First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta

Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

12:30 p.m., Sunday, August 20, 2023

In person RE/Office Building - Parlor, with Zoom option available

In attendance: Debra Miller and Jim Grecni, Anne Sparks, Cindy Taylor, Rebecca Phillips, Maggie Meyer, Kelcey and Chris Jacobs, Dawn Hewitt (arrived late), and Adeline and Mike Bailey in person; George Banziger and Ginnie McNeil on Zoom..

Co-chair Debra Miller called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m.

**Minutes** of the July meeting were approved as submitted.

**Ecological Restoration project - Mark Krivchenia**

Mark was not able to be at the meeting, since some of his restoration work is scheduled for Sunday afternoons. He continues his work with the Broughton Nature Preserve and with the Friends of Ohio River Islands group.

**Reactivate “Sustainable Supper” (formerly Just Dinner) as outreach?**

At the last meeting the group discussed renewing GSC periodic offerings of a sustainable potluck meals (known in those times as “Just Dinners”) as a means of drawing attention to sustainable practices and reaching out to FUUSM friends and folks in the wider community to join us. Acting as a FaCT Ohio anchor congregation, GSC is looking for ways to reach out to other faith communities interested in ”green” activities. Additionally, George said that the Chalice Lighters grant received by the congregation encouraged focus on this sort of activity.

Trying to avoid conflict with other FUUSM and community events and functions, various dates were discussed, with the group settling on September 29 or September 30 as the best options. Debra Miller volunteered to check the Social Hall calendar and reserve the date(s) if available. The group agreed that the Sustainable Supper will be a planned “potluck” with a (potential) menu to be finalized at the September GSC meeting.

**FaCT Ohio update - Ginnie McNeil**

FUUSM is now an anchor congregation for FaCT Ohio, with Ginnie McNeil as liaison Ginnie reported that FUUSM’s letter of agreement with FaCT Ohio requires some minor text revisions. She will send Dawnthe new wording, so that she can confirm the congregation’s approval with the FUUSM Board.

In planning for a youth development program (the “Greenies” group) to introduce this fall, Ginnie has been investigating existing programs. She was very impressed with resources for youth and other ideas from EarthCare, a program developed for Unity Worldwide Ministries. One program involved looking at bird migration, which might be something Dawn, GSC’s birding expert, could help with as the migration season is getting underway. Rebecca suggested fall plantings of things to support the bird population might also fit. Ginnie also has a lead on a funding opportunity from a sponsor (Allen McGrew) who is connected with Quakers. She has arranged a Zoom meeting with McGrew for September 5, and invited Chris Jacobs, part of the Marietta Quaker group, to attend. Questions about a matching commitment and other stipulations will be discussed at that time.

Adeline mentioned a newly released curriculum for youth developed by Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth that may be of interest to Ginnie. She also suggested that Ginnie get in touch with the Chalice Lighters Grant committee to coordinate planning, since developing programs for youth is a major focus of their mission.

**Pollinator Habitat - Rebecca Phillips** (Report at end of minutes)

Rebecca reported that the habitat is growing well and doing what it is supposed to do for pollinators, but volunteers are needed to help with developing a new design to make it prettier. She said the Marietta Main Street connection will be very helpful as the project continues.

Ginnie asked about youth participation, and Rebecca said it would be welcome, although for some of the work at the habitat a waiver would be required, and proper protective attire is always necessary.

**Solar Charging Bench**

Mike Bailey reported that fogging up continues to be a problem for the signage display, and suggested a small solar-powered fan might be a solution. Adeline presented some draft ideas for modular signs that could be changed periodically. Signage will require moisture protection, perhaps by lamination.

**Updates: CCL, ReImagine Appalachia/SAI, Fracking on public lands/SLAPP - George Banziger (report at end)**

**Highlights:**

**CCL OH 6** meets Monday at 7pm on Zoom. George suggests that recent severe weather offers opportunity to focus letters to the editor or to legislators on climate change effects.

**ReImagine Appalachia** - Recent webinars focused on seeing opportunities in liabilities, such as using coal ash to create eco bricks or acid runoff to develop paints. **SAI,** a new research center being developed just off Route 7 South near the Eramet site, The facility combines data processing with waste heat recovery. Current plans are to heat a greenhouse to grow produce during the winter.

**Fracking on public lands/ Save Ohio Parks.** Industry’s main target is Salt Fork State Park. Comments can be registered online with the Ohio Oil & Gas Land Management Commission. Forms to comment - see the Save Ohio Parks.org website. **SLAPP** (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) issue. These lawsuits can be used by corporations to stop activists. Ohio does not have anti-SLAPP legislation.

**Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action**

Adeline mentioned the survey/contest investigating single use plastic products used in local businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores and encouraged GSC folks to register to participate. If MOVCA approves, she is hoping to extend the deadline for participation in the contest. The survey effort is a start on developing a guide to local businesses that use sustainable practices. Mike talked about the MOVCA letter of concern about WV gaining regulatory primacy over Class VI wells for injecting captured CO2 under state parks and wilderness areas. Several other environmental groups have signed on to the letter, and the action has received positive publicity.

**Announcements**

# Jim Grecni applauded the recently announced court ruling in favor of Montana youths in a landmark climate decision that may set a precedent for future cases.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline Bailey, scribe

Next GSC meeting: Sunday, September 17, 12:30 p.m. in the FUUSM RE/Office building.

**Addenda**

**Fort Street Pollinator Habitat Report from Rebecca Phillips -August 2023**

The habitat is healthy but in need of redesign to make it easier to maintain. After consulting with designer Andrew Clovis, the plan is to transplant the smaller species from the hillside, where they are being overtaken by larger, more aggressive plants, to the top or bottom of the slope, where they will be more visible and easier to weed around. This work is likely to take place in late September, after the weather cools.

The habitat is now part of Marietta Main Street's envisioned C4 District pollinator zone. Habitat coordinating committee member Dylan Holdren and I met with Main Street executive director Jen Tinkler on August 14 to begin developing plans for media outreach, volunteer recruitment, and additional work on the site itself.

Volunteers Andrew Clovis, Jim Grecni, Dawn Hewitt, Dylan Holdren, Debra Miller, Squish Rector, Joey Thomas, and I staffed a table at the Harmar Days Festival, where we distributed native plant seeds and information and held good conversations with a number of people. Eighteen names were added to the list of those willing to be contacted for workdays.

Work on the Hoffart-Henderhan garden has been delayed. Several sections have been planted, but unwanted vegetation has returned to other parts of the site and needs to be eradicated. A donor would like to add to additional apple trees to ensure pollination of the one planted by the Girl Scouts in the spring. More plants will be added after the weather cools. Marietta College's Sigma Kappa sorority has indicated interest in that project.

Because of a late start with concrete work on the part of the city, the staircase has not yet been replaced. I will be following up with Steve Wetz regarding a date as the current staircase has deteriorated further and is unsafe.

**Reports from George Banziger - August 2023**

**Citizens Climate Lobby**

Congress is currently in recess until right after Labor Day. The Agricultural Bill is being held up by the Freedom Caucus for their insistence on further budget cuts. Appropriation bills, especially in the House, are in jeopardy for a similar reason—it’s likely that there will be a continuing resolution for three months or so for the House & Senate to work out their differences.

CCL is focusing this month on the legislation, Technical Service Providers Bill (S1400 & HR 3036). This bipartisan bill will support additional TSPs that are experts who help farmers adopt conservation practices.

There is a lot of suffering under the extreme weather most are experiencing in the U.S., but these events do offer the opportunity to connect these phenomena to human-caused climate change. I have asked CCL members locally, and I ask GSC members also to make that case in letters to the editor.

**ReImagine Appalachia**

On August 9 I attended an open house of the new heat-exchange project being developed just south of Marietta. The project is an initiative by SAI Tech, a Singapore-based company, and its non-profit, Organization of Clean Energy & Climate (OCEC). The technology, basically, involves capturing heat from high-end computers, which conduct mining for crypto currency and training for artificial intelligence, and transferring this heat via water to places that require heat for agricultural purposes, manufacturing, and recreational needs. The Executive Director of OCEC is Dr. Tao Wu. Dr. Tao has asked me to serve on the advisory board to OCEC. This kind of facility, which would replace natural gas as a source of energy, is exactly the kind of energy-development project that ReImagine Appalachia has been recommending. This facility in Washington County is a research center, which will provide about 50 jobs when fully operational; it will also have an educational component affiliated with Washington State CC Dr. Tao is looking at an initial project that will support growing vegetables for addressing food insecurity using the greenhouse which is part of the development of the project.

On July 25 I attended a webinar sponsored by RA called “Targeted Employment.” Major take aways from this session were: Central Appalachia (eastern OH, WV, and easter KY) has a higher proportion of disconnected workers than the U.S. at large; Appalachian OH and WV have a lower portion of prime-age employment than the U.S. at large. This may be due to dislocation from fossil-fuel industries, the opioid epidemic, and involvement with the criminal-justice system; two states with considerable fossil-fuel industries, ND and WY, have trust funds provided by the fossil-fuel industry to support employment in other industries in the event of decline of those industries.

RA has a report, “Turning Liabilities into Opportunities,” which describes how waste products like coal ash can be used to extract rare-earth elements, iron oxide for artisan paint, and “ecobricks” for construction. I can send a summary of this report to any who would like it.

**HB 507, Fracking Public Lands in Ohio**

Everyone in Ohio who is concerned about this issue is encouraged to send comments on the “nominations,” i.e., requests for permits, for fracking sites to the Ohio Oil & Gas Land Management Commission. Forms for these comments can be accessed at saveohioparks.org.

Another issue that came up in this context, which was raised by Randi Pokladnik, is SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation). This issue is used by corporations to silence activists whom they regard as excessively critical. Ohio does not have any anti-SLAPP legislation. WV does.