



Summary Report of Townhall Meeting

Prepared by

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Hosted by Initiative on Coastal Adaptation and Resilience (iCAR), University of South Florida Saint Petersburg

Carter G. Woodson African American Museum, Sep 25, 2021

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NOTES FROM TOWN HALL, SEPT. 25TH

Section A: Ice-Breaker Flip Charts:

1) What brought you here today?

- ✓ To support what is being done, make connections and facilitate change, and ensure community voices are being heard and amplified
- ✓ To get more education on climate change and disparities
- ✓ To learn the best methods for environmental advocacy
- ✓ I am interested in the differences in how environmental issues impact different communities
- ✓ To discuss solutions to climate resiliency issues here in St. Petersburg and surrounding areas
- ✓ I care passionately about EJ issues and how they affect St. Pete, thought I would learn more
- ✓ Interested in advocating for change
- ✓ To understand the issue for local communities
- ✓ s caused by climate change
- ✓ I want to learn about climate resiliency

2) What do you hope to get out of this meeting?

- ✓ Learning more about research related to disparity in environmental impacts
- ✓ To find out more information on the research and work being done and how it can be put to good use and action in the community
- ✓ To establish connections and partnerships
- ✓ I would like to know what is the common point of interest about climate resiliency among people
- ✓ How I can get involved and help collaborate with neighbors
- ✓ Understanding what I can do to help my community and the people in it
- ✓ Best practices for advocacy
- ✓ Continued investments in community organizing, base building and infrastructure development
- ✓ Need to improve stormwater facilities/infrastructure

3) What are you most concerned about in your community?

- ✓ The rise of temperature and the cutting down of trees for more high rise “luxury living” buildings/ Lack of trees and shade where many rent, unsustainable as climate change creates rise in temperatures
- ✓ Fumes and water quality
- ✓ Flooding
- ✓ Even in inland neighborhood, gentrification and the pricing out as a result of climate change
- ✓ I am concerned with my community getting information, resources, and being included so we may be prepared and understand what’s going on
- ✓ Flooding and the ability of people to get the help they need
- ✓ Air Quality and Climate Gentrification

Section B: From Note Cards Later In The Discussion

1) What is resiliency?

- ✓ Ability to endure a hardship
- ✓ Ability to get back to how things were before
- ✓ Being able to sustain environment and living
- ✓ The ability of an individual or community to weather an exogenous shock
- ✓ Able to withstand negative environmental events because community has been prepared beforehand and educated about how to withstand and given the resources to keep themselves safe
- ✓ The ability to prepare for a stress and recover from a stressor
- ✓ Review and treat coastal flooding issues
- ✓ Plans to evacuate when major storm is coming
- ✓ Educate and lobby local and state government
- ✓ The ability of our community to anticipate, accommodate and positively adapt to and thrive amidst changing climate conditions by creating reliable and interconnected community systems and resources
- ✓ The ability to successfully mitigate climate changes

2) Barriers to Resiliency:

- ✓ As I get older, realtors and developers are creating a crisis in affordable housing. I am on a fixed income and I want to live in a neighborhood that has shade trees. I am concerned that high rents will force me into living in a

- neighborhood where trees are not planted, i.e., for lower income senior housing
- ✓ Also, red tide is an increasing problem
- ✓ Knowledge of risks
- ✓ Who to reach out to
- ✓ How to be prepared
- ✓ Money to prepare
- ✓ Disinformation
- ✓ Lack of information, advocacy and resources
- ✓ When it comes to my own life, cost and time limit a lot of what I can do. Economic stresses often trump environmental ones due to being more immediate
- ✓ Income levels, low income
- ✓ Housing issues, having housing that is able to withstand flooding and high wind
- ✓ Would like to buy a house in St. Pete but the areas that are not in flood zones are cost-prohibitive
- ✓ Finances
- ✓ Lack of resources, lack of access to resources that are made available to others, inaccurate data being shared, not collecting data that is relevant to marginalized communities, the emphasis on aesthetics over operation/function
- ✓ A huge concern is affordable housing, access to quality resources, gentrification of Black neighborhoods, displacement of long-time residents, shutting out of people who are not wealthy, corrupt government and policies
- ✓ Lack of awareness (or immediate concern) about the magnitude of the issue. It doesn't rank as high on the list of priorities as come other community challenges
- ✓ Infrastructure

Section C: Notes From General Conversation

- ✓ Concerns over red tide in the community
- ✓ POC are on the outskirts of red tide outbreaks
 - -economic impacts of red tide
- ✓ Inaction by state legislators on red tide: focus on mitigation, not prevention, dangerous for current economy and future
- ✓ -no legislation on red tide = green washing

- ✓ St. Pete water quality - need funds for more regular monitoring
- ✓ Need funds/budget commitments - easier to prevent a problem than to fix it
- ✓ Discussion of the concentration of high cancer risk in Midtown - why? Siting of hazardous waste facilities, problem of proof, need better data
- ✓ Historical experience of high breast cancer cases
- ✓ Consider a Public Health Module in CRIS to collect data needed to pressure officials and policy makers
- ✓ Is there any data or research on the perceived preponderance of breast cancer near the neighborhood where Tropicana was constructed?
- ✓ A Public Health module to CRIS should be considered to track such data by neighborhoods
- ✓ How are funds for resilience against climate change effects being allocated? CRIS seems a powerful tool to track this
- ✓ How is the date RE air quality collected? Perhaps we need to do a better job of explaining to the public how we do the science
- ✓ Is the City of St Petersburg aware of the data collected by CRIS/iCAR? - Yes but the lack of response from this area was highlighted. It's clear that more effective outreach strategies are needed to increase response
- ✓ Are there any studies on the hazardous waste site in the area and impacts on surrounding neighborhoods?
- ✓ Getting community input is critical. Community-building is important to prioritize major issues affecting the community and influencing the development of policies to address them
- ✓ What about other issues such as affordable housing? Does CRIS track this?
- ✓ There was concern about the community getting info and resources to be prepared for impacts of climate change and major storm events
- ✓ Flooding and the ability of people to be prepared
- ✓ Concern about fumes and water quality - follow up regarding improperly treated waste water being discharged; improved waste water plants needed; question as to whether this was local, state or federal responsibility; in response to the last question, the point was made that regardless of whether funding comes from local/state/federal sources, citizens can/must advocate locally for better systems and proper allocation of resources to these important issues to the community; it falls on citizens to hold policy makers/elected officials to their words/pronouncements
- ✓ Extensive discussion on red tide - a lot of attention but concern may be more for tourism/fisheries, which is not run by members from marginalized neighborhoods; a response pointed out that regardless of this, tourism and fisheries does affect the economy and wages and jobs, which does affect communities of color

Section D: From the conversation with Ken Welch, Former County Commissioner:

- ✓ St. Pete needs to look differently at what growth looks like
- ✓ Cannot further displace people in the transition to a new environment
- ✓ Be intentional about affordable housing – cannot contribute to gentrification
- ✓ Inclusive progress means getting community input; science based decision making
- ✓ Look at increasing renewable energy – county level
- ✓ Poverty reduction has not been as effective as hoped in the CRA
- ✓ Bus system needs to be fixed; tie this into hurricane evacuation
- ✓ Electric busses
- ✓ State government has interfered in implementation of solar power at community level
- ✓ Infrastructure improvement and development is key
- ✓ Huge concern about shade in poorer communities, rising heat
- ✓ Low-income communities having mold problems, lead problems – these need attention urgently

Section E: Overall Patterns in the Data:

- ✓ Heat, rising temps, lack of attention to landscaping for natural cooling
- ✓ Poor housing quality is compounded by climate change
- ✓ Flooding, hurricane prep and recovery, lack of funds/resources
- ✓ Long term planning to prevent problems, i.e., red tide; poor infrastructure
- ✓ Better poverty alleviation – financial resources increase resiliency
- ✓ St. Pete development patterns not conducive to equity and resiliency
- ✓ Need to prevent further gentrification, climate pressure on housing
- ✓ Concern about community health and intersection with EJ/Climate change

Section F: Overarching Concerns:

- ✓ Intersection of community health and climate and environmental threats
- ✓ Lack of affordable housing, poor housing stock, potential for climate change to worsen; threat of climate gentrification may worsen a bad situation
- ✓ Lack of ability to prepare for and recover from hurricanes and flooding
- ✓ Neglect of infrastructure to ameliorate climate impacts

EVENT PICTURES







TOWN HALL

Climate Resiliency and Justice In Our Community

COME TO THE
CARTER G. WOODSON
MUSEUM FOR
A COMMUNITY
CONVERSATION

Are you worried about losing wages after a hurricane or major storm?

Are those flooded streets dangerous?

If the power is out after a storm, how will you get food and stay cool?

Are those fish safe to eat?

Do you wonder what's in the air you breathe?

Join your neighbors and friends at an informal discussion about **Climate Resiliency and Justice**. Come and share your thoughts!

Free food and drinks provided!
Bring the family – kids' craft table

This gathering will be held outdoors.

MASKS ARE REQUIRED

WHEN: September 25th, 10 am to 1 pm

WHERE: Carter G. Woodson
African American Museum – Garden
2240 9th Avenue South

You will be provided with a digital link/QR code to access information and resources from your smart phone to help you prepare and recover from a major storm.

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