) I wish I could say that people I have spoken within the DEQ have been interested.

j) It would be better to address these EJ issues as public health issues rather than environmental issues because more people are interested in health issues.

k) A person disagreed with that last statement. People do now relate to environmental issues, more so than ever before. People understand what being "green" means.

l) Since some relate preferentially to public health or environmental issues, we need to connect the two.

- m) One issue is the air monitoring system. We need an air monitor in Saginaw, not many miles away! Saginaw is not Detroit, Chicago, etc. We are not viewed as the big problem. We have to identify projects here that must be addressed!
- n) We need a green jobs initiative in Saginaw.
- o) We need an EPA grant to advise folks regarding fish consumption.
- p) We need to give our students a role in this EJ work, such as river research, etc.
- q) Must communicate in layperson's language.

**5. What should a state environmental justice plan include to address the health and pollution-related impacts in your community?**

- a) The elements shown on the "components" slide (Disparate impacts, Petition process, Public participation, Integration into DEQ activities, Inter-departmental integration, Role of local units of government) are generally on track.
- b) Also, we need:
  - o an "EJ Ombudsman" or coordinator in every community to connect state EJ activities to each community. The ombudsmen would empower and educate the community and know who the players are and who to contact.
  - o a method to recruit the actual folks on the block
  - o an education element
  - o a method to address abandoned houses
- c) The petition process would be helpful to allow reconsideration because of a disparate impact discovered after the decision was made. New Jersey has a fairly developed petition process. However, they were unprepared for the number of petitions they received.

**6. What other advice or comments do you wish to provide to assist us in developing a statewide environmental justice plan?**

- a) What are you trying to accomplish? Do you want one plan to address all?

- b) What other agencies besides DEQ should be involved? Michigan Department of Transportation, Department of Community Health, Civil Rights, Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan State Housing Development Authority. What do all these agencies have in common?
- c) What is the DEQ ready to tackle? Is the end goal to tell people not to eat fish, or to clean up the problem?
- d) The EJ Workgroup needs a mission statement as to what EJ means.
- e) Education is the key.
- f) There is no impact on any area that does not eventually affect all areas. The weakest part of the community is often what is “known” and affects the perception of the entire community.
- g) People are ready for change, but it takes money.
- h) Local experts need to add their voice to the debate. They are not always consulted by the decision-makers.
- i) People have to know the DEQ staff personally for this effort to work.
- j) You need a big splash when this EJ Plan is launched. Do not come out with it unless everything is in place. We do not need another program that does not work.
- k) You need to include the legislators.

**Environmental Justice Focus Group Meeting Notes**  
**Tip of Mitt Watershed Council**  
**Petoskey, Michigan**  
**June 12, 2009**

- Introductory comments and opening slides by Director Steven Chester of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Question Facilitators:
  - Harold Core, Public Information Officer, Michigan Department of Civil Rights
  - Brad Van Guilder, Organizer, Ecology Center
  - Pat Spitzley, Chief at the Office of Legal Services, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
  - Pamela Smith, Program Manager Saginaw Lead Hazard Control Program, Saginaw County Department of Public Health

After the presentation, a series of questions were posed to community members regarding environmental justice issues.

**1. What are the most significant health and pollution-related impacts affecting your community?**

- a) Emissions from coal-fired power plants which result in mercury deposition to area water bodies is a huge Environmental Justice (EJ) issue for Native Americans and other folks in this area due to subsistence consumption of fish.
- b) The Bay Harbor contamination site needs remediation due to mercury, etc. This mercury may migrate to the surface water. There are many other sites that need remediation. There is an operating cement plant near Lake Charlevoix which is a major pollution source of mercury. The quality of water in this area is unmatched so addressing these concerns must be a priority before it is too late.
- c) On-site septic systems near the many pristine surface waters in this area often are not functioning properly and local health departments have no “teeth” in their regulations to cause owners to correct. Need to nudge legislators for better legislation and a state-wide sanitary code.
- d) Storm water management in towns is a significant problem.
- e) There are a large number of Leaking Underground Storage Tanks in Northern Michigan and inadequate clean-up funds.

- f) Regional transport of air contaminants. Remote areas in the Upper Peninsula have exceeded ozone standards due to pollution generated in Chicago. We need more monitors in this area.
- g) Water withdrawals that will harm our wetlands and water bodies.
- h) Land use. We realize that this is primarily a local issue.
- i) Mining and excessive oil and gas exploration. Oil and gas remediation is a major concern especially given the potential for the reclassification of old wells. Otsego County seems to be particularly bad for this.

**2. What are the factors (social, economic, other) that have caused or contributed to these health and pollution-related impacts?**

- a) Mineral rights relative to property rights are out of balance. It seems these rights favor the mining companies rather than the property owners. How can a property owner possibly keep these exploration rigs off their property? Owners feel disempowered.
- b) Community impacts are not so pronounced in Northern Michigan.

**3. What does it mean to you to have a healthy, safe, and livable community?**

- a) We have a healthy community relative to many others in this state. However, the important question is: Are we penalized from receiving grants and other consideration because we have such good water quality, etc.? We have a pristine environment in many ways, but we only have this opportunity to keep it that way. We need some regional equity in the state EJ plan; otherwise, this area will not ever be viewed as a high priority for EJ work.
- b) Appropriate use of land.
- c) Getting youth (and others) outside to enjoy the environment.

**4. What state and local agencies are most involved with health and environmental issues in your community?**

- a) 501(c) (3) and other volunteer organizations have the biggest impacts. They provide assistance for environmental improvement projects such as stream bank restoration. They also function as “ombudsmen” between the community and regulatory agencies.

- b) The tribes and conservancies are also very involved and helpful in this area.
- c) Local health departments often provide valuable help.
- d) The DEQ is also a valuable resource. It is about the people. Personal interaction and face-to-face meetings are preferred. Some staff are much better than others. Many of our issues are regional or even global in scope. We need the DEQ's involvement to address these concerns.
- e) Drain commissioners and local planning and zoning folks are also very involved. They do not always have environmental considerations in mind when making their decisions.
- f) We must educate and inform folks at all levels who are involved with health and environment issues. There is a strong passion in this area by most folks to protect the environment. Many just need to be educated. We need more funding for this outreach.

**5. What should a state environmental justice plan include to address the health and pollution-related impacts in your community?**

- a) Require better alternatives analyses for large projects of concern such as the coal-fired power plants. The plan should include this.
- b) Require cumulative impact analyses for all projects. Native American look at these impacts on the next 7 generations.
- c) Recognize regional differences in implementing EJ. Northern Michigan often feels ignored by state agencies. The plan must not exclude this region from EJ considerations. What should be the scope and scale of the region? It will be a challenge to see this area as an EJ priority relative to many urban areas.
- d) Require pre-application meetings and placing early information on the internet. This could trigger the formation of stakeholder groups and early public participation.
- e) Fair treatment for everyone.
- f) Certain areas (such as Class I) are so important and pristine that we need legislation along with this EJ plan to protect them.
- g) When you think about it, implementing EJ is just good public policy in general.

**6. What other advice or comments do you wish to provide to assist us in developing a state- wide environmental justice plan?**

- a) TMDL grants for surface water discriminate against this area. Is it possible to get grants to prevent/protect? This is much smarter than cleaning up contamination after the fact.
- b) Need to take a multi-disciplinary approach. We tend to be “silo” thinkers when it comes to the environment as well as in many other areas.
- c) The EJ plan should incorporate incentives similar to the Clean Corporate Citizen program to reward folks for doing good things for the environment.
- d) We should not have to trade jobs for health. Environmental benefits must be valued equally with economic benefits.

**Environmental Justice Focus Group Meeting Notes  
Council for World-Class Communities  
Benton Harbor, Michigan  
June 23, 2009**

- Greetings by Dr. Marcus Robinson, President and CEO, The Consortium for Community Development
- Introductory comments by Ms. Paula Sadler
- Opening slides by Director Steven Chester of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Question Facilitators:
  - Harold Core, Public Information Officer, Michigan Department of Civil Rights
  - Brad Van Guilder, Organizer, Ecology Center
  - Pamela Smith, Program Manager Saginaw Lead Hazard Control Program, Saginaw County Department of Public Health

After the presentation, a series of questions were posed to community members regarding environmental justice issues.

1. **What are the most significant health and pollution-related impacts affecting your community?**
  - a) Children are not learning to eat properly.
  - b) Lead-based paints affect children's education.
  - c) Two nuclear plants are located near by. The impacts of those plants are unknown.
  - d) Housing issues. We have slumlords and ghostlords. There is so much vacant housing.
  - e) Schools with asbestos contamination.
  - f) Housing units sitting on contaminated property.
  - g) Air contaminant transport issues due to our proximity to Chicago.
  - h) Illicit dumping by the citizens themselves, and by developers.
  - i) Lack of local medical treatment. There is nothing within walking distance.

- j) Lack of auto emissions testing. Many of our cars are older and should be tested.
- k) Construction related pollution.
- l) Lack of education about pollution issues.
- m) Chromium soil and groundwater contamination. We need grants to help us clean up these sites.
- n) Aging infrastructure causes sewer backups in basements and overflows to rivers that have health impacts. There are no dollars to remedy these problems.
- o) Ox Creek is a historically contaminated creek that needs to be cleaned up.
- p) HIV epidemic and cancer clusters in this area.

**2. What are the factors (social, economic, other) that have caused or contributed to these health and pollution-related impacts?**

- a) Historically, people were encouraged to contaminate this area more so than other areas and now we have trouble cleaning it up.
- b) Lack of education and lack of knowledge on environmental processes.
- c) We were such a manufacturing hub during the hay days of manufacturing and now it is the community's responsibility to clean up what companies have left behind.
- d) There has been a lack of enforcement requiring companies to clean up their own messes.
- e) The Harbor Shores Development is the single greatest environmental injustice in this area. It is paradoxical that we are meeting in the very building where these activities were planned. This project is stealing the heart of the only public park in the community. What occurred was a takings of public land for private use. People's concerns were minimized in the report. The disenfranchised in this area have become that way for good reason. This meeting is a start to improve on these things.
- f) There was a counterpoint to the last statement. The Harbor Shores Development has cleaned up serious contamination with the help of DEQ in the development process. It is providing a positive environmental transformation.

- g) Benton Harbor was deemed the worst place to live in 1989 by *Money* magazine. We have not improved since that time. This Harbor Shores Development is built on injustice and is not the will of the people. There is another side to Benton Harbor that developers do not see.
- h) We experienced a social collapse in 2003 because of the way people in this community have been treated by all levels of government.
- i) We have had many meetings and are told that the city will review and respond to our letters and that never happened. We need the intervention of state and federal agencies because the city does not respond to the citizens.
- j) Commenters on the Harbor Shores Development were 7 to 1 in favor of the project.
- k) Need health insurance to mitigate these impacts.
- l) Need to address contamination issues.
- m) Need to prioritize environmental issues so we can address them.
- n) Ox Creek flow was cut-off intentionally by industry.
- o) Need education.
- p) This will take a vast group to change, some from within and some from without. From the penthouse to the outhouse. Romance without finance is a nuisance.
- q) Code enforcement is so important. The amount of dumping by the general citizenry is incredible.
- r) At the end of the day, we need to take personal responsibility. There must be consequences for breaking the rules.

**3. What does it mean to you to have a healthy, safe, and livable community?**

- a) Jobs and a sustainable lifestyle.
- b) We are hit harder than most communities in almost all areas because we are a poor community.
- c) Everyone can afford medical care.
- d) Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

- e) You cannot have a healthy community if you have no hospital. This is one of the greatest environmental injustices in Benton Harbor.
- f) There is a major scandal going on now with the city police force. That is a safety issue. There must be trust between citizens and the police for a safe environment.
- g) Housing fit for humans.
- h) Leadership with vision and voice who can articulate this vision rather than merely voice complaints. Leaders must be willing to speak truth.
- i) Need block clubs who have the power to address concerns.
- j) Need schools and children who love learning and who graduate with the ability to go to college.
- k) Healthy and wealthy (not money – but abundance) is synonymous.
- l) My children can go outside and play. I can have my windows open and breathe fresh air.
- m) We are an African American community, yet we have lakefront and river front property. We need better fish consumption education and postings.
- n) The 2003 uprising got a lot of media attention. There were focus groups that came up with ideas that needed to happen. But nothing did happen. Need to hold people accountable.

**4. What state and local agencies are most involved with health and environmental issues in your community?**

- a) Planned Parenthood.
- b) CARES provides AIDs testing in the community.
- c) DEQ has helped with cleanups and Harbor Shores, etc.
- d) DNR has also been extremely attentive.
- e) Cities of Promise Program has brought together people from a number of state agencies and has helped Benton Harbor.
- f) The city has a Brownfields Authority.

- g) DEQ is the first call I would make if I had an environmental problem.
- h) I would call the federal government. I have not gotten any results from local or state agencies.
- i) A couple of years ago, we had a drinking water emergency at a school and we were not sure who to call.
- j) Loraine Thomas of DEQ's Kalamazoo office is extremely helpful.
- k) I get responses from DEQ but I do not always like the response.
- l) Need better link between all levels of government.
- m) DEQ is positive and professional but not always what I want to hear.
- n) Need to improve linkages and strengthen local government relations.
- o) Need to lobby in Lansing for what citizens want.
- p) We do not know how to stop doing what we have been doing for many years.
- q) In Benton Harbor, we do not do recycling. We have not passed a green initiative resolution. So we need to do more locally.
- r) A community liaison or Environmental Justice (EJ) ombudsperson would be useful if this person is a grassroots person and is connected to the people. Otherwise, it would be a useless position.
- s) The lead problem is still here. We talked about this many years ago and still nothing is being done.
- t) Must not shake hands with a closed fist.
- u) My experience has not been good with agencies actually solving the environmental problems we have brought before them.
- v) We do not take advantage of the opportunities that are there. We do not even know what the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) does, which is their fault, and it is ours. For example, BCHD is doing free HIV testing at the bowling alley this Saturday. They are even giving away free pizza, but people do not take advantage of these opportunities.
- w) It is difficult when you are focused on survival to take advantage of these opportunities.

- x) Certain agencies are pressured politically to do things that do not live up to their own mission statements.
- y) There was a one-stop telephone number for the community that people used but when the funding went away so did the number.
- z) We do not use the local newspapers as we should.
- aa) CARES needs to do something for dialysis as well as AIDS.
- bb) Drug trade is a huge environmental problem. We were once the fruit belt. Now we are the crack belt. There is a huge dumping of drugs here because we are in between Detroit and Chicago.

**5. What should a state environmental justice plan include to address the health and pollution-related impacts in your community?**

- a) It is difficult for us to dictate the process, but you should provide best practices that have worked in other communities as guidance for this community.
- b) Education factor is huge.
- c) Local ordinances should be reviewed to see how they fit with the state plan.
- d) Need line of communication with state to help us educate ourselves on EJ.
- e) There needs to be a linkage between what EJ means and the key health and environmental issues of the local community.
- f) Need to implement more lead abatement in Benton Harbor houses.
- g) Need to implement more green policies and apply for more grants, etc.
- h) Plan needs to address crumbling infrastructure.
- i) Need to keep focus groups going to keep our eyes on the prize.
- j) Need the draft policy to review and comment on.
- k) Petition process should be a mechanism to empower the community. Seems whenever we have done this in the past there is something wrong with the petition, i.e., not enough signatures or whatever. Need to go to the community.

- l) The timing is very important. 2010 is probably the biggest government turnover in the state, so we need something in place by then.

**6. What other advice or comments do you wish to provide to assist us in developing a statewide environmental justice plan?**

- a) I feel that all federal, state, and local agencies have failed us in the Jean Klock park project. Hence, I have not been able to respond to a lot of these questions.
- b) Needs to be some mechanism for redress, such as the petition process.