December 6, 2024
Citizens Adviosry Committee Meeting
(2:00 PM – 4:00 PM)

Attendees: Liz Balladares, HEP; Allison Fitzgerald, NJCU; Christopher Girgenti, RIPA; Wynnie-fred Victor Hinds, WPA; Shino Tanikawa, NYCSWC; Aimee Boucher, EPA; Alexis Goldsmith; Bart Chezar; Bill Schultz, Raritan Riverkeeper; Brooke Helmick, NJEJA; Carrie Roble, HRPT; Elizabeth Butler, EPA; Holly Porter-Morgan, SWIM/CUNY; Jeremy; Katie Stromme, NYC Parks; Kevin Barret; Louis Kleinman, All Home Services; Marcha Johnson, Mauricio Gonzalez; Michele Langa, NYNJ Baykeeper; Michelle Luebke, SWIM; Noelle Thurllow, Resilience Adventures; Rosana Pedra Nobre, HEP; Surrey Miranda Alarcon, Fordham University, Ron Pirani, HEP, Beczack, Margaret Flannagan, Michaela Mincone, HRPT

2:00 PM – 2:05 PM – Welcome & Introductions
NY co-chair Chris Girgenti welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the leadership and kicked off the meeting.

2:05 PM – 2:20 PM – Announcing Harlem River Artist in Residence Program
Bronx/Harlem River Urban Waters Federal Partnership Amabassador, Christina Carrero, presented on the Harlem River Artist in Residence (AiR) program.

- The Bronx/Harlem River AiR Program is a partnership with the Bronx Council on the Arts and HEPand is seeking artists to participate in a 13-month process intended to engage the public in critical water challenges and other environmental concerns in Harlem River communities in the Bronx.
- Funds granted to artists can be used to **support** artist fees, equipment/supplies, fabrication, installation, and documentation of the art
- Artists with a meaningful **connection to the Harlem River and the Bronx** are highly encouraged to apply
- Allison F: Does the artist need to live within the watershed to be eligible? Christina C: We are looking for an artist who has or has had a significant relationship with the Bronx and specifically the communities along the Harlem River. That could include living there now or in the past, and/or a history of working with those communities. One of our major goals for this program is to not only engage the local community around issues of climate, water quality, and environmental justice as it pertains to their local waterways, but also to uplift the voices of that community by selecting an artist who has an established community connection and can represent them.

2:20 PM – 2:50 PM – Reducing Plastic Pollution
Brooke Helmick, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance's Director of Policy and Alexis Goldsmith, Beyond Plastics' National Organizing Director highlighted some of their recent efforts to reduce plastic waste, their impact and highlight potential policy changes that will help tackle some of these challenges.

As an alliance, NJEJA supports community efforts to support and rebuild because of the impacts due to ej issues

- Waste reduction
    - waste justice assemble: plastic pollution and community foucused waste reduction strategies
    - EJ communities in NJ are inundated with Industry
    - For EJ communities - the problem with plastics is not just based on Climate Change
    - Plastic production is interwoven with fossil fuel industry
    - EPR bill - modeled after beyond plastics national efforts
    - Chemical recycling is false solution
    - EPR legislation would require 50% plastic reduction by 2035
    - WPA, Food and Watch Watch protested against formosa – We need people to speak out and hold them accountable.

- Alexis:
    - The NY law being proposed is similar to the NJ bill.
    - Pushes to remove the most toxic kinds of chemicals like PFAs and Toulene from packaging
    - Manufacturers would have to pay to get rid of plastic waste
    - We want to reduce plastic at its source as much as possible
    - State action now is more important than ever
    - 15 million tons of plastics enter our oceans every year
    - Plastic is emitting 4x the greenhouse gasses than the aviation industry
    - Plastic loses its integrity in the recycling process
    - NY BILL - statewide coalition lookig for new members
        - grassroots advocacy day in albany on January 28
        - Carrie asked a question about resources on how to reduce single use plastic for things like office environments.
            - Brooke — has small examples of things that work but brooke will pass on info to people that may be able to help
        - Carrie - there's one group that's looking into reducing plastic material on lab practices
        - Louis - is there anything being done re public school education.
            - brooke - we've been growing our education work. Couple of ways is just informing people through in person community events and working with Kean Uni freshmen – where environmental education is a topic.

2:50 PM – 3:05 PM – HEP 2024 Conference Overview

Rosana Pedra Nobre, HEP Water Quality Manager, shared an overview of HEP's annual conference held on November 12, 2024 at the NYU Kimmel Center. The Conference highlighted the activities, partnerships, and research shaping HEP's draft 2025-2035 Action Agenda. Rosana

Pedra Nobre, HEP Water Quality Manager, will share some of the highlights from the day and gather any additional feedback from those that attended.

3:05 PM – 3:35 PM - Action Agenda Capacity Building Open Discussion
The CAC leadership held a Breakout discussion focusing on HEP's draft 2025-2035 Action Agenda community engagement objectives. The breakout rooms were distributed according to the topics below:

- Group 1: Action A-1: Provide community based organizations with tools, research, communications, technical assistance and training based on needs and emerging issues
- Group 2: Action A-2: Enhance collaboration between community organizations and agencies to strengthen management across underserved watersheds
- Group 3: Action A-3: Assist stewardship organizations in securing grants and managing funds.

3:35 PM – 3:50 PM – Opportunities Available: Fordham University Flourishing in Community
Director of Campus and Community Engagement, Surey Miranda-Alarcon, provided an overview of the the Flourishing in Community Grantmaker which offers funding, technical support, capacity development, programs, and research opportunities to projects led by community organizations, nonprofits, and other entities championing environmental justice initiatives in Region 2.

- 250K pot is dedicated for shovel ready projects or projects that are ready to be executed
- Selection of projects is made after a review of a leadership board
    - First application cycle closes on December 31st
    - 75K non-competitive awards
        - from jan 4 to jan 10th people are going to be picking through nominations

3:50 PM – 4:00 PM – Partner Announcements.

Breakout Session (30min.)

Room/Action A-1: *Provide community based organizations with tools, research, communications, technical assistance and training based on needs and emerging issues. (Setting the stage + name introductions - 5/6min.)*

- What specific tools, research, or training do community organizations currently lack to address emerging issues in our region? (8min.) (think product)
- How can we identify and prioritize the most pressing needs of community-based organizations? (8min.) (think process)
- What types of technical assistance or resources have been most impactful in the past? (8min.)

Room/Action A-2: *Enhance collaboration between community organizations and agencies to strengthen management across underserved watersheds. (Setting the stage + name introductions - 5/6min.)*

- What are the main barriers to effective collaboration between community organizations and government agencies in serving under-resourced watersheds? (12min.)
- What existing models or structures of collaboration have been successful in similar contexts, and how can we explore the potential to adopt something similar? (12min.)

Room/Action A-3: *Assist stewardship organizations in securing grants and managing funds. (Setting the stage + name introductions - 5/6min.)*

- What challenges do stewardship organizations face in identifying and applying for relevant grants? (8min.)
- Are there common pitfalls in the grant application or management process that organizations need guidance on? (8min.)
- How can we create a shared resource hub for funding opportunities and grant-writing best practices? (8min.)

Room/ Action *C-1: Support early-stage education initiatives &* C-4: *Use art to build engagement and awareness of Estuary issues & Action (Setting the stage + name introductions - 5/6min.)*

- How can we encourage students - particularly of elementary and middle school age - to make the connection between science and their everyday/practical life as members of our Estuary communities? Where do we start? (12min.)
- How can we integrate artistic expression with scientific information to make Estuary issues more engaging and relatable to diverse audiences? (12min.)