Members and Alternates Present: Sabiha Gokcen, Henry Clark, Stephen Linsley, Scott Perkins, Jimmy Rodgers, Michael Shimansky, Teng Chung Wu, Howard Adams (alternate), Ric Bonner (alternate), Christine Huff (alternate), Leslie Stewart (alternate), Absent: Pam Aguilar, Frank Gordon, Jim Payne, Scott Anderson (represented by alternate), Sharon Fuller (represented by alternate),

Staff: Michael Kent, Randy Sawyer

Public: Dennis Bolt, Cedrita Claiborne, ChuckMcKetney

1. Call to Order: Commissioner Gokcen called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Announcements and Introductions:

Michael Kent announced that there is an opening on the advisory board to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District in the Public Health seat, CalEPA has Environmental Justice grants available, the Concord Naval Weapons Station has a final Public Health Assessment available for the site, there is going to be a multi-cultural fair in North Richmond on July 30th, and a private company is going to conduct a free e-waste collection event on July 31 and August 1 at the Antioch fairgrounds.

2. Approval of the Minutes:

The June 23, 2005 minutes were approved 7-0-2. Move by Commissioner Bonner, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, with Commissioners Huff and Perkins abstaining.

3. Public Comments:

None

4. Hazardous Materials Programs Report:

Randy Sawyer, Director of the Hazardous Materials Programs, reported on several topics:

- AB 1078 concerning drug lab cleanup standards passed through the Assembly and is being considered in the Senate. He will continue to track its progress.
- A public meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2005 in Martinez to take input on the community participation program for the Industrial Safety Ordinance. This will be the second meeting with members of the public to discuss the format of participation meetings scheduled for the fall for facilities in Martinez and Bay Point.
• He is meeting tomorrow with the contractor who wrote the Environmental Impact Report for proposed amendments to the Industrial Safety Ordinance, which include amendments proposed by the Hazardous Materials Commission. The contractor is preparing responses to comments on the draft so they can complete the process.
• He has been providing input to the American Chemistry Council on the topic of Federal site security standards. They are considering the type of inherently safer technology requirements contained in the Industrial Safety Ordinance.

5. Planning and Policy Development Committee Report:

The Planning Committee received an update on the e-waste collection issue. They continued their evaluation of potential future issues to work on, including Indoor Air Quality, household hazardous waste issues, and transportation related incidents. They also discussed the California Energy Commission Report on the environmental impacts of the petroleum infrastructure and recommend that the Commission comment on a draft letter that Randy Sawyer is preparing to write. They will review this draft letter at their next meeting and bring back recommendations to the full commission at the September meeting.

6. Operations Committee Report:

The main item on the agenda was the California Air Resources Board land use guidelines which will be considered under new business.

7. Old Business:  None

8. New Business:

   a) Report from the Public Health Department on a recent Health Indicators report and the activities of the Asthma program.

Chuck McKetney, Director of the Community Health Assessment, Planning and Evaluation (CHAPE) unit gave an overview of a report his department did for the county hospitals on community health indicators. The report looked at 23 health indicators for 10 cities and one unincorporated area. The take-home messages in the report are:

The County population is:
• Increasing at a faster rate that the state
• Becoming increasingly diverse
• Higher percent of older (above 65) compared to state

The key health indicators:
• For most indicators the county does as well or better than the state
• But still has not met many national benchmarks
• People of color (African Americans in particular) have staggeringly high rates of death and disease compared to the rest of the county.

The Implications for Contra Costa Health Services are:
• More residents, shrinking resources
• Need to become more culturally competent and sensitive
• Much work still needs to be done on reducing health disparities
• Large percentage of older adults, more chronic disease.

Cedrita Claiborne, of the Public Health Department’s asthma program gave an overview of the program’s activities. She explained that the Health department does not have good data on the prevalence of asthma in the population, but only of the asthma hospitalization rates. In Contra Costa County the age-adjusted childhood asthma hospitalization rate is 21 per 10,000. This is significantly higher than the state rate of 18 per 10,000. In Contra Costa County African American children are 5 times more likely to be hospitalized than white children.

She went on to explain that her program does education and outreach to residents about indoor asthma triggers such as mold, second-hand smoke, pets, and pests; and outdoor triggers such as wood stove smoke and pollution from cars, trucks and industrial sites.

The County works with a west county asthma coalition and a countywide coalition that are soon going to merge. The west county coalition recently received a three-year extension of a California Endowment grant. The county also has programs in the schools to educate students and teachers, and programs to improve clinical management. Asthma advocates, community members trained about asthma triggers, also conduct workshops and in-home asthma trigger checkups that provide low-cost methods to reduce triggers. They also advocate for policy changes to reduce asthma triggers and improve asthma management.

A general discussion ensued. Commissioner Clark asked for an explanation of the higher rate of disease for African Americans, and if there are more resources going to this group. Dr. McKetney responded that the rates of poverty and discrimination are not that different in Contra Costa County than what we see in other states. There are some targeted programs for African Americans, and the Health Department does have a Reducing Health Disparities Initiative. They are just starting a group to look at African American disparities. Commissioner Clark also wanted to know if the deaths attributed to diabetes include health problems caused by diabetes. Dr. McKetney responded that that the impact is probably underestimated because it is a secondary cause to many illnesses. He also added that the relationship between the high death rate for diabetes in African Americans has some to do with poor education about the disease, but other factors are also important, such as exposure to cheap, bad food, and limited options for exercise.

Commissioner Clark also wanted to know if there was any explanation for the relationship of African Americans to sources of diesel pollution. Ms. Claiborne responded that there is an historical proximity because of housing patterns and other land use patterns.

Commissioner Rodgers asked if it would make a difference in outcomes if African Americans could afford better health care. Dr. McKetney said that studies of pre-term infant health found that wealthy African Americans did better than African Americans as a whole but not as good as
whites. This implies that discrimination is still a factor, as are issues related to accumulation of wealth, housing patterns and employment that have a long-term impact on health. Ms. Claiborne felt that the proximity of people living near sources of pollution has to do with income levels.

Commissioner Adams noted that the Deluged by Diesel report recommended keeping housing away from sources, but why not just have a blanket recommendation against building anything near major sources. Commissioner Clark added that the original purpose of the Richmond Parkway was to keep trucks out of North Richmond, but now they are building houses right next to the Parkway.

Michael Kent asked Dr. McKetney is there were any conclusions he could draw between the health indicators examined in his report and the location of hazardous materials in the county. He responded that about all you can say is that it is an environmental justice issue when you have low-income communities of color with high health disparities in the same area as sources of pollution. Commissioner Clark felt there is a relationship because if you have a person that already has compromised health, they will be more susceptible to chemicals, in addition to the lack of access to services and education.

Commissioner Linsley asked what was known about the sources of pollution that caused asthma or exacerbated asthma attacks. Michael Kent said much is know about what pollutants at what concentrations can trigger asthma attacks, mainly ozone, nitrous oxides, sulfur compounds and particulate matter. And a good deal is know about what are the sources of these pollutants and how much of these pollutants they emit. But because there are many asthma triggers besides air pollution, and the reasons for asthma attacks vary from person to person, it is not possible to say what contribution any individual source makes to the rate of asthma attacks in the county.

Dennis Bolt noted that in the early 1980’s most people could get access to health care universally. Over time this has been reduced, causing more calls to 911 for ambulances in poor communities and more trips to emergency rooms. This is a systemic problem with the health care system.

Commissioner Clark asked what will be the impact of a growing Hispanic population in the County. Dr. McKetney felt that it won’t change the disease rates much, but will change the amount of people in the categories. One note he made was that for immigrants, the longer they stay in the United States, the worse their health becomes due to changes in diet and community structure.

Commissioner Huff wanted to know if there has been an analysis of what contributes to the number of deaths recorded. Dr. McKetney responded that the report didn’t do this type of analysis. Commissioner Huff also wanted to know if there were other cancers besides the ones mentioned that had significantly higher than the ones mentioned. Dr. McKetney responded that other cancers were included in the all-cancer rate only. He also added that they have not shown a relationship between the location of the where cancers occurred and the causes of cancers. Commissioner Rodgers felt that the cancer risk in the County from air pollution came mainly from cars.
b) Review and discussion on the recommendations in the California Air Resources Board report, *Air Quality and land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*, pertaining to refineries and land use planning.

The Commission discussed the overall purpose of the report, which was to make recommendations to local land use decision-making bodies concerning the establishment of buffer zones around certain sources of pollution. For refineries, they did not recommend a specific distance, but instead recommended consulting with local air districts and other local agencies to determine an appropriate separation.

Commissioner Clark began the discussion by stating that he didn’t think that the outreach on the report was as good as it could have been, and more outreach is needed. He plans to bring this issue into the diesel work with land use issues. Commissioner Huff noted that the County-wide Environmental Justice effort hasn’t moved forward much in the last year, and maybe the Commission needs to look at this.

Chairperson Gokcen suggested that the Commission consider how the County could address the findings of the report at the same time they look at several other issues related to the implementation of the County’s Environmental Justice Policies for possibly developing recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. These issues are:

- The status of the Board of Supervisors ad hoc committee on Environmental Justice.
- The status of the CAO’s departmental workgroup on Environmental Justice.
- The status of the outreach and education programs conducted by the California Air Resources Board and the Governor’s Office of Policy and Research on their guidelines.
- The actions the Community Development Department has taken on the above-mentioned guidelines.

Chairperson Gokcen referred these issues to the Operations Committee and requested them to report back at the next Commission meeting.

9. Items of Interest:

The first Citizens Advisory Group to the DTSC-led clean-up of the Zenica site in Richmond is this evening. Commissioners Clark and Linsley have been appointed to the group.

10. Plan Next Agenda:

The commission will hear recommendations from the Operations Committee concerning Environmental Justice and the Planning and Policy Development Committee concerning comments on the California Energy Commission report.

11. Adjournment:  The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.