

Inclusive Community Engagement: Some Best Practices from Climate Adaptation in NYS, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm, Wednesday, June 14, 2023

Conservation and Land Use Webinar Series

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Christine Vanderlan 00:00:02.040 --> 00:00:20.600

All right, so welcome, everyone, to today's conservation and land use webinar. Our topic today is inclusive community engagement and we're going to be hearing about some best practices from climate adaptation in New York. We are delighted to

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Christine Vanderlan 00:00:20.680 --> 00:00:41.080

have Kristen Hychka and Shameika Hanson join us to deliver today's webinar. Kristen contributed to the development of the Inclusive Community Engagement primer, that was released earlier this year by the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program, which we'll be hearing about today, and

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Christine Vanderlan 00:00:41.560 --> 00:01:01.560

Shameika has been working with communities and with The Nature Conservancy and applying principles of inclusive community engagement to her work. So we're going to hear from both of them today and I'll introduce them each more fully in a few moments. Ingrid Haeckel is also here with us today to

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Christine Vanderlan 00:01:01.600 --> 00:01:08.640

assist with the webinar in moderating the Q and A and handling the chat and stuff like that. So,

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Christine Vanderlan 00:01:09.880 --> 00:01:30.360

we'll be hearing about today this Inclusive Community Engagement Primer, we will be discussing the process of community engagement and options and best practices for moving toward inclusive engagement at a community level. The webinar will offer resources to support a more inclusive engagement process and

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Christine Vanderlan 00:01:30.400 --> 00:01:37.400

examples of how to implement these practices while developing climate resilience and mitigation plans.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:01:39.960 --> 00:01:44.480

So I'm gonna now review a few webinar logistics.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:01:46.360 --> 00:02:03.040

There are so many things on my screen now. I gotta click in the right spot. If you're having a challenge with the audio, you have options on how to connect to the audio, and you can look for the three dots next to the Red X to switch audio and request a callback.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:02:06.840 --> 00:02:25.400

If you have problems, you know, technical problems with Webex and the webinar, please reach out to me or Ingrid Haeckel through the chat. And if you have questions, you'd like to pose to the speakers, please use the Q and A function which may not be visible at the start, but

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Christine Vanderlan 00:02:25.520 --> 00:02:45.880

if you look to the right bottom, right, corner of your screen, you should be able to click the three dots next to chat and open up Q and A. A few other notes: Your microphones are muted. The webinar is being recorded and at the end we ask you to take a few minutes and share

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Christine Vanderlan 00:02:45.960 --> 00:03:06.360

your feedback with us, and we use your feedback to help us as we plan future webinars, so we hope you will do that. An email confirmation will be sent to you at the conclusion of the webinar and if you need to show that you participated for municipal training credit that email contains

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Christine Vanderlan 00:03:06.480 --> 00:03:09.800

Information, that certificate of attendance.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:03:15.960 --> 00:03:31.960

If you are not familiar with the HudsonRiver Estuary program or if you're new to this webinar series, just to introduce the Estuary program briefly, it's a special program at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:03:31.960 --> 00:03:52.440

which was established to help people enjoy, protect, and revitalize the Hudson River and its valley. We work throughout the ten counties bordering the tidal Hudson, shown here in green on the map, to achieve many key benefits, including the vital estuary ecosystem, clean water,

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Christine Vanderlan 00:03:52.880 --> 00:04:07.920

tributary streams, climate adaptive communities, conserved natural areas in the watershed. And we work to encourage an informed and engaged public and access for all to the Hudson River.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:04:09.280 --> 00:04:29.560

Within the Estuary program, our conservation and land use team works with municipalities and regional conservation partners. We're working to conserve important habitats and natural areas through local land use planning and decision making and Ingrid Haeckel and I are available to provide technical assistance

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Christine Vanderlan 00:04:30.200 --> 00:04:42.360

on a variety of conservation planning and policy projects. And our program website is a clearinghouse for guidance and resources on these topics, and we'll share that link in the chat.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:04:44.280 --> 00:04:57.000

Recordings and transcripts of all of the webinars in this series are available on the DEC website and you'll receive a link to that at the conclusion of the program.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:05:00.280 --> 00:05:18.840

So now to introduce our speakers, Kristen Hychka works as a research and outreach specialist at the New York State Water Resources Institute at Cornell University, where she leads the building community climate resilience and the riparian restoration and assessment

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Christine Vanderlan 00:05:19.080 --> 00:05:39.320

Teams. Her research and outreach efforts focus on watershed issues, particularly related to flood resiliency and the management of wetland and riparian systems. Kristen works with partners including the Hudson River Estuary and Great Lakes watershed programs,

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Christine Vanderlan 00:05:40.160 --> 00:05:59.800

Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center and New York Sea Grant to promote state- wide assistance to individuals and organizations regarding these issues and to understand and alleviate barriers to adoption of resilience practices. Kristen has a BA in biology from Smith College and a Master's

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Christine Vanderlan 00:06:00.160 --> 00:06:04.800

in wildlife science and Ph.D. in geography from Penn State.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:06:06.600 --> 00:06:26.240

Shameika Hanson grew up in Suffolk County of Long Island. She obtained an associates degree from Nassau Community College in Communications with a focus on interpersonal relationship skills, subsequently, she attended Stony Brook University, graduating with a bachelors in Environmental Humanities.

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Christine Vanderlan 00:06:26.800 --> 00:06:47.160

Upon graduating, she moved to continue her career full time coordinating volunteers, music, and events for the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, a nonprofit organization based in Beacon, New York. She later spent two years with Mothers Out Front, a nonprofit organizing community members

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Christine Vanderlan 00:06:47.200 --> 00:07:07.640

concerned about their children's future and eliminating fossil fuels. Shameika now works at The Nature Conservancy as a climate adaptation specialist. She connects with community leaders, residents and coalitions in areas dealing with chronic flooding to help build local knowledge and capacity so they can better

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Christine Vanderlan 00:07:07.640 --> 00:07:28.120

adapt to a changing climate, and in May 2021, she completed her professional science masters in Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England concentrating on sustainable development and climate change with an additional certificate and climate change resilience and she currently serves

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Christine Vanderlan 00:07:28.760 --> 00:07:48.600

as executive board member of the Long Island Progressive Coalition and the American Society of Adaptation Professionals. So now Kristen is going to lead us off with a presentation that will be followed by brief video and then some time for Q and A, clarifying questions for

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Christine Vanderlan 00:07:49.880 --> 00:08:02.880

Krisetn, before moving on for Shameika's talk, followed by an additional Q and A session. So with that, should Kristen, I'm gonna ask you to share your slides and begin your talk.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:08:17.680 --> 00:08:19.480

Are you seeing my slides?

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Christine Vanderlan 00:08:19.960 --> 00:08:21.880

Okay, great, we can see them.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:08:21.880 --> 00:08:36.800

Great, well, hello everybody. Thank you all for coming today. And thank you, Christine and Ingrid for inviting both of us to come and talk with you all today.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:08:39.159 --> 00:08:58.360

Just trying to start a stop watch, keep myself honest here. All right, so I'm really pleased to be talking with you about some work I did with the climate smart communities equity working group. We're putting what resulted in a primer on equitable engagement and you.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:08:59.320 --> 00:09:18.840

Some of the, the co- authors on this talk were some of the members of that working group who worked together on this effort and I will say that we built off a lot of existing resources and I will present those here. Christine gave a nice intro for me. So

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:09:18.880 --> 00:09:39.320

thank you, Christine. I guess we'll just add that, you know, I have some expertise in this area. I'm not, you know, the expert and I don't want to sound like I'm coming at you from on high, I've done some work with equitable engagement through literature and research. I've also seen and tried to deal with some of these issues out in the field through

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:09:39.360 --> 00:09:59.800

again, through like participatory research and outreach, but really being part of this group, I was looking to learn and move forward and continue to grow. And I did, I learned a lot from my co- authors and from these resources, so I'm happy to share some of that with you today. I think the last caveat I'll give is that I'm not a representative of DEC or the state of New York, I am hoping

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:10:02.360 --> 00:10:21.920

at least one of those folks is on the call today from the office climate change, but I'm very fortunate to partner with state agencies, often in the work that I do, and I, again was part of that equity working group, and I'm presenting the guidance we came up with, but, you know, I'm gonna go off script. And editorialize. So if I get anything wrong,

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:10:21.920 --> 00:10:28.760

it represents me and not New York state or DEC. So with that, I'm gonna jump in.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:10:30.360 --> 00:10:31.880

Let's see.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:10:34.720 --> 00:10:39.760

All right, so what we're, what I'm planning to cover today.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:10:43.040 --> 00:11:01.600

Talking about why, you know, what is the need for this deep pervasive intentional change that has to happen, for participatory governance, and then particularly what is the working group and, and why did we do this work. And then

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:11:03.200 --> 00:11:21.400

talk a little bit about what is in the primer. What are some of the frameworks that we use to talk about equitable engagement, particularly the spectrum of community engagement to ownership. How do you move across that spectrum, and then talk a little bit about best practices and resources.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:11:28.480 --> 00:11:47.680

So really, you know, I touched upon this, but really why we're even talking about all this. So there was work, you know, the impacts of climate change are disproportionately impacting marginalized communities throughout the world and we know,

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:11:47.880 --> 00:12:08.160

in New York State, so there's a current effort going on right now to create a new, NYSERDA's, leading an assessment of climate impacts, and they've said, what's very unfortunate, but they've said it quite well, that in New York State climate stressors intersect with, and are worsened by underlying

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:12:08.520 --> 00:12:28.640

socio and economic stressors, placing certain populations at greater risk. So within our state, lower income populations, tribal nations, communities of colors and immigrants are more vulnerable to climate change, a stress that compounds with other forms of these disadvantages. And due to legacies of displacement,

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:12:28.840 --> 00:12:49.120

Racial and ethnic discrimination, higher exposure to pollutants, those populations are often on the front line of climate hazards, but may have fewer resources available to adapt to them. In addition, differences in economic conditions, income, wages, recovery capacity, across the state affect

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:12:50.480 --> 00:12:56.720

community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from extreme events.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:12:58.720 --> 00:13:16.680

So really in summary, the impacts of climate are not gonna be uniform and disadvantaged groups will likely be disproportionately burdened because of exposure, susceptibility, and ability to cope and recover.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:13:20.480 --> 00:13:39.040

But we're sort of fortunately faced with this sort of this transformational opportunity, so right now we have unprecedented levels of funding coming to the state to address issues related to climate change and here are two large ones, but these are not the only ones. So the bilateral infrastructure law funds and the

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:13:39.120 --> 00:13:59.520

Environmental Bond Act funds. And along with those, there are calls to address equity through the Climate Leadership and Protection Act, CLCPA, and they're also federal the Environmental justice forty initiative to put forty percent

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:13:59.560 --> 00:14:20.000

of climate and energy investments to benefit or flow to disadvantage communities. So in some ways we're sitting at a little bit of a paradox. As Elie Wiesel used to say, "and yet." So we hold these two things in our hands at the same time: it's a crisis, all hands on deck, it's a financial opportunity, let's get

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:14:20.160 --> 00:14:40.480

done as fast as we can, and yet, let's do this, right. We need to take the time to do better by our marginalized communities and community members and not cause harm and hopefully move toward righting some of the deeply entrenched wrongs that we see in our communities. And so I'll, I'll kind of paraphrase some things I learned from

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:14:40.600 --> 00:15:00.960

A coworker Libby Zemaitis who hopefully many of, you know, she used to be with the Hudson River Estuary Program. She led the climate team down there. And her a way of thinking about climate adaptation, it's often overwhelming, it can feel stifling, but what she talks about is that these are transformational opportunities. These are times when we can envision a better,

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:15:01.400 --> 00:15:12.160

more equitable and resilient future, and move in that direction. And it's hard work, but we can bring some connection through those efforts.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:15:16.320 --> 00:15:34.240

So when we talk about equity, there are a lot of different dimensions to equity and, and many people slice it different ways. Mostly people talk about at least procedural and distributive equities. So procedural really has to do with process. So transparent, fair, inclusive process.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:15:36.800 --> 00:15:54.720

Ensure that people are treated openly and fairly and increasing civic engagement and opportunities of communities that are disproportionately impacted. We talked about that and then distributive. So what are the outcomes of these processes? So, is- are the resources benefits and burdens or impacts

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:15:55.400 --> 00:15:56.880

fairly distributed?

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:15:59.840 --> 00:16:19.040

And then finally, there are also sort of recognitional, and structural aspects. Recognitional is really , are people acknowledged and respected throughout these processes? And then structural recognizing that we need to make a commitment to correct past harms and prevent

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:16:19.040 --> 00:16:39.520

future unintended consequences and address some of the underlying structural and institutional systems that are the root causes of some of these inequities. So it's a lot, but that's where we're at. Again, it's this transformational opportunity. So I hope all of you know this already, I'll be very brief, The Climate Smart Communities program

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:16:39.520 --> 00:17:00.000

helps local governments, as a state program, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. It has a number of resources including a grants program, a rebates program, free technical assistance and lots, and lots of guidance, which primarily falls under their climates smart community certification program.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:17:01.280 --> 00:17:11.040

So the Climate Smart Community's program put together an equity working group with the goals of really focusing on

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:17:12.319 --> 00:17:29.200

those pillars and I would, I would argue trying to incorporate structural and recognitional as well, but really focusing on the process, the implementation of these actions, and then the distributional impacts and benefits of the program.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:17:32.640 --> 00:17:48.440

So what have we done so far as a group? We completed a review of the climate smart community's actions using an equity screening tool that was developed by Sustainable New Jersey, a partner program in the state of New Jersey

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:17:49.960 --> 00:18:10.400

that looked for opportunities and, you know, where we're doing things well, and where we needed to do some work. We developed guidance that I'm gonna be talking more about today for communities pursuing climate smart certification, and then in the future plan to draft a full action to address equity and then further incorporate issues

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:18:11.120 --> 00:18:15.560

really looking at disproportionate impacts and benefits of the program.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:18:21.920 --> 00:18:42.400

So, again, so why, so I've sort of laid out why we're doing this work. All the reasons that I've already talked about, but partly just remembering that, that this is an opportunity, obviously climate change can be daunting, but as adaptation or practitioners, we often have our hands on these kinds of

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:18:42.880 --> 00:19:02.880

Levers of power. So this is somewhere where we can make a difference. So we put together this guidance because, you know, municipalities will benefit from taking action on climate change. Even though it's a complex process, engaging the community is a way to make it really stick and make it happen and an engaged

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:19:03.200 --> 00:19:23.360

community is gonna be a great asset to you in making these changes. We also must identify where we are in order to move forward. So recognize that marginalization is the status quo, and that we need to create a plan to get out of that status quo, and it will take many forms in many different places. That we need to commit

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:19:24.000 --> 00:19:40.200

to the learning process, that no community has it all figured out. No person has it all figured out, but there are resources that are available to help and, and we've outlined some of those for you all in, in this, in these resources and, and really the only way out is through.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:19:41.920 --> 00:20:01.440

And again, setting expectations remember that, you all are probably coming to this with lots of different levels of expertise experience. You may be new to all this. You may be working. You've been in the trenches for a long long time, but know that, you know, one attempt at improving your engagement is not gonna be enough and that

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:20:03.540 --> 00:20:11.220

it's really only gonna work when you listen to community members and incorporate their suggestions and involve them in decision making.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:20:14.420 --> 00:20:32.980

So here is, this is the primer. This is the link. You can find it online, we will share the link with you all. So basically, what's in it. Learning the concepts of meaningful inclusion, introducing the spectrum of community engagement, some best practices, and then examples and evaluation tools.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:20:38.100 --> 00:20:58.100

Yeah, so let's see. So again, it provides guidance and a framework allows municipalities to reflect and self-assess on their engagement, and then can allow you to use established resources as a foundation. So, we looked at lots and lots of different

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:20:58.620 --> 00:21:19.700

resources, and one that we landed on as being particularly relevant to CSC, because it's so municipally focused, is the USDN Urban Sustainability Director's Network publication that, that I show here, the "From community engagement to ownership".

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:21:20.340 --> 00:21:40.180

So it's an excellent document if you have a chance to dig in hopefully our resources, kind of helping to boil down some of the key insights, but please, you know, go back and forth and, and there's lots of great work in here. So again, it really focuses on contextualizing equity

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:21:41.060 --> 00:22:00.660

into government actions, it has case studies, evaluation approaches. It was developed by Rosa Gonzalez of Facilitating Power with some partners, and she drew on some existing public participation tools. I'll touch on one of those in just a moment.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:22:00.740 --> 00:22:13.020

Yeah, and again, we started to kind of distill this information to something that could be accessible to, municipalities and community members. So this is Rosa Gonzalez.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:22:16.660 --> 00:22:32.460

And just one quote from her. She's got a lot of wonderful ones, but, "the key to closing equity gaps and resolving climate vulnerability is the direct participation by impacted communities in the development and implementation of solutions and policy decisions that directly impact them."

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:22:34.580 --> 00:22:54.420

So, one of the sort of foundational, I won't talk about this too much, but a foundational framework that she pulled upon and that many of us do, is this. Sherry Arnstein's ladder of degrees of citizen participation, and basically it charts a path to strengthen and transform local democracies.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:22:57.220 --> 00:23:14.900

And it explored decision making in public planning process, defined a gradient of citizen participation, and called out sort of contrived methods that left people powerless and sort of pushed back against empty buzzwords, empty rituals, and tried to really focus on how do you move

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:23:14.980 --> 00:23:35.380

people up this ladder to, from non- participation through tokenism to actually having some control and input. And so this was transformed into the spectrum as Shameika may mention, you know, there are a lot of different frameworks and approaches

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:23:36.020 --> 00:23:37.740

that do similar things.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:23:39.220 --> 00:23:59.180

And, you know, it depends on how you want to use them, but, but this, this is what Rosa Gonzalez put together and we primarily pulled from. So this is the spectrum of community engagement to ownership and the idea again, is that it's trying to empower engaged democracies.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:23:59.820 --> 00:24:14.700

Decisions driven by a common good, self- assess community engagement activities, acknowledge harm from marginalization, and breakdown barriers, and try to redistribute power more equitably and make adjustments along the way.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:24:15.700 --> 00:24:33.220

So, again, I said already before we're all gonna be on different places on the spectrum. Some are just starting, but, the goal is to move from left to right.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:24:34.900 --> 00:24:54.740

And so basically on the left is, is a situation where you're just purely informing the public of an action that the government is gonna take. Provide the community with relevant information. Actually, ooh, sorry, this is, actually

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:24:54.780 --> 00:25:15.220

Ignore is the first one and that's marginalization. So when you deny access to decision- making process, but you really get on this spectrum about inform. So you're providing information to the community, but then the next level up is when you're starting to consult with the community, you're gathering some community input, a little further along the spectrum

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:25:15.260 --> 00:25:36.340

if you're involving the community, so ensure that community needs and assets are integrated into the process and inform the planning. So not just sort of gathering information, but really integrating it into your planning and decision-making. Collaborating is when you ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementing the decisions and then defer to

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:25:36.340 --> 00:25:56.820

is when you have a more democratic participatory approach where you allow communities to sort of self- govern through community driven decision- making. So behind all this, you know, with the exception of marginalization, so that's the zero, the rest

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:25:57.100 --> 00:26:15.100

is like a one to the five. Each step along the spectrum is gonna be essential in building capacity for community collaboration and that communities will, you know, sometimes be informed, sometimes consulted, involved, but through deeper collaboration, you can

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:26:16.660 --> 00:26:31.980

unlock, and, and some of this is really unlocking many more minds. Again, it's all hands on deck. We need people who have the lived experience in the places dealing with these issues in how to make these kind of solutions work.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:26:33.300 --> 00:26:34.420

So.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:26:36.500 --> 00:26:52.780

Walking through it with a little more detail again. So hopefully this is just what I showed before, So ignore- to- defer, sort of what is the impact is it marginalization? That's the ignore piece.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:26:54.420 --> 00:27:14.900

Where you deny access to decision- making process, that's closed door meetings misinformation, disenfranchisement, voter suppression. We know, we all know historical cases when this happens, unfortunately, in some cases, it still does happen. So we always have to be aware and looking for these issues.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:27:14.940 --> 00:27:35.380

When you move to inform, you're providing information and that may look like fact sheets, open houses, presentation, billboards and videos. We all have done it, you know, continue to use these approaches. They're not fundamentally bad, but hey're not getting all the way to the listening and engagement.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:27:36.020 --> 00:27:55.860

So when you move a little further along, you might give, there might be a limited voice or tokenization, so gathering some input through public comment, focus groups, community forms, or surveys, you know, again, nothing wrong with any of those things, but if you move to voice, you make sure that.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:27:56.060 --> 00:28:16.340

this information is integrated back into the process and informs planning. So community organizing advocacy, interactive workshops, polling community forums, open planning forums with citizen polling, and then delegated power, actually MOUs with

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:28:16.340 --> 00:28:36.820

community based organizations, citizens, advisory committees, co- designing and implement solutions, collaborative decision making to finally community ownership. So where there's planning and governance, consensus building, participatory action research, maybe participatory

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:28:37.500 --> 00:28:57.940

budgeting and cooperative models. So, you know, when you think about this, what is the message you're giving to the community when you're at different points on the spectrum. Here on the left, you

know, your voice and needs and interest don't really matter. If you move to inform, it's sort of, we'll keep you informed here's the

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:28:58.580 --> 00:29:18.420

Information, we're the owners of the information and, and it's sort of a one way directional, we're, we're sharing our information with you. The consult role, you're trying to say, we care what you think, but really, when you have a voice, it says you're making us think, and therefore we're acting differently based on what you have told us.

100

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:29:19.820 --> 00:29:36.380

And then when you get further to the right, your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue and then really how do you know, it's time we unlock collective power and capacity for these transformative solutions that we were talking about at the beginning.

101

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:29:38.260 --> 00:29:58.740

So let me just see. Okay, and so here you can also think about, and this is not, you know, set in stone, but clearly, resource allocation will change as you move along the spectrum and so where resources go, Is it mostly to systems administration? or is it moving towards

102

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:29:58.820 --> 00:30:19.220

You know, how much money are you spending on the publicity part? How much are you spending on consultation activities, community involvement? Are you actually investing in community partners? and do community partners have agency in making decisions about funds? So, again, it's not a perfect, you know, that this isn't, this is, you know, some guidance.

103

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:30:21.080 --> 00:30:35.680

But really thinking about how you spend resources. So I'm gonna take a moment. Let's see, and I'm gonna ask a poll question. Can you Christine? Can you run that poll question?

104

Christine Vanderlan 00:30:38.800 --> 00:30:41.280

I'm not seeing.

105

Christine Vanderlan 00:30:42.000 --> 00:30:43.280

The run option. Sorry.

106

Christine Vanderlan 00:30:46.000 --> 00:30:47.120

Technical glitch there.

107

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:30:47.200 --> 00:30:48.400

Hey, it's okay.

108

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:30:49.040 --> 00:31:09.520

So, so I guess I will just say that, you know, maybe as we are, you know, thinking through this, maybe think to yourself about at least the last community engagement effort you were involved in and where did it fall in the spectrum? Was it how far, you know, I didn't even put ignore in the poll.

109

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:31:11.120 --> 00:31:23.920

But it could be ignore. I hope it wasn't, but where does it fall? Is it ignore, inform, consult, involve, collaborate or defer to, you could put some comments in the chat or just think to yourself about that.

110

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:31:26.160 --> 00:31:45.360

So I'm gonna talk briefly about how do we move across the spectrum and particularly this case of moving from consulting to involving. Hopefully again, whoops, hopefully

111

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:31:45.480 --> 00:32:05.840

You know, in this day and age are moving towards this more back and forth information, not just one way and not just getting information and sort of sticking in a file. So this, I'm just really talking about an example of moving from consulting to involving. So, in the case of watershed based,

112

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:32:06.040 --> 00:32:25.840

this is a fictitious example, but a watershed-based flood mitigation plan. Community engagement at the consult level might be that once you've developed a draft plan, you may hold an open house.

113

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:32:26.320 --> 00:32:46.800

I will admit I have followed this this process myself at times. You know, it might be advertised on the town website. The meeting would be held in a town hall. Oftentimes there's little or no, if you have a consultant, helping you write the plan, there's very little time

114

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:32:46.840 --> 00:33:07.280

Or the budget left at the end to actually addressing anything that comes up in these meetings. And it may just be that the, you know, feedback is collected and stuck in the report to the agency. It's kind of a

box checking exercise and, and unfortunately I think probably most of us have been involved in one way or another and that kind of exercise.

115

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:33:07.920 --> 00:33:27.760

So how might you nudge along this spectrum, move a little bit more towards giving a voice to the public. So have a public forum early in the process, before you've started to draft a plan. Helping you think about what really is going into this plan.

116

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:33:27.800 --> 00:33:47.520

Where are the areas that we have concerns about flooding in the water shed? What is the data that already exists? Where have we had events? So put efforts into engaging the hard hard to reach community members. It may mean going to them.

117

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:33:49.600 --> 00:34:00.360

The forum would ease participation in a number of ways. Again, it could be that you go to the meetings that exist already. You may be going to a public housing board meeting.

118

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:34:01.680 --> 00:34:22.800

Open up additional avenues for participation, hopefully, maybe there's an online forum. There are other ways to, you know, there's open information at the library that's there for a longer amount of time. And then make sure this all circles back. So this process informs the plan and, and follow up on your input and what

119

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:34:22.840 --> 00:34:32.520

this will also do, is build trust over time for when you're not just doing the mitigation plan, but you're out there trying to implement some of this.

120

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:34:34.960 --> 00:34:38.960

So, again, this is another just sort of thought exercise, but

121

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:34:40.120 --> 00:35:00.560

for yourself, maybe think through this think through an action that, that might fall into this consult role that you were part of, or you maybe will be part of in the future and how could you move it along the spectrum, at least just to involve? What could you do and maybe think about your protocol, your due diligence, you know, where do you generally promote events?

122

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:35:01.880 --> 00:35:05.720

What could you do? Where does that fall on the spectrum?

123

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:35:10.800 --> 00:35:12.000

All right.

124

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:35:13.360 --> 00:35:34.480

So generally speaking a few things to think about in improving our practices. So when to involve community members- again, like I just mentioned earlier the better and throughout the process, try not to come to the table with too many expectations; try to be open. It may be that you're gonna have to address

125

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:35:35.240 --> 00:35:44.400

pressing local issues first, things like fair housing practices, before you could get to something like urban riparian buffer street trees work.

126

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:35:45.560 --> 00:36:05.840

How do you engage with the community? Again, this is not fully prescriptive, but, you know, again, try to be open, process oriented, to have an open and process oriented approach. Do your best to build relationships and listen. If you're, if you're a state regional, if you're working at a really broad scale and

127

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:36:05.920 --> 00:36:26.320

you can't be at all the meetings try to partner with people and organizations that do have a pulse on what is really happening where you're doing work. Do your best to address white supremacy and be anti- racist and not to dilute the power of these statements, but really try to address any supremacy.

128

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:36:26.760 --> 00:36:46.800

Even in the case of, let's say, academic expertise, I walk into room, I have a PhD. I come in with certain expertise, you know, it's a mix of academic lived experience, but I have to remember everybody in the room. Everybody is there with expertise and, and it is valuable.

129

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:36:47.560 --> 00:36:54.120

So make sure you're trying to come into these engagement activities with that kind of

130

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:36:55.760 --> 00:37:15.600

perspective and it's not always easy and it does take work. So who to engage with? Again, look beyond traditional stakeholders. Try to reach hard to reach community members work with trusted community representatives. So not trusted necessarily by the adaptation practitioners, but trusted by the community. So people that are

131

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:37:15.600 --> 00:37:24.160

really part of the community and sort of know your audience, do an assessment of, of who is in your community.

132

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:37:27.760 --> 00:37:31.720

Let's see, so some other tips here.

133

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:37:34.800 --> 00:37:53.360

You know, for best practice for inclusion I've mentioned some of these already: engaged with trusted community members; commit to listening more than speaking, which is, I think hard for, for some of us; try to offer food childcare and stipends if possible; co- design, even the means

134

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:37:53.520 --> 00:38:13.800

of engagement first and then planning second, if you can, and if you can, and I know this is difficult given the way that money, you know, flows and our timelines, but try to focus on building relationships and not always just on completing tasks. I know that's part of it, and of course.

135

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:38:14.480 --> 00:38:20.840

Be committed to being anti- racist and providing an open forum.

136

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:38:26.000 --> 00:38:42.640

So one other thing is to know your audience, and to know your audience is sometimes a difficult thing to do. This is something from the Sustainable Connecticut Equity Toolkit, which the working group used to inform some of our work and one of their very first steps is for you to, who lives and works in

137

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:38:43.640 --> 00:39:02.400

the community where you're doing this kind of work. And they pointed to a few data sources again, make sure you're not just leaning on the census data. There, there is good information there, but it's, you gotta dig a little bit to get the information, particularly about like immigrants and undocumented folks.

138

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:39:03.760 --> 00:39:23.560

But it's really important to look at what, what is the makeup of your community and it's not just about race and ethnicity. It's, you know, our retirees, commuters, students, family, low- income, LGBTQ, you know, there are a lot of a lot of different ways that people represent.

139

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:39:23.600 --> 00:39:30.800

And they may be impacted or, you know, it may impact how you have to make your planning decisions.

140

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:39:33.200 --> 00:39:53.040

So I'm getting to the end here. So integrating the primer into climate smart community actions. So this was put together by the Climate Smart Community's team and they point to the primer that we worked on, but basically this is for the community climate adaptation plan, and these are their

141

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:39:53.040 --> 00:40:13.520

suggested ways if you're familiar with the way CSC certification works, they have guidance about how to implement this action and they really want you to do this, analyze the demographic makeup of the community, convene a diverse and representative working group, develop and implement a public engagement strategy, which this primer might be helpful for,

142

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:40:14.920 --> 00:40:34.000

Evaluate information on climate hazards, so disproportionate impacts again, co- create your vision for adaptation and resilience, and develop strategies to adapt to changing climates. So co-create that, and then obviously update your plan, so, you know, the primer is just one

143

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:40:35.620 --> 00:40:49.340

piece of how you can address equity in your community and taken a while here. I'm gonna make this really brief, but one thing I'll just say is that, you know, remember that this is progress, not perfection.

144

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:40:51.540 --> 00:41:11.340

We did some work on a, not a CSC action, we worked on a community visioning process looking at communicating flood risk and public spaces, myself and some co- workers, and we were doing a needs assessment and we put out invitations to local decision makers, and when the day came.

145

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:41:11.380 --> 00:41:31.860

Well, we looked at it and it wasn't a very representative of this very diverse community. And so we used our connections to identify who were some trusted local groups, and we added those folks to the invitation and when the day came, they didn't show up to the workshop, and so we went through the

workshop activity with who was there, and we were sort of scratching our heads and we're thinking, you know,

146

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:41:31.900 --> 00:41:52.340

we have deadlines for our deliverable grant deliverables. What are we gonna do? And the town supervisor said come to us, we have a huge Earth Day event, just come, put up a table. See what you can get there. So we put up, it wasn't the full assessment, but we, we did somewhat of assessment we had cookies and people came and it was kids and it was a very broad

147

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:41:53.620 --> 00:42:12.820

slice of the community and we did get information and we were able to let that inform. We kind of had to shuffle our process a little bit, but let it inform our design write up. So anyway, I guess my advice is to get in there, make mistakes,

148

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:42:12.900 --> 00:42:15.940

keep pushing up the ladder, across the spectrum.

149

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:42:19.220 --> 00:42:37.620

Yeah, keep building trust and listening, and I guess let's see. Yeah, my closing thought really is that you, again, I keep saying it, but I think y'all know it's true. This is really a transformational opportunity.

150

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:42:39.060 --> 00:42:56.900

And equitable engagement practices and centering equity is gonna be key into actually getting the work done that we want to be done, and to creating the kind of future that we want to have for our communities. So thank you all very much, appreciate you taking the time to listen.

151

Christine Vanderlan 00:42:59.540 --> 00:43:19.380

Thank you, Kristen. So, our plan now is to show a short video that highlights the connection between environmental justice and climate justice, and it was produced by New York State and the Climate Smart Communities program in conjunction with the climate team at the Hudson River Estuary Program.

152

Christine Vanderlan 00:43:20.020 --> 00:43:39.860

And it visits the city of Yonkers where the community-based organization Groundwork Hudson Valley is helping to tackle heat stress and flooding while employing local young people. So we're gonna show this video and then turn it over to

153

Christine Vanderlan 00:43:39.940 --> 00:43:50.060

Kristen to answer some clarifying questions and just give me a moment to bring up the video.

154

Anonymous 00:43:57.140 --> 00:44:15.060

VIDEO titled "Climate Justice: Working Together for an Equitable Future." Speaker one: Environmental justice is the fair and meaningful participation and treatment of all people regardless of race, color, income, national origin, or age in the environmental process. People need to have a say in what happens in their backyards. Speaker two: I believe at the end of the day, whether

155

Anonymous 00:44:15.860 --> 00:44:22.780

justice, environmental justice, justice is justice. I, and I think justice should be an equal distribution of resources.

156

Anonymous 00:44:31.060 --> 00:44:50.260

Hector Santiago, Climate Safe Yonkers Task Force: So I was born and raised in Yonkers. I've always been in love with the infrastructure of Yonkers. So this area in particular is impacted by heat because there aren't any trees or anything really causing any shade and so it really had me look into heat

157

Anonymous 00:44:50.420 --> 00:44:53.100

islands, and what does that mean?

158

Anonymous 00:44:58.580 --> 00:45:14.580

Oded Holzinger, Groundwork Hudson Valley: Each year, hundreds of people in the United States die from extreme heat. Usually the people that suffer from that would be the most vulnerable people.

Hector Santiago: You can't speak about racism without classism, and when you take a step back and look at redlining.

159

Anonymous 00:45:14.660 --> 00:45:18.580

Red lining is all I know, it's all my family knows.

160

Anonymous 00:45:24.820 --> 00:45:40.820

Oded Holzinger: When we look at redlining maps, and we overlay them with the heat map, what we find out is that neighborhoods which were historically redlined could get up to ten degrees difference.

Hector Santiago: Once I started doing my research with the community, I realized

161

Anonymous 00:45:41.460 --> 00:45:52.980

this could have all been prevented with some education. So one of the things we would love to see more of in the community is more awnings coming out of the businesses. Something like this.

162

Anonymous 00:45:54.900 --> 00:46:14.740

Alanah Kedell Tuckey, DEC Office of Environmental Justice: There have been a lot of communities, low-income and communities of color that have been historically overburdened by environmental issues, incinerators within a mile from where they live, they have landfills in their backyards. There are electric generating facilities nearby, they're experiencing high levels of air pollution, water pollution. What we see is that

163

Anonymous 00:46:14.900 --> 00:46:35.220

people who are suffering from all these environmental justice issues, they're not contributing as much to greenhouse gases, but they're bearing a disproportionate burden of the effects from that. Hector Santiago: So I live right down this block and if you go straight down, there's no trees. There's only one tree on the right side and everyone on the block calls, it like the tree of life.

164

Anonymous 00:46:35.900 --> 00:46:44.740

Because when it's a scorching hot day, you'll see everybody as they pass by stop there to kind of cool down. Speaking to a child: I saw you on the bus. how was school?

165

Anonymous 00:46:46.740 --> 00:46:55.780

Xiomara Manguia, local business owner. This is the hardest summer for me. It was too hot. I've been doing this for years, but for me this year, it was the worst.

166

Anonymous 00:46:59.540 --> 00:47:18.100

Alanah Kedell-Tuckey: Yu see a lot of these communities have extremely high asthma rates. They have higher instances of cancer and lung disease and even higher instances of diabetes from all, from being exposed to these environmental harms. Corey Allen, Neighborhood Revitalization Specialist, Habitat for Humanity Greater Newburgh: We need to make sure that those folks in those areas are taking care of health wise and whenever

167

Anonymous 00:47:18.140 --> 00:47:26.620

there are any efforts, to improve the environment, that they get first rights to the jobs. That's environmental justice to me.

168

Anonymous 00:47:31.580 --> 00:47:48.060

Oded Holzinger : Groundwork Hudson Valley is a Yonkers, New York-based environmental nonprofit that works to create sustainable environmental change in urban neighborhoods and promote equity, youth leadership, and economic development.

169

Anonymous 00:47:48.860 --> 00:48:08.660

Here in Yonkers we're focusing on the two main impacts of climate change. These are extreme heat and extreme rain events, which cause a lot of flooding issues. We're at the back of housing property that suffers from recurring flooding where Groundwork Hudson Valley came with their youth

170

Anonymous 00:48:09.540 --> 00:48:29.140

employment program known as the Green Team to help solve the flooding issues. So, right here you could see a rain garden that our youth group built here. Jeremy Ramirez, Green Team Alumni - Green team grabs a students from multiple different schools in Yonkers and teaches us how to help the community. We plant the trees around.

171

Anonymous 00:48:29.420 --> 00:48:32.220

In my experience, it is a lot of fun.

172

Anonymous 00:48:34.260 --> 00:48:54.100

Hector Santiago: So right now we're on our way to a climate Change Task Force meeting Oded Holzinger: Groundwork Hudson Valley joined the national partnership called the Climate Safe Neighborhoods and work with the community to promote nature based solutions. Kisha Skipper, Vice President, Yonkers NAACP: The first thing which was great, was they reached out to local community based organizations

173

Anonymous 00:48:56.220 --> 00:49:14.580

This message out help us help you. Alanah: I think it's a common misconception that people who live in these urbanized areas in these communities, aren't interested in environmental conservation and it's just the opposite. They understand exactly what needs to be done to make sure that we have a resilient community that everybody has a seat at the table.

174

Anonymous 00:49:15.300 --> 00:49:18.380

Everybody's talking, we're thinking forward.

175

Anonymous 00:49:20.980 --> 00:49:40.180

Person at a meeting in the video: I think our planet is our house.

Another person at the meeting in the video: First, we wanted to explain what a climate action plan actually is... Hector Santiago: Sometimes our community needs to see someone from their community bringing that information Oded Holzinger: we are asking them to dedicate their time and just like I get paid for the work that I do, we need to pay.

176

Anonymous 00:49:40.340 --> 00:49:46.700

those community members that actually give us their knowledge, which has value to it.

177

Anonymous 00:49:51.060 --> 00:50:00.300

Corey Allen: If you want to find out what the community wants, if you really want to find out what they want, Scott talk to him. Don't be afraid go where they are.

178

Anonymous 00:50:02.020 --> 00:50:21.780

Gabby Figueroa, Green Team Alumni: My hope for the future is that we do get a lot more trees a lot more coverage. More parks, more green space, just more areas for people to be with one with nature. Hector Santiago: The future I would want to see -good health and more education, then I think that together we can make something happen.

179

Anonymous 00:50:22.500 --> 00:50:27.900

Corey Allen: It all trickles down from economic development. people have money and resources everything will improve.

180

Anonymous 00:50:35.220 --> 00:50:55.060

Alanah Kedell-Tuckey : Well, the future for climate resilience has to involve meaningful participation from everyone, so involving people in the planning process, making sure environmental justice principles are implemented from day one. Kisha Skipper: And what we want to see for every resident of our city of all colors creed nationalities and ethnicity is a fair and equitable existence.

181

Anonymous 00:50:56.260 --> 00:51:00.180

So this is the first step and moving that needle forward in the right direction.

182

Anonymous 00:51:07.100 --> 00:51:21.340

Narrator: Climate smart communities is a certification program that provides support and funding for local municipalities. The program has information and resources on how to create inclusive community engagement through several of its actions. Visit [Climatesmart.ny.gov](https://climatesmart.ny.gov) to learn more.

183

Christine Vanderlan 00:51:28.860 --> 00:51:37.580

Okay, I hope the quality on that was good for everybody and Ingrid, do we have questions that have come in...

184

Ingrid Haeckel 00:51:38.460 --> 00:51:58.940

Hi, yeah, and many thanks to Kristen for her great presentation. Yes, there's one clarifying question from Caroline asking about how you mentioned future plans for a climate smart communities action, but also mentioned

185

Ingrid Haeckel 00:51:58.940 --> 00:52:10.780

incorporating impacts and benefits assessment. Is the benefits assessment for the CSC program as a whole or for a specific CSC actions.

186

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:52:12.580 --> 00:52:13.700

Question.

187

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:52:15.580 --> 00:52:36.060

So to the second question, first, I think it really has to be both. So the example that I gave about climate adaptation planning, they actually ask you explicitly to look at the impacts and benefits of that particular action when you're building a plan, but you also need to be thinking about

188

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:52:36.060 --> 00:52:54.620

the impacts and benefits of the program statewide. And I worked with a student, we did some analysis looking at that. I know CSC has done the OCC has done some of their own analysis, but yes, I think it needs to happen on both levels. and I'm sorry, what was the first question?

189

Ingrid Haeckel 00:52:56.580 --> 00:53:00.420

I'm sorry, now my window disappeared.

190

Ingrid Haeckel 00:53:02.300 --> 00:53:11.260

Had to do with, excuse me, plans for a future CSC action.

191

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:53:12.580 --> 00:53:31.740

Yes, I, I don't know where that stands, but that's definitely in the works, what we've done so far is look at a couple other models. So looking at Sustainable Connecticut and Sustainable Jersey, they've come

kind of come about it a couple different ways, whether or not you're, there's a specific action that's about

192

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:53:32.420 --> 00:53:52.220

equitable, you know, equity broadly, or is it looking at how you incorporate equity into... So I think it's Connecticut does it where you can incorporate equity into any action, but you just have to demonstrate that you've done it and you get points for that. So we've, we've talked about different approaches and I, I.

193

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 00:53:52.220 --> 00:53:55.620

I'm not quite sure where, where that stands right now.

194

Ingrid Haeckel 00:53:56.060 --> 00:53:57.180

Thanks.

195

Christine Vanderlan 00:53:59.900 --> 00:54:15.940

So I'm gonna invite Shameika to share her slides and begin her presentation, and we should have some time at the conclusion of Shameika's presentation for further questions as well for both speakers.

196

Shameika 00:54:21.020 --> 00:54:41.500

Hi everyone, thank you for having me. Kristen, thank you for leading off with all of that really good information and that wonderful video that you all put together. So my name is Shameika Hanson. I work at The Nature Conservancy as a climate adaptation specialist and as mentioned my background really is in communicating and sort of demystifying

197

Shameika 00:54:41.740 --> 00:54:53.820

climate science to general audiences. And so for those who are not familiar with The Nature Conservancy, let's see if this clicks over.

198

Shameika 00:54:56.860 --> 00:54:58.580

There we go.

199

Shameika 00:55:03.260 --> 00:55:05.180

And so I'll be. - garbled

200

Shameika 00:55:24.380 --> 00:55:26.140

Those one. - garbled

201

Shameika 00:55:30.820 --> 00:55:38.460

In my team, the primary area we work on is in the tackling climate change area, which focuses on for us in the adaptation space.

202

Shameika 00:55:39.140 --> 00:55:58.940

And so here in New York that really means addressing issues of flooding, throughout the state and both coastal and riverine areas, and so we have seen communities in our coastlines and in flood planes areas, they've really been many time.

203

Shameika 00:55:59.620 --> 00:56:20.060

from emergency rescues or repeated property days and have undertaken rebuilding efforts following each flood. Sometimes these efforts come at a high cost of residents and municipalities and we really believe that our communities can be protected by thriving natural wetlands, marshes, forest and flood plains.

204

Shameika 00:56:20.700 --> 00:56:40.540

So traditionally, the way that communities have really looked at flood plain and flood protection is by first starting with sort of defending ourselves from the incoming water, then when we can't do that, we work to sort of accommodate the water coming in and usually as a very last resort

205

Shameika 00:56:41.340 --> 00:57:01.020

we decide to retreat away from the water itself. But our team has turned that model upside down and proposes advocating for sort of a new framework for flood adaptation. We call it the flood adaptation hierarchy and so this framework starts instead with using nature as our first line of defense.

206

Shameika 00:57:01.660 --> 00:57:21.500

By protecting floodplains and wetland areas first, particularly the ones that are still intact and functioning, then moving to that sort of undeveloping of areas along the coast and in those riverine areas to make room for restoration of floodplains, migrating wetlands, and when those three measures are not feasible, then, the

207

Shameika 00:57:21.580 --> 00:57:26.620

final option would then be to sort of defend our community with hard structure.

208

Christine Vanderlan 00:57:27.900 --> 00:57:43.420

I've got a break in. Sorry, Shameika, there's a bit of a Garbling. I can hear your voice clearly at this point, but there's kind of this garbling that comes and goes and I'm just wanna see if there's anything on your end. You might be able to change up. Nope, okay.

209

Shameika 00:57:43.900 --> 00:57:45.180

Now I'm sorry, not.

210

Christine Vanderlan 00:57:45.860 --> 00:57:46.460

No, you need.

211

Christine Vanderlan 00:57:48.380 --> 00:57:53.940

Oh, or turn off your video. That might work. Thanks for that suggestion. All right.

212

Shameika 00:57:54.180 --> 00:57:55.700

Let's see.

213

Shameika 00:57:57.340 --> 00:57:59.940

Is that helpful with the audio?

214

Christine Vanderlan 00:58:01.540 --> 00:58:02.460

Yeah.

215

Shameika 00:58:02.460 --> 00:58:22.940

OK. OK. I'll keep the video off then maybe it's an internet thing. So just to set some context, right? Like, while we want these natural areas to serve as sort of protective buffers between people and water, they can

216

Shameika 00:58:23.100 --> 00:58:43.420

also provide wildlife habitat, ensure water quality is enhanced, create recreational opportunities, et cetera and in many instances communities are already acting towards the sort of vision in a variety of ways, and so throughout New York, one way we see this happening is by residents making the choice to move away from some of the riskiest

217

Shameika 00:58:43.500 --> 00:59:03.900

floodplains typically achieved by what we know is government backed voluntary home buy- outs. This approach usually not only eliminates flood risk for people, but it creates opportunity to re- imagine the floodplain so they can benefit people in nature and this approach is really a long term solution, but the decision to relocate from a risky areas is

218

Shameika 00:59:04.100 --> 00:59:24.380

not an easy one for the residents and sometimes it's often the only option they have, right? So it's sort of picking between only one thing, essentially. The current process for buyout programs, can be long confusing and very emotionally taxing for residents

219

Shameika 00:59:24.580 --> 00:59:44.860

and the local towns and villages that are often lacking the capacity to administer these processes. Unfortunately in many of the places where communities have bene to do this voluntary retreat, we find that the remaining vacant lands oftentimes become overgrown, distressed looking, causing blight in communities they're found in or become a burden or

220

Shameika 00:59:45.540 --> 01:00:05.340

stewardship task for the local municipality to take on. As you may know these impacts reduce the desire for communities to want buy-outs to occur as those that remain do not want to be left with an eyesore surrounding them or, you know, the increased cost of maintenance or any potential unseedy activities that

221

Shameika 01:00:05.620 --> 01:00:25.820

may occur in an area that looks unkept. So our team really wanted to work with communities to improve the buy- out experience, and figuring out where to work, what happens to the land after, we were grappling with a lot of different questions. There are many communities throughout New York State, dealing with these issues, and so it

222

Shameika 01:00:26.220 --> 01:00:46.300

felt very unfair and inequitable of us and our team to sort of try to pick anyone community, and so after a lot of thought, we knew we wanted to bring people in early, thinking of many of the concepts that Kristen discussed earlier, and to do that, we looked at what the resources we had and where and

223

Shameika 01:00:46.540 --> 01:01:06.780

what our actual staff capacity was. And so in this conversation right now, around equitable community engagement, we are a, sort of one level removed from the community itself. So wanting to work with them, but we are not grounded in these places and spaces.

224

Shameika 01:01:07.780 --> 01:01:22.660

We are not the experts. These are not our homes. We really needed to have the opportunity to hear from community members and give them opportunities as much as we can to sort of

225

Shameika 01:01:23.780 --> 01:01:42.820

describe what they wanted to see, create a vision for what they wanted to see. And so we had a small budget as I said, limited team capacity, and limited geographic range, but what we decided to do was create a community visioning grant.

226

Shameika 01:01:46.180 --> 01:02:05.380

So this grant gave communities the opportunity and the space to reimagine how their flood prone vacant lands can be used as assets to benefit the community as opposed to potential liabilities. Our team recognize that many communities lack the time and resources to complete a community- based vision.

227

Shameika 01:02:05.380 --> 01:02:18.060

And found that in New York, there weren't many positive examples for reusing land that, that we were aware of, much less ones where multiple buyouts had occurred in one community, so.

228

Shameika 01:02:20.100 --> 01:02:40.580

As I said, we spent a lot of time in that deliberation process: how to choose where to work. And so we came up with the idea of having a community visioning RFP in areas that experienced managed retreat. So we didn't just want to work in communities we were familiar with.

229

Shameika 01:02:40.580 --> 01:03:01.060

And we wanted to ensure we had a fair process for communities to access the funds, but inherently RFP processes have many barriers, are sometimes very inequitable, and do not necessarily allow for the full breadth of community work to be done and led by community members. And so we really wanted to figure

230

Shameika 01:03:01.180 --> 01:03:21.540

out how we could change that. You know, choosing criteria to identify anyone wasn't where we wanted to go, and so we really wanted to think of how can we incorporate people on the ground hear their voices, but do that from the perspective of knowing that we are a big green organization

231

Shameika 01:03:21.940 --> 01:03:37.060

and won't be there in perpetuity. So how do we really plan and think about engaging communities equitably knowing we will not be doing that, you know, into the long term. And so we looked to do

232

Shameika 01:03:38.180 --> 01:03:58.660

two sort of granting opportunities to different communities. We wanted to have on the ground projects. We were really interested in learning about the process of equitable community engagement, particularly in areas where buyouts had occurred and we really wanted an enlightened way

233

Shameika 01:03:59.460 --> 01:04:19.140

looking at the community engagement and the project design. So what sort of things were being done or being proposed that seemed novel, innovative, unique, or very helpful in identifying community desires wants and needs. And so

234

Shameika 01:04:19.780 --> 01:04:36.460

what we started with to ensure that we were again, reducing sort of those barriers in the RFP process. We thought about making very intentional shifts, and so what you're seeing here is sort of the standard RFP process.

235

Shameika 01:04:38.980 --> 01:04:51.140

You would do, moving from your project planning, to drafting up the RFP, issuing the RFP, and reviewing proposals and awarding your contract for us. However, we did not want our

236

Shameika 01:04:52.420 --> 01:05:12.900

applicants to have to meet a bunch of deliverables. We really wanted folks to be creative in what they were bringing us, and so we actually created a set of guiding principles for the project teams to adhere to while they did their work. This provided room for project teams to be creative in the ways that they wanted.

237

Shameika 01:05:13.780 --> 01:05:33.380

Which were best and most unique for engaging with people in their communities, but also served as a point where we could make our sort of scoring criteria also more flexible. So you can see here, seven guiding principles. I won't read them all, but I will read some. And so some of them include ensuring that resources

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Shameika 01:05:33.420 --> 01:05:53.340

are shared equitably among organizations that are involved in the partnership and that partnership should demonstrate resource sharing. We really wanted to make sure that folks were being hired from, in the community whenever possible, for any part of the project to be honest. And another one was really thinking through

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Shameika 01:05:53.900 --> 01:06:14.340

working to change sort of unequal power structures and dynamics that may prevent marginalized communities or individual voices from participating in the process. Again, that's only three out of the seven, but you sort of get it an idea of what we were sort of trying to go for. We want to look for groups, entities that would be leaning into

240

Shameika 01:06:14.500 --> 01:06:34.820

these principles without determining on their behalf, the type of work that they would be doing or what it would look like. So as we started thinking through this RFP process, we thought through some of the changes that we could be making to make it more open and accessible to community statewide and so on the left side of the screen, you'll see.

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Shameika 01:06:35.020 --> 01:06:55.300

The standard RFP process on the right side of the screen, you'll see the process that we use, which reduces a lot of some of the extra pieces that other RFP hold that applicants have to adhere to. So we developed a list of equity consultants that was

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Shameika 01:06:55.460 --> 01:07:15.780

paired with this, with the release of the RFP, around New York State. So we understand municipalities who may be interested in doing this work don't have the capacity or expertise to necessarily design and implement, you know, the RFP and then the actual engagement piece and so there were a list of consultants who

243

Shameika 01:07:15.780 --> 01:07:29.540

from around New York State were willing to engage and work and partner with other municipalities in doing this work. So having that list of resources to sort of solve that capacity problem.

244

Shameika 01:07:31.140 --> 01:07:51.620

We were interested in ensuring that again, that capacity issue was not something that prevented people from participating. So another thing that we did was, we had interested folks just right a one page pre-proposal. This pre-proposal gave our team a high level understanding of the potential project

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Shameika 01:07:51.620 --> 01:08:12.100

without burdening the interested applications with the responsibility of submitting a full multipage proposal that may be declined. This also gave our team more time to focus on reviewing full submission more closely. Post selection in the project, we ended up giving our project teams additional money to sort of bolster their ability to ensure

246

Shameika 01:08:12.740 --> 01:08:32.580

the project would be complete and throughout the project we willingly move deadlines and extended contracts to ensure teams and communities really weren't rushing through the visioning process. So at the end of the selection, we ended up with two communities. They are Edgemere and Sidney and so.

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Shameika 01:08:32.620 --> 01:08:53.060

you can see from this map and those yellow markers where they are, but for those who are not familiar with these communities, I'll just give a quick wrap on, you know, some of their characteristics. so Edgemere is a low line waterfront community on the Rockway Peninsulas in southeastern Queens. It extends from beach thirty- two to beach fifty ninth street, east to west, and from Jamaica Bay to the Atlantic

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Shameika 01:08:53.100 --> 01:09:13.540

Ocean, north to south. It shares boundaries with the communities of to the Arburn to the west and Far Rockaway to the east and the area is less than one square mile, but is home to approximately eighteen thousand residents from an array of diverse cultures and nationalities. So I will just repeat, less than one square mile home

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Shameika 01:09:13.660 --> 01:09:34.020

To eighteen thousand residents, Edgemere experience is regular flooding from a lack of adequate stormwater infrastructure and sort of a combination of high water table and flat topography, and so you can also see the coastal flooding projections here at one, five, and ten feet of sea level rise. This is the Edgemere community.

250

Shameika 01:09:34.900 --> 01:09:54.500

And when you get to ten feet, there's basically complete inundation, but there is a thriving community there right now, and we are not planning for ten feet immediately. It is a transition. This is a long term thing that we need to be considerate of the people there, what they want, what they want to realize and what they can actualize

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Shameika 01:09:54.580 --> 01:10:14.980

between now and, you know, planning for their potential future, and so in the Edgemere community visioning project, they really focus on fifty- five city owned vacant lots, more or less most of them were less than ten thousand square feet in size, located more on the bay side between the beach channel drive and beach

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Shameika 01:10:15.180 --> 01:10:35.460

third Street. So the lots accounted for approximately forty percent of the overall one hundred and nineteen vacant lots in the neighborhood that has been designated for the Edgemere Community Land Trust. This is a project of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development HPD as part of the city's coastal resilience effort to rezone the Rockaways.

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Shameika 01:10:36.740 --> 01:10:55.940

This land trust will be stewarding the land that is going to be underwater essentially, but there is a lot of complexity with this model and implications for the communities within them. This model is however, being enacted in Edgemere and the CLT

254

Shameika 01:10:55.940 --> 01:11:16.420

is currently underway of being formed by the local residents in the Edgemere community. So again, really thinking through how are we giving folks this opportunity to not only make decisions, but do that on behalf of themselves in place and carry that work forward. So moving to Sidney. It's approximately

255

Shameika 01:11:18.100 --> 01:11:38.460

Eighty five miles at North and slightly west of Edgemeer and it lies in the village of Sidney, which is located on the south side of the Susquehenna River. It's at the confluence of the Unadilla rivers in the Catskill foothills of Delaware County. It's about forty miles from

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Shameika 01:11:38.740 --> 01:11:58.940

Binghamton and forty- five miles from the Pennsylvania border for those who are not familiar with Sidney. But in Sidney, more than half of the village lies in the floodplain of the Susquehenna River or where creek. For seventy years, the community experienced minimal flooding until 2006, storms dropped fourteen inches of

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Shameika 01:11:59.140 --> 01:12:19.420

rainfall on the area. Then in two thousand eleven, they experienced back to back major flood events, the first time from Hurricane Irene followed up by tropical storm Lee. You use 2011 events cost twenty million dollars in damage and displaced five hundred residents and eight hundred workers for weeks.

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Shameika 01:12:19.500 --> 01:12:39.900

Some permanently, so again, thinking through who is being displaced, for what reason, and what are our plans to adapt equitably as we think of these transitions and what this future looks like. So the Sidney greenplain project ambitiously attempts to address the

259

Shameika 01:12:39.980 --> 01:13:01.020

need to keep people in the community and out of harm's way. It promised to relocate upwards of a hundred families buy out a hundred and forty- plus properties, and build the Sidney green plain a climate adaptation initiative that uses nature and natural flood reduction measure. This green infrastructure enhanced floodplain ecosystem is capable of storing an additional twelve million cubic feet

260

Shameika 01:13:01.180 --> 01:13:21.500

of flood water, which is equivalent to the size of a sort of a swimming pool that is a football field and 20 stories deep. While I could tell you more about these communities, as I mentioned from the inception of this project, our team has wanted to center having equitable practices and approaches

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Shameika 01:13:22.540 --> 01:13:42.620

And one of these is to not speak on behalf of the community members. So I'm gonna share a short video that does that. This video was paid for by our team and shot by Niger Miles and the team at Mark by Fire, located in Brooklyn, New York, but it only features people from Sidney and Edgemere. It is a very small insight into some of the project team members and the work

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Shameika 01:13:42.900 --> 01:13:47.700

these communities have been doing to bolster their resilience in the face of climate change.

263

Anonymous 01:14:21.020 --> 01:14:37.660

Video titled: Community Visioning, Creating a Safer Future Together. Rockaway was ignored and neglected by the city for a really long time, especially this past decade after Hurricane Sandy. Many neighborhoods have seen improvements, but Edgemere was one that was sort of left off the map. We were looking for

264

Anonymous 01:14:37.780 --> 01:14:58.140

Ways in which we could utilize property that has been damaged through two floods, the last time that a major disaster happened here was two thousand eleven, a lot of people got together at that time and came up with some good plans on how to try to restore our village and also try to mitigate

265

Anonymous 01:14:58.260 --> 01:15:07.380

Any further impact to the residents. Eleven years down the line, the community visioning project has been able to actually do that for us.

266

Anonymous 01:15:33.980 --> 01:15:54.460

There's so many different thoughts and perspectives that go into creating what that community portrait of Edgemere is, and just things that you don't see if you don't live on the block. One of the challenges of walking around in the community to meet people was that are they gonna trust me when I walk up to them.

267

Anonymous 01:15:54.620 --> 01:16:14.940

And say, I'm a community person, you know, and, and I'm here with some important information for you. I mean, the biggest challenge in this project is I think a lot of the people are under impression at once we develop this plan, it's going to be implemented next year, but we need their input.

268

Anonymous 01:16:15.700 --> 01:16:35.420

Tell us what we want to accomplish down the road. Work like that is overall a way to sort of get through all the technical details and get to stories what can people tell you emotionally about a place, that can help the experts, make that

269

Anonymous 01:16:35.820 --> 01:16:55.900

better for them. When we first met with the Nature Conservancy, we found out, right from the very beginning that they were understanding, they were excited and they wanted to get involved and see what we were doing here, and it was just a good fit for us. Yeah, like it's helped me gain more people skills also just to be a facilitator to

270

Anonymous 01:16:56.020 --> 01:17:16.260

guide people and also like to listen, make sure you're listening to their thoughts and ideas and feelings and learning how to incorporate that into the bigger goal. The reason we're doing this whole process is, so that we can make Sidney better and bring back a certain measure of quality of life.

271

Anonymous 01:17:19.580 --> 01:17:36.860

We would like to keep our young people here in our community and I think if we can offer some recreational programs and have the facilities where they can use that and have some programs in the arts, I think people will want to say, Hey, here's an area that I would like to live in.

272

Anonymous 01:17:36.860 --> 01:17:57.340

I believe in it. I think that there is, there's an impact that can be made and felt. If we can still be able to offer a good quality of life to the people that want to live here, I think then we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. I think the community vision project is probably the glue of making every

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Anonymous 01:17:57.980 --> 01:18:17.820

Thing pull together. If people are invested, they'll use it, but people are invested they'll take care of it, And that's what we're, that's my whole goal since I've been here, so you get the community invested and moving forward in one direction. This land in Edgemere has been barren for so long and finally we can see

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Anonymous 01:18:18.460 --> 01:18:38.300

things forming on these pieces of land and that's gonna make the community more beautiful, more connected, more engaged, more active. So I just want to see people be happy in their neighborhood and they're with the ecosystem that they should get to enjoy. One thing I dream and hope for is that there can just be more connection within

275

Anonymous 01:18:39.140 --> 01:18:58.780

this community. That it's not so isolated. I hope that people can know like that the help and the resources that they need are within their community. I envision for Edgemere that it will live up to be the coastal community that it deserves to be, and that the people who live there can enjoy

276

Anonymous 01:18:59.100 --> 01:19:09.220

their communities and show pride in their community, and it may be one of the beautiful places that it deserves to be. End of video.

277

Shameika 01:19:34.620 --> 01:19:53.180

Now, now that you've heard a little bit about these stories and these communities and the work that they did right, Both worked very hard, both project teams worked very hard for over a year. Engaging with community members. This occurred, basically during COVID.

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Shameika 01:19:53.500 --> 01:20:13.660

Right when it hit us, and we were trying to figure out really how to do our work after a year or two of being in a pandemic, wanting to keep community safe and protected. And so in Edgemere, the team began with doing their research to understand the historical context they've been working in. Multiple projects and planning

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Shameika 01:20:14.020 --> 01:20:34.140

had occurred in this community, so going in with an understanding of some of what was already been done, what some of these people had already gone through, was really important. They also created a community advisory committee. Those were made up of community members of all ages and backgrounds to lead the community workshops, these CAC members.

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Shameika 01:20:34.180 --> 01:20:54.620

receive stipends for their time participating, and were the leaders of the conversations that were occurring, and helped to think through how we were going to engage with people as well as ensure that, that engagement could be done in a way that

281

Shameika 01:20:55.380 --> 01:21:14.700

respected the community and allowed for folks who may not be able to join in person to still have an opportunity to make their voices heard. So they did a lot of community outreach, partnership mapping, scoping interviews. They had a vacant lot survey that they did, and again, form that committee.

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Shameika 01:21:15.740 --> 01:21:16.980

They then

283

Shameika 01:21:19.520 --> 01:21:39.760

Had community meetings that were held locally, they were held over the weekend to make sure that they could accommodate work schedules. They advertised this information, not only via word of mouth, but having flyers in the neighborhood, and sharing it online, by not only the project team, but local partners that

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Shameika 01:21:39.840 --> 01:22:00.200

Were identified in their partnership mapping work. The first meeting was held in person and the final two online again, to consider COVID as one of those guiding principles and the health impacts to these community members who were already experiencing devastation from the COVID pandemic. So.

285

Shameika 01:22:02.800 --> 01:22:20.720

As I mentioned earlier, the lots in the project area are fairly small, but as you all can see here, some are contiguous and potentially allow for larger projects to be placed on them. And so some of the things community members wanted to see on these lots are things that generate economic opportunities.

286

Shameika 01:22:20.800 --> 01:22:41.200

Beautification, Arts, Entertainment, and a fun fact, this list of ideas of what to put on each lot was done via a virtual Google Earth Walking tour, and so when we could not get out physically into the communities, the project team walked all of the online participants through the neighborhood.

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Shameika 01:22:41.240 --> 01:23:01.680

Via Google Maps technology, it can be an amazing thing when it works the way we want it to work. So this not only limited the chances of folks spreading COVID, but it gave people who could not attend, could not maybe do the walking piece for whatever reason still the opportunity to see the neighborhood and engage in the

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Shameika 01:23:03.680 --> 01:23:22.800

conversation. Moving to Sidney, the project team also worked really hard to ensure they were engaging the community deeply. They established a project website that all plans, documents, announcements and information on the project could be accessed. They set up four focus groups, held three virtual community

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Shameika 01:23:22.840 --> 01:23:41.040

Workshops, sent around three thousand mailers village wide about the project, and gave front porch presentations in person to ensure community members were getting the information that they needed so that they were able and ready to participate in these workshops and in this process.

290

Shameika 01:23:42.640 --> 01:23:43.760

Sidney

291

Shameika 01:23:45.600 --> 01:24:05.680

had this plan an inception for over ten years and it spans a much larger area of the community. Some of the things that the residents want to see in that space, you can see listed here on the screen. They really are looking for five general projects to be done, which

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Shameika 01:24:05.880 --> 01:24:26.160

Is looking at our natural, their natural and conserved open space areas, having multiuse gathering spaces, making upgrades to their key Clark Park, and having buy out neighborhood adaptation, as well as a park expansion and improvements for their Willows Street Park. So, again for folks who are interest

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Shameika 01:24:26.560 --> 01:24:46.640

In hearing more about this, there will be information shared with you all, but in Edgemere, as I said, New York City housing preservation, HPD, the Edgemere CLT is currently being formed and they are going to be helping the community navigate.

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Shameika 01:24:46.800 --> 01:25:07.120

This space and what is going to be done with the vacant lots based on the vision and plans that were created. And in Sidney, this past December, the Sidney Greenplain team was recently awarded a grant from the Department of State for Seven Hundred thousand dollars to design and construct waterfront recreation

295

Shameika 01:25:07.840 --> 01:25:17.320

facillties, including a green soccer complex and event lawn, adding a new green plain community park. These projects

296

Shameika 01:25:19.280 --> 01:25:39.760

are not over, but if you would like to learn more about what folks are doing, you can visit these three sites. <https://www.resilient-sidney.com/visioning> The first is to learn specifically about community work going on in Edgemere and Sidney, the second - <https://www.riserockaway.org/rise/initiatives/community-visioning-for-vacant-l/> Edgemere and then the third, -<https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/new-york/stories-in-new-york/ny-climate-change-action/> our climate adaptation team has been working on a number.

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Shameika 01:25:39.880 --> 01:26:00.240

Of projects both in community, granting communities, et cetera, and so this is just one of many projects that we've done over the last few years, and if you're interested in learning about some of the others, you can visit our website, so that being said, that was our last slide that I.

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Shameika 01:26:00.320 --> 01:26:12.400

Had for you all, and we thank you so much for listening and joining us today. So really appreciate you all, and if you have any questions, I will stop sharing my screen now.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:26:12.400 --> 01:26:30.320

Thank you, thank you Shameika. We are running close to two thirty. I don't know whether you and Kristen can stay on or if folks can stay on for a few questions beyond two thirty, would that be possible? that's fine.

300

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:26:30.600 --> 01:26:32.160

I can, yes.

301

Shameika 01:26:32.400 --> 01:26:32.880

As well.

302

Christine Vanderlan 01:26:32.880 --> 01:26:54.000

Great, one of the attendees brings up a relatively common experience that a small subset of community comes together for a short time or around a specific topic and gets engaged and is asking about examples for meaningful ongoing engagement, with

303

Christine Vanderlan 01:26:54.240 --> 01:27:03.120

a wider spectrum of the community and maybe going beyond a one shot effort. I don't know if either of you would like to speak to that.

304

Shameika 01:27:04.880 --> 01:27:08.080

I can start if you'd like, so.

305

Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:27:08.080 --> 01:27:09.360

Yeah, yeah.

306

Shameika 01:27:10.000 --> 01:27:29.840

So as Kristen's aware, I've been working on a number of projects now with various communities and so the Edgemoor and Sidney story is only one, another community that we did a project in is in Long Island where there was a lot of community members to, you know, really care about

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Shameika 01:27:29.960 --> 01:27:50.320

waterfront and what's happening to that waterfront, but didn't necessarily work well together and so some small numbers of that, you know, subset people would work together, but everyone wasn't necessarily speaking. And so we actually designed an ambassador program to invite all of the community leaders in , to

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Shameika 01:27:50.480 --> 01:28:10.800

Not only get to know what each other was doing, but build trust amongst one another to have a more personal connection. These community leaders just happen to represent a lot of actually the community we wanted to connect with, but knew we did not personally have the capacity time or trust within the community to get sort of started on that work

309

Shameika 01:28:10.840 --> 01:28:31.280

immediately. We brought them together for a little less than a year, then that was during the pandemic. So, and it was right when it started when we launched that project. So we definitely put sort of a damper on our getting started, but once we got together, folks spent about nine months talking to one another facilitated

310

Shameika 01:28:31.320 --> 01:28:51.760

conversations by me. and we had colleagues come in, getting them one on ones, getting them to talk to their decision makers, and what was very important for this particular community because as I said, these projects are not gonna happen overnight is understanding a) why these things take so long, and b)

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Shameika 01:28:52.080 --> 01:29:12.240

The various pieces of decision making that is occurring during these large infrastructure projects. that's particularly ones that are coming down from like the federal government, right? There's procurements, they have multiple rounds of review and in each stage, the cost usually starts going up, right? And so community members don't necessarily get read into that background that is

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Shameika 01:29:13.240 --> 01:29:32.720

happening and they got that this time I can thankfully say this community, and then these members in this group have gone from not necessarily speaking to each other, doing individual projects lists on another without one, another to now honoring each other working together,

313

Shameika 01:29:32.720 --> 01:29:53.200

As a larger group, and being recognized by their municipality as that, that sort of go to group to really talk to about these projects. So they have now a, a plot of land that they're doing that they want to do work on that. The town is ready to get started on and they've invited every single one of those people to.

314

Shameika 01:29:53.280 --> 01:30:13.680

advise on this sort of committee. And so really thinking through how you get those subsets of people together and to do that, I really started with just building individual relationships with all of those subsets and then listening to them. It was about three years of just listening in the community and understanding what were their actual

315

Shameika 01:30:14.520 --> 01:30:34.160

Desires; what were their actual wants and what, what were the pain points that were sticking for whatever reason that kept community members from speaking with one another, even though a lot of them are saying many of the same things. And so thinking through how you can sort of build a space for people who

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Shameika 01:30:34.280 --> 01:30:39.160

don't usually have the opportunity to talk to each other to do so, but remembering.

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Shameika 01:30:40.760 --> 01:31:01.040

They're coming with their own pasts, histories. There may be reasons why these subsets do not speak, and so really getting an understanding of that before you move forward is very helpful to navigating the types of conversations that you're going to be having, how you may need to facilitate that conversation, and ensuring that you're moving at the pace of trust, not the pace of just

318

Shameika 01:31:01.880 --> 01:31:04.440

your project, so I'll stop there.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:31:09.360 --> 01:31:11.280

That handles it beautifully. Yeah.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:31:13.840 --> 01:31:14.480

Thank you.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:31:14.640 --> 01:31:18.240

Chance to talk about that project. That's, that's really exciting.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:31:20.560 --> 01:31:40.520

I do want to acknowledge. I know some people need to jump off or have already jumped off because it's a little after two thirty and we will be following up and sharing the link to today's recording and the presentation slides and the videos that we shared, as well as some additional resources from both of the speakers.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:31:41.720 --> 01:31:44.720

So another.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:31:46.840 --> 01:32:05.480

Another question that just came in from Jennifer is whether there is a plan for a community leaders of Sidney and Edgemere to come together to discuss their challenges opportunities and best practices in community engagement and leadership as they move from imagination to implementation.

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Shameika 01:32:06.680 --> 01:32:27.120

Thank you for that question. Because that actually sort of happened, but it was such a big project. It's hard to throw everything in a small slideshow, but one of the things that we really wanted to see on our team was, this just happened in other places, it wasn't about anyone community or another. We just want to see communities having these conversations, having the resources and space

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Shameika 01:32:27.240 --> 01:32:47.600

to do this, and in a way that honors what they want to see, as I said before, and so we had a mentorship aspect of this grants of which we gave the winning project teams in Sidney and then in Edgemere extra funds to support teams that we thoughta

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Shameika 01:32:47.720 --> 01:33:08.080

had good applications, but what could have been stronger for various reasons. So Edgemere happened to be paired up with that community in Long Island that I mentioned before and Sidney was paired up with the community of Olive, sort of upstate a little bit. They, these communities were paired off for various similarities

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Shameika 01:33:09.080 --> 01:33:28.560

in terms of geography, characteristics, et cetera, et cetera. In this mentorship program, the project teams were sort of coaching the teams that were not awarded on ways that they were doing their project better and how they could improve, and then we brought everyone together to have these sort of

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Shameika 01:33:28.600 --> 01:33:49.040

conversations and learn from on, another, share certain best practices and think through other ways that, you know, maybe they could be supporting one another in terms of resource sharing or otherwise, and so that is another like, whole piece of the project. It's just again, a lot more to talk about that the time just didn't allot for

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Shameika 01:33:49.680 --> 01:33:56.840

Yes, we did have some folks come together. Have this conversation and sort of learn from each other in the best practices.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:34:02.480 --> 01:34:21.560

Yeah, thanks for sharing that I think there's, there's one more question that I see that I think would be great to, to pose, and that is the question about what did you find were the biggest challenges or have you found are the biggest challenges in using the tools of the community engagement spectrum.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:34:24.240 --> 01:34:31.440

I can start with that, and I'm guessing Shameika has built bump bumped her head against this stuff too many times, so.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:34:32.680 --> 01:34:38.920

You know, obviously it'll vary quite a bit, but, you know, one.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:34:40.520 --> 01:35:00.720

I guess the biggest thing that comes to my mind, and frankly that I still struggle with is both, you know, again, holding these two things at the same time and in your hands, at the same time. You wanna make sure that people have a voice and an opportunity and can give input and help make decisions.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:35:01.360 --> 01:35:21.200

At the same time, you don't want to overburden people that are already super busy, maybe have multiple jobs, you know, so finding a way to do those things I think takes some grace and thought and creativity, and sometimes it's just, it's, it can.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:35:21.200 --> 01:35:41.680

Can be budget, you know, do you make sure your, not just tacking on a little bit of an engagement budget. So that often happens with projects. It's not just this tiny little like, okay, we'll throw a couple thousand dollars towards, you know, some kind of digital campaign, like there has to be

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:35:41.680 --> 01:36:02.160

a thought and like Shameika was talking about about, you know, how do you pay people stipends to actually do the work to pay attention and listen. So, yeah, I think that's something that at least for myself and this kind of relates to another

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:36:02.240 --> 01:36:22.640

person's question, sometimes even that, that act of giving a stipend is difficult in large organizations, you know, we, we can get forty thousand dollars to an institute. We have processes for that. It's a little harder for us to get a hundred dollars to individual.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:36:23.000 --> 01:36:39.200

So like, figuring out kind of fixing some of the systems so that they can, you can support doing some of these, you know, moving people along the spectrum. Yeah, that's what came to my mind Shameika, do you wanna.

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Shameika 01:36:39.920 --> 01:36:59.760

Yeah, so for me, if you were listening to sort of the, the different phases, how our TNC team was sort of thinking about the project, but then how the project teams were thinking about it, We kind of went from that sort of number three on the spectrum, we hit a little bit of four on the spectrum, some pieces touched five

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Shameika 01:37:00.040 --> 01:37:20.240

A little bit, so, you know, it may not be perfect, right? And there are a ton of tools out there, There is tools from USDN network. There are tools from NCARP. There are tools that we have internally that we use. So when we finished our grant writing process and we finished this program.

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Shameika 01:37:20.560 --> 01:37:40.720

We actually took one of our conservation tools and measured the work against it and said, you know, could we have improved, could we have shifted on that Spectrum, our internal tool, didn't all even line up with that project, right? So you may actually have to not only pick and choose from tools, you may need to think through, are there methods

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Shameika 01:37:41.040 --> 01:38:01.200

That I need to create for my project or questions, I can be asking myself, that helped me move along the spectrum, regardless of what tool I'm using, right? You may find different parts of your project touch different parts of the spectrum and you want to focus on maybe bringing the ones that are in the ones two or three.

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Shameika 01:38:01.880 --> 01:38:21.680

Closer to the four or five as well as nurturing the things that are four or five so that they do not drop down. So just really thinking through the fact that, again, all projects are not the same. They're not supposed to be, because all the communities aren't the same and they're all gonna ask for different things, and so there's a bunch of tools out there.

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Shameika 01:38:22.320 --> 01:38:42.160

But ensuring that you have the one, two, or three that you can really match up against your project and having sort of guiding questions that you and your team are asking yourselves, particularly guiding questions, you formed with your community members, with the most impacted

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Shameika 01:38:42.280 --> 01:38:48.840

People, with the people that will be sitting and living with this project once you all are no longer there.

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Shameika 01:38:50.480 --> 01:39:10.320

And for my challenges, I will just say again, there were a lot of tools, but for us, we have our own organizational mission, We have things we wanted to see happen. We have funders, we have timelines and fiscal years to run with. So I'm sure you all deal with that as well.

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Shameika 01:39:10.960 --> 01:39:30.800

Grappling with those pressures, as well as trying to move at the speed of trust, certain communities speed of trust is a lot slower than others, right? And so finding that balance internally and externally was probably one of the big challenges I faced, and then I think the second one that we really faced, which.

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Shameika 01:39:31.440 --> 01:39:51.280

We really didn't know we were gonna get into this, until we were already into it. So lesson learned. We did not have the ability to do a really deep dive into the communities before we chose them, right? Because we have the sort of application pool, we already had those applications to go through. So doing that, scoring

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Shameika 01:39:51.320 --> 01:40:11.760

Them on top of a whole community desktop research project wasn't really possible. So when this sort of community land trust model that was occurring an Edgemere landed, it's different from anything that's happening across the state, different from anything that we've experienced in other communities, and so who

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Shameika 01:40:11.840 --> 01:40:32.240

owns the land after needs to be a part of that conversation. And that was a huge lesson learned for us. In Sidney, the applicants own the land, it's the town. They're good to go. They can make these decisions, but in the city that wasn't the case, and so thinking through sort of , after you are no longer a part of this project,

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Shameika 01:40:33.000 --> 01:40:52.720

what does it look like for the people that are there? Do you actually have your project set up in a way that, when you have your exit strategy, they are still set up for success. If they are not, what do you need to add to your project, to your resources, to whatever, to your project team.

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Shameika 01:40:53.360 --> 01:41:13.200

To ensure that once you leave this community, they are not dealing with more negative consequences than had you just not come to begin with. Cause many organizations do have to do this sort of parachute in and out of a community, and that's all right, there's a lot of communities to work in, but we need to do it thoughtfully and we need to do it in a way that sets community.

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Shameika 01:41:13.760 --> 01:41:33.680

to be sustainable and resilient and allowing the actual community members to lead successfully, not setting them up for failure, which unfortunately we see in many projects. We give people money and then say, you know, good luck. Money doesn't solve a challenge of capacity or of lack of

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Shameika 01:41:34.560 --> 01:41:55.040

never having resources before, you don't know what to do with the resources. And so really understanding what burdens resources may also bring to a community is helpful in thinking through sort of that exit strategy, being very thoughtful in when you leave and what that looks like is super important in planning, and planning that with the community

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Shameika 01:41:55.080 --> 01:42:15.520

ahead of time is important because they're gonna ask you questions you may not have thought of, right? The CLT folks said, Okay, we're gonna be stewarding land that's going under water - who pays for that. Where does that money come from after you give us that that land? They had very thoughtful questions that all the experts in the world. I don't think were thinking of that, right? And so making sure that you're really

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Shameika 01:42:15.880 --> 01:42:36.000

planning from the beginning and that when you leave, you are setting folks up for success is probably one of the biggest lessons that we learned. We still talk to the community. We still offer our community support. We offer grants, right? And capacity, help where we can, you know, we show up when and where we can as much as we can, and we

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Shameika 01:42:36.080 --> 01:42:56.480

did not play the traditional grantor role in terms of, we just gave the money and let it go, right? I showed up at the community meetings and, you know, if there was something that needed to change, maybe

project we sort of thought through figuring that out, right? So being actual partners, being actual support, actual people that they can call me on my cell phone or text me at any time.

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Shameika 01:42:57.200 --> 01:43:07.520

Even as a grantor, that's the role that we were playing to ensure that folks really felt like they had what they needed to do this project in a way that would truly be a benefit the community members.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:43:13.760 --> 01:43:34.240

So thank you for that, and thank you again. I think we're gonna wrap up because we're creeping up on two forty- five, but really appreciate Kristen and Shameika for taking the time to share all of this with us today and the amazing set of resources that we will be sharing in follow- up that they.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:43:34.320 --> 01:43:36.800

brought forward and.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:43:38.080 --> 01:43:48.520

Folks who have attended and are still on the line, look for a follow- up email probably next week with that information and thank you all for joining us today.

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Christine Vanderlan 01:43:50.400 --> 01:43:53.920

A virtual round of applause with our little emojis.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:43:59.840 --> 01:44:19.680

Thank you, both. That was really wonderful. It's really, and yeah, great to learn from your projects and I, I hope communities as they're planning out future projects right now it's grant season many people putting together their applications put a lot of thought into this community engagement work and make that.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:44:22.400 --> 01:44:28.880

First and foremost part of your, your work plan and, and how you're gonna go about things.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:44:31.840 --> 01:44:35.160

All right, have a great afternoon.

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Kristen Hychka, NYWRI, she/her 01:44:36.320 --> 01:44:39.000

Well, thank you guys. Thanks for the invitation.

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Ingrid Haeckel 01:44:40.160 --> 01:44:41.520

Thank you.