



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

File #: 2024-0525

Substitute

7/22/2025

File Status:

Public Hearing: YES ☐ NO ☒

Department: Board of Commissioners - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All Commission Districts

A Resolution to Establish the Environmental Justice and Sustainability Resident Advisory Group

Information Contact: Commissioner Edward C. "Ted" Terry

Phone Number: 404-371-4909

PURPOSE:

This proposed resolution requests the governing authority create and provide structure to a proposed Environmental Justice and Sustainability Resident Advisory Group.

NEED/IMPACT:

The Board of Commissioners recognizes the importance of equitable protection for the environment and residential health, the promotion of green jobs and energy, and addressing environmental injustice. This resident advisory group will further these goals by providing reports and recommendations to the governing authority.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No cost to the County

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the resolution.

**A RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB
COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO ESTABLISH THE
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY RESIDENT ADVISORY
GROUP, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the Governing Authority of DeKalb County believes resident input will assist the County in further providing equity and addressing systemic injustices in all areas of public policy and governance related to the critical issues of environmental justice and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Authority of DeKalb recognizes the benefit of aligning with former President Joe Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, which ensured that 40% of the benefits from federal investments in climate and clean energy go to communities that have been historically marginalized and polluted, and believes resident’s input will assist in meeting a similar goal within DeKalb County; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Authority of DeKalb recognizes the importance of equitable protection for the environment and residential health, the promotion of green jobs and energy, and addressing environmental injustice: and

WHEREAS, the Governing Authority of DeKalb County desires to enact a resolution to provide a structure to an Environmental Justice And Sustainability Resident Advisory Group.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Authority of DeKalb County as follows:

1. *Creation & Name.* The Governing Authority of DeKalb County hereby creates the Environmental Justice and Sustainability Resident Advisory Group (“Advisory Group”); and it’s two sub-committees: The Sustainability Committee and the Environmental Justice Committee.

2. *Mission.* To provide informed professional and resident advice to the Board of Commissioner for their use in policy decisions involving the issues of sustainability, green jobs, energy initiatives, and environmental justice.

3. *Purpose.* To advise the Governing Authority of Dekalb County on sustainability, green jobs, energy initiatives, and environmental justice.

4. *Specific Roles & Duties.* The Advisory Group shall hold organizational meetings which can be viewed and or attended by the public; prepare model legislation as it deems appropriate for consideration by the Board of Commissioners; monitor the progress and make recommendations towards DeKalb County’s current environmental efforts including but not limited to the county’s 100% Clean Energy and Transportation Transition Plan; provide quarterly updates to the Governing Authority, with presentations at the request of the Chief Executive Officer and/or Board of Commissioners in the forum as determined by the requesting party; and

conduct a scientific analysis, including case studies, and prepare an annual report. This annual report shall be completed and submitted to the Governing Authority no later than September 30 of each year. The first report shall be completed and submitted no later than September 30, 2026. The annual report shall include, at minimum, the following:

- a. A review and recommendation concerning facilities located in DeKalb County that are deemed high risk and/or potentially pose a threat to human health or the environment; such list shall contain historical and current demographic information, including health statistics of the population surrounding each site;
- b. A review of statutes, rules, and policies related to DeKalb County's siting and land use decisions; with a focus on sites which could pose a threat to human health;
- c. A review and recommendation of potential policies or operating procedures that would highlight considerations of environmental equality, environmental justice, and protection of high risk areas;
- d. A review and recommendation as to the advisability of creating a permanent Advisory Group or other entity to consider environmental justice issues in DeKalb County.
- e. A review and recommendation for the creation of a "DeKalb County Sustainability Officer" and "Environmental Policy Analyst" as positions within the DeKalb County Government.

5. *Membership & Voting.* The Environmental Justice and Sustainability Advisory Group shall be comprised of seventeen (17) voting members and one (1) non-voting member, totaling eighteen (18) members. Members must be residents of DeKalb County and of voting age. Members appointed by a Commissioner must reside in the district of the appointing Commissioner. No member shall hold elective office and upon qualifying to run for elective office a member automatically resigns from the DeKalb Environmental Justice Advisory Group. A quorum shall be comprised of nine (9) voting members and any advisory report, recommendation or model legislation to be presented at its quarterly update meeting must be approved and executed by no less than nine (9) voting members. The Advisory Group's Membership may be expanded by any City located in DeKalb, which shall be entitled to add one (1) member, if said City passes a resolution expressing a commitment to Environmental Justice and appointing a voting member.

6. *Appointment.* The Chief Executive Officer shall appoint three (3) voting members; each Commissioner shall appoint one (1) voting member; the DeKalb County House Delegation shall appoint two (2) voting members; the DeKalb County Senate Delegation shall appoint two (2) voting members; the DeKalb County School Board shall appoint one (1) voting member; the DeKalb Municipal Association shall appoint one (1) voting member; the DeKalb Soil and Water Conservation shall appoint one (1) voting member; and Decide DeKalb shall appoint one (1) nonvoting member. Any City which meets the requirement to add a voting member shall appoint one (1) voting member. In appointing members, the appointing official(s) shall endeavor to appoint individuals who are experts in the area of scientific analysis, review of existing and potential policy and legislation concerning Environmental Justice, or clean technology while also representing a broad variety of County interests, including but

not limited to representatives from impacted communities and environmental justice organizations.

7. *Term.* Each member shall serve for a four (4) year term or until a replacement is appointed, whichever is longer, at the pleasure of the appointing party, unless such term ends sooner in the manner set forth herein. Members may only be reappointed to two successive terms. Any vacancy in the membership shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as the initial appointment. If a member moves outside the County, that action shall constitute a resignation from the Advisory Group, effective immediately. The post of a member shall be considered automatically vacant if the appointing party determines the member is unable to exercise the duties of membership or if the member is absent from three or more consecutive meetings of the Advisory Group without a medical excuse or prior consent from the Chair. The initial appointees shall be appointed at the first regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting in September of 2025, and The Advisory Group shall have its initial meeting on or before September 30, 2025. The Advisory Group will sunset after the first term (four years), September 30, 2029, unless determined by the governing authority to continue a temporary or permanent Environmental Justice and Sustainability Resident Advisory Group.

8. *Annual organizational meeting.* The Advisory Group shall meet every other month but may meet more frequently if a majority of the members vote to do so. The two sub-committees shall meet in between the bi-monthly meetings of the Advisory Group. At its first regular meeting of each year, the Advisory Group shall, by majority vote of its full membership, excluding vacant seats, elect one (1) of its members to serve as chairperson and one (1) member to serve as co-chairperson. The persons so elected shall serve in these capacities for terms of one year or until a replacement is elected. The chairperson and co-chairperson may take part in all deliberations and vote on all issues. The chairperson and the co-chairperson may each serve maximum of two (2) terms. At the second regular meeting of each year, the chair shall appoint members to either the Sustainability Committee or the Environmental Justice Committee. At its first regular meeting of each year, the sub committees shall, by majority vote of each of their respective full membership, excluding vacant seats, elect one (1) of its members to serve as chairperson and one (1) member to serve as co-chairperson. The persons so elected shall serve in these capacities for terms of one year or until a replacement is elected. The chairperson and co-chairperson may take part in all deliberations and vote on all issues. The chairperson and the co-chairperson may each serve maximum of two (2) terms.

9. *Rules and Committees.* The Advisory Group is authorized, but not required to develop procedural rules, and is authorized to create committees to study various issues and make reports to the Advisory Group.

July 21, 2025

ADOPTED by the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

MICHELLE LONG SPEARS

Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

LORRAINE COCHRAN-JOHNSON

Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

BARBARA SANDERS-NORWOOD

County Clerk
Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer

ZACH WILLIAMS

Chief Operating Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WILLIAM J. LINKOUS III

County Attorney
DeKalb County, Georgia