First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta

Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

12:30 p.m., Sunday, September 19, 2021

Zoom platform

In attendance: Debra Miller, co-chair; Jim Grecni, George Banziger, Mike Bailey, Adeline Bailey, Maggie Meyer, Rebecca Phillips, Vic Elam, and Ginnie McNeil.

Debra called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m.

**Minutesof the July and August meetings** were approved as submitted.

**George Banziger- Various Reports**

George summarized reports he had sent to committee members prior to the meeting. (His reports are attached at the end of these minutes.) He briefly discussed his efforts to bring the ReImagine Appalachia resolution to the Washington County Commissioners, his presentation to a community meeting with concerns about water quality, and his work with Citizens Climate Lobby. Citizens Climate Lobby meets Monday, September 20, at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

**Ginnie McNeil** questioned the funding sources for the ReImagine Appalachia initiative. **Rebecca Phillips** located a list of endorsers (You can see it at https://reimagineappalachia.org/about/). George agreed to investigate the group's funding.

**Clear into the Future Grant Projects Update: Rebecca Phillips**

Prior to the meeting, Rebecca updated progress on the pollinator habitat and solar charging bench projects. (Her report follows George's at the end of these minutes.)

**Pollinator habitat**

**Rebecca and Andrew Clovis**, habitat designer, have scheduled Phase Two planting at the pollinator habitat for October 2, a date when volunteers from Marietta College are available to help dig a trench for landscaping timbers that have been donated by Andrew's employer. More volunteers are requested: before the planting day, mulch and black plastic sheeting and materials holding it down need to be removed from the site; tools and volunteers to help with planting already purchased plants, which Andrew will lay out according to his design for the habitat. Another plant order will come in April for Phase Three of the project. Rebecca thanked GSC volunteers for maintaining a watering schedule over previous months, and she noted that a soaker hose system would make watering easier. She estimated a 300-500 foot hose and connectors would cost around $150. **Jim Grecni** volunteered to work up a plan for putting together and installing a soaker hose system.

**Proposed Marathon Oil habitat**

Rebecca also reported on how the Fort Street habitat was influencing further pollinator-friendly development along the Ohio River. During Harmar Days, a Marathon Oil company manager requested a consultation with Rebecca and Andrew about designating an area as a pollinator sanctuary. At the end of August, they walked the site, and Andrew will be designing the layout and suggesting appropriate plants.

**Solar charging bench**

Rebecca noted that **Michael Chisholm** had received word that the bench was ready to ship and will be delivered sometime in the last half of October. Presently, the plan is that the city will store it until such time as the Lock One Park actually breaks ground. If the committee doesn't want to wait, we will need to work with the city to find another location. An empty concrete pad near the gazebo in Muskingum Park was mentioned. Possible problems with vandalism, theft, and winter weather were discussed, perhaps making spring a better time to set up the bench. The difficulty of moving the bench to the new park later was raised. Rebecca will investigate feasibility with the city and with Engo, the bench manufacturer, allowing GSC to make an informed decision once the bench had been delivered.

**Adeline Bailey** will submit an article about GSC project work to the October *Confluence*.

**Indian Acres water well field protection**

No new information was reported about cars parking on the aquifer area near the ball field, although **Jim Grecni** said there are permanent-looking posts and cable fencing as well as no parking signs, which are blocking the area which had been of concern, perhaps indicating that the city has taken action.

**Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action Update**

Adeline reported that Angie Iafrate, the youth programming director, is currently running a contest for high school and college students, challenging them to create a 30-second PSA on climate issues for TV or radio broadcast. Submissions are due November 1. Contest rules and requirement information is available online at the youth climate hub: ecosparkmov.org.

MOVCA is also preparing a postcard campaign to WV members, asking them to contact Sen. Joe Manchin regarding his vote on the reconciliation bill.

Adeline expressed her appreciation for GSC members who attended the group's September Third Thursday program and participated in the discussion. She also thanked contributors to MOVCA's opinion column, MOV Climate Corner, that is published regularly in the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel*. Several writers are GSC members. MOVCA also appreciates letters to the editor on climate-related topics that have appeared in the *Marietta Times.* **Mike Bailey** said those letters as well as the Climate Corner columns are archived on the MOVCA webpage, movclimateaction.org.

Debra Miller also thanked the writers of letters to the editor for keeping climate crisis issues in front of the Marietta community.

**FACT Ohio Update**

**Ginnie O'Neil** reported that FaCT, Buckeye Environmental Network, and UU Justice Ohio are currently working against bills in the Ohio legislature that would permit AquaSalina, made from radioactive brine waste, to be sold for use as a deicer in the winter and dust reducer in summer. Several bills have been introduced to that effect.

Ohio Department of Transportation has discontinued purchasing the product for use on Ohio roadways. The manufacturer wants to sell it as a commodity available for residential use without regulations on application. FacT is soliciting video statements from faith leaders to emphasize the moral component in working against the bills.

Ginnie also announced FacT's annual meeting, to be held on Zoom on September 25, at 4:00 p.m. Keynote speaker is noted microbiologist Yuri Gorby, whose presentation is titled **"The Brine Battle: What Are the Risks of Unregulated Use of Waste Water from Oil and Gas Wells?**"

**Vic Elam** noted that fossil fuel companies are exempt from regulations on fracking materials and transparency about what is in them. If they don't use injection wells, what other crazy ideas—like radioactive deicer—might they come up with to deal with brine waste water? Vic said there's already enough gas and oil to sustain the use; why let them create more waste?

Jim remarked that they are just looking to get bigger, and mentioned a new gas-fired power plant going in off Route 70. Ginnie noted the Ohio Health project studies of various health symptoms that show a correlation with fracking.

**New business**

**Debra** showed Concerned Ohio River Residents' full-page ad in a recent issue of the *Marietta Times*, with information about barges carrying radioactive materials on the Ohio River. She supplied a link on the CORR site to a petition to stop the dangerous practice: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/no-barging-of-radioactive-oil-gas-waste-on-the-ohio-river>

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline Bailey, scribe

Next GSC meeting: Sunday, October 17, 12:30 p.m. (probably on Zoom)

Following are reports from George Banziger and Rebecca Phillips

**ReImagine Appalachia**

**Meeting with Washington County Commissioners**

**September 16, 2021**

Present: Commissioners Kevin Ritter, Charlie Schilling; MTimes reporter Michele Newbanks, Clerk Ben Cowdery, George Banziger

I introduced myself by stressing my experience in strategic planning, especially with Washington County Harvest of Hope and Washington County Health Department. I also mentioned the research I did 40 years ago on the relationship between economic indicators and mental health. Discussions in the Health Department have led us in the strategic planning group to conclude that economic factors and health inequities are inextricably connected.

I used the latter experience to transition to the endemic nature of poverty, economic hardship, and health inequities in Washington County and how these indicators of high unemployment and economic difficulty have persisted over time and resisted any attempts at change. I also noted that population decline in the county (census figures show that Washington County has dropped below 60,000 in total population) and the need to attract young people to the area.

Then I mentioned the unique opportunity afforded this region by the federal economic stimulus money available during this period through the infrastructure bill and reconciliation bill (assuming that they pass in some form), particularly programs to address climate change. This provides us with a unique opportunity to “reimagine Appalachia” and finally address the endemic aspects of economic hardship in this region. ReImagine Appalachia is a movement centered in the Ohio River Valley and includes four states: Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. I described how in the past serious federal investments have been made in the Tennessee Valley region (i.e., TVA) and Colorado River basin with successful outcomes; federal funds need now to be directed at the Ohio River Valley. I summarized the major features of the resolution and mentioned the groups which have endorsed it. An advantage to their endorsing the document is that federal officials notice this kind of endorsement when making decisions about where to allocate federal funds.

I mentioned that none of the features of the resolution is engraved in stone and that endorsing the document does not commit them to any particular action or project.

Both commissioners mentioned that they are supportive of the comments I made in my description and rationale for the resolution, but they have problems with the wording in several parts of the resolution itself. Mr. Ritter gave me a copy of the resolution with his comments—I have scanned and included that document as part of my report. He said that if changes were made, we might be able to find common ground, and he and Mr. Schilling might be supportive. I was asked to follow up with the two commissioners with a modified document.

**George Banziger**

**Meeting on Injection Wells**

**September 14, 2021, 6 p.m.**

**Farmers Daughters & Sons, Marietta**

Green Sanctuary Members Present: Adeline & Mike Bailey, George Banziger, Dawn Hewitt, Jim Grecni & Debra Miller, Rebecca Phillips

Other attendees: Several independent oil/gas producers in Washington County, several public officials including two county commissioners (Kevin Ritter & Charlie Schilling) and 94th Ohio District Representative Jay Edwards, representatives from Bordas & Bordas law firm

Moderator: Bob Lane (owner of Bob Lane Welding and independent oil/gas producer)

Speakers:

*Attorney Zach Zatezalo –* Representing Bordas and Bordas law firm from St. Clairsville & Pittsburgh, he described how his firm is involved in investigating the impact of injection wells on fresh water and on property rights. He made reference to collaboration with Cooper Law firm of Louisiana which has been involved in cases like this one and one of whose members has published a book, *Crude Justice.* The firm is looking at injection wells as well as the petroleum spill at Veto Lake. *.*

*Marco Kutofen –* (from Bordas & Bordas, joined via Zoom) A civil engineer, he described the questions that Bordas & Bordas will be looking at in this case including: how far the petroleum product has migrated, what were the land and water like before critical incidents, clean-up plans, how much petroleum product was involved, and who is responsible. Investigators include geologists, real estate experts and chemists. He mentioned that brine waste from injection wells is migrating.

*Bobby Anderson -*As owner of Anderson Drilling Inc. he described how oil wells have traditionally been capped and distributed a booklet. His booklet included information on how old wells were drilled prior to 1902, well logs, and some maps of his property. He described the oil/gas maps created by Professor Pepper of OSU. He also expressed his long-standing concern for clean drinking water in the context of successful oil/gas drilling.

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_??-* He described the danger of abandoned oil wells and how the migration of brine results in outflow to other production wells.

*Mark Fulton –* Owner of RAMMP Co, which first alerted Bob Lane to the infusion of brine waste at his production wells.

*Bob Wilson –* He is an independent oil/gas producer who has partnered with Bob Lane on these efforts to limit the spread of injection wells and on the legal case. He reported that 30 of his wells have been contaminated by brine waste and that he is losing about $500/day because of this contamination. He owns a total of 170 wells in southeast Ohio.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*McMaster –* A geologist and as a former ODNR employee, he defended the work of ODNR’s Division of Oil & Gas Resource Management as highly regulated and effective. He was questioned on these assumptions be several in the audience.

*George Banziger* – I described myself as concerned about safety and health of citizens of Washington County and about clean water in the county. My remarks were excerpts from the piece I had written that was published in *Marietta Patch* on August 23, “Injection Wells: Too Much Fracking Waste & Too Many Unanswered Questions.” I mentioned the review of ODNR reports on Class II injection wells that I made 9-10 months ago and all the questions I raised, which have not been fully answered by ODNR including information about the Redbird #4 spill and the spill that took place just outside Marietta on a pipeline owned by Deep Rock Disposal. It is my opinion, as stated in the article, that ODNR should halt all injection well activity or, at the very least, not issue any more permits for injection wells.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Farmer from western Washington County whose land was impacted by brine waste from Redbird # (I could not catch his name or most of his remarks because of audience noise).

At the end of the meeting Bob Lane asked for a show of hands on how many of those present would like another meeting. The majority responded affirmatively.

After the meeting Debra, Jim, and I spoke with a gentleman, whose name we do not know, who said that he manages the oil/gas wells for Bob Lane. He had photos of the petroleum spill at Veto Lake. In a phone call on September 15 from someone in the Buckeye Environmental Network I learned that the injection wells are the origin of this problem. There is simply so much brine waste being injected into the ground under so much pressure that it is disturbing old wells and causing them to spew oil & gas. Such is the gas with Veto Lake; there used to be an oil/gas well under what is now Veto Lake that was abandoned—or maybe even plugged—and that was fractured by the shear quantity of brine waste in the ground. There are injection wells within a short distance of Veto Lake.

**George Banziger**

**Report on Citizens Climate Lobby**

**August-September, 2021**

1. Meeting Sam Hattrup (Congressman Johnson’s Energy Policy Advisor). On August 17 Dave Ballantyne, Bob Chase (petroleum engineer), and I met via Zoom with Sam Hattrup. Our major agenda item was to cover the eight major points listed in the ReImagine Appalachia letter to Ohio congressmen in order to discover common ground we could have with the congressman on any of these issues. The two issues where there was agreement were: expanding broadband access and supporting job transition for those in the coal industry. On other issues Sam offered cautions or objections such as clean & efficient manufacturing jobs in renewable areas, modernizing the electric grid, promoting union-based jobs. Sam said he does not see any cohesiveness to Biden’s energy policy; he thinks that Democrats are unrealistic about their energy initiatives, such as dependency on China, use of rare-earth metals, and the timing of renewable energy goals. At one point when he was expressing disagreement with the issues proposed by ReImagine Appalachia, I asked if Johnson says he is not a climate change denier, then what does he propose to do to address climate change. Sam did not respond to this question. We plan to meet with him again in November via Zoom.
2. House Campaign. For most of the month of August CCL focus was on the House of Representatives to promote their inclusion of a price on carbon in the Reconciliation Bill. While this seems like a hopeless task when applied to our representative, Bill Johnson, it is important for him to know that many of his constituents do support carbon pricing. CCL National reported that there were 11,094 contacts made by CCLers with congressmen during this period.
3. Clip-Boarding Event on August 21. CCL-Marietta was fortunate to have the advice and assistance of Ms. Ellie Sparks, CCL-National staff member, who was visiting relatives in Marietta in late August. She suggested a clip-boarding event, whereby local CCL people would converse with people at the Marietta Farmers’ Market about contacting their representative (Bill Johnson in the case of Ohio residents and David McKinley in the case of WV residents) about including carbon pricing in the Reconciliation Bill. Dave Ballantyne, Vic Elam, Dawn Hewitt, Maggie Meyer, and Rebecca Phillips—in addition to Ellie-- participated in this event; most of us participated in a training session with Ellie on August 20. Over 100 people were contacted throughout the morning of August 21 at the Market. There was a handout describing the reasons for carbon pricing and the contact information for the congressmen that were given to everyone who was willing to accept one.
4. Senate Campaign. The focus of CCL in the Senate is on Democrats who are putting together the large Reconciliation Bill. CCL would like to optimize pressure on these senators to include carbon pricing in this bill in early September when the Senate Finance Committee was meeting. For Ohioans efforts were to be directed at Senator Sherrod Brown who is on the Senate Finance Committee. I sent a message to the CCL-Marietta with instructions on how to communicate with Senator Brown. I also wrote a letter to the editor which appeared in the September 9 edition of the Marietta Times, explaining the rationale for carbon pricing and urging readers to contact Senator Brown. Early reports from CCL national are encouraging about the results of this campaign; the Finance Committee is actively considering including carbon pricing in the bill. I submitted a similar article for the weekly Climate Corner series in the Parkersburg News & Sentinel and urged its readers to contact Senator Manchin with the same message; this will be published in the September 18 edition of this newspaper.
5. Carbon Pricing Campaign for the White House. CCL national has determined that President Biden can be influential with Congress about what appears in the Reconciliation package. To that end they launched a campaign to promote the inclusion of carbon pricing with the president. Here is the link for that campaign:

[**https://community.citizensclimate.org/topics/reconciliation-actions**](https://community.citizensclimate.org/topics/reconciliation-actions)

George Banziger

**Riverbank and Solar Bench Update Fort Street Pollinator Habitat**

• The pollinator habitat is thriving and attracting positive attention in the Harmar neighborhood. Some residents have joined the volunteer team.

• Marietta College has offered volunteers.

• Because of volunteer availability, Andrew Clovis and I have agreed on October 2 as the date for the planting of Phase Two. I will contact the people who signed on as volunteers at Harmar Days. Jackson Patterson of Main Street West is our contact with the college volunteers. Mark Swaney, a Fort Street neighbor, has offered to supervise the college volunteers who will dig out an edging at the top of the bank.

• Andrew will arrive early on October 2 to place the plants according to his design. Planting will start around 10:00 AM.

• Volunteers?\

• Tools?

• The solarization plastic and bamboo need to be removed before planting day. A team is needed for that task. Who is available and when?

• We have purchased an additional $180 worth of landscape plugs from Natives in Harmony Nursery. Cindy Brown picked them up today (9/18). Other plants have been ordered from North Creek Nursery and will arrive in April for Phase Three.

• Green Sanctuary volunteers have kept the plantings watered—thanks to all! It has been suggested that we install soaker hoses to make the job easier when the planting expands. If we choose to do so, I estimate that we will need between 300-500 feet of hose to cover the main bed. The area to the north of the staircase will also need water, but reaching that area with the soakers presents a problem because of the staircase.

**Solar Bench**

Michael Chisholm reported that Engo is shipping the bench to arrive in late October. There is no report as to when the city will begin work on the Lock One Park project. Question: Do we want to wait for inclusion in the park, which is intended to be a downtown showpiece, or seek a different location to get the bench placed sooner?

**Marathon Oil Pollinator Habitat**

On August 29th, Andrew Clovis and I met with Brian Harmon, assistant manager at the Marathon Oil trucking site on Route 7 to walk a potential pollinator habitat area. Andrew has agreed to create a basic design and species list for the site.

**Rebecca Phillips**