First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta

Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

12:30 p.m., Sunday, November 19, 2023

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

In attendance: Dawn Hewitt, Jim Grecni, Debra Miller, Patty Troisi, Rebecca Philllips, and Adeline and Mike Bailey in person; George Banziger, Anne Sparks, and Lace Lynch on Zoom.

Co-chair Dawn Hewitt called the meeting to order at 12:43pm.

**Minutes** of the October meeting were approved as amended.

**Solar Charging Bench Progress** - The solar charging bench was ceremoniously dedicated on November 13, with a good turn-out of GSC members and others from the congregation, as well as representatives from Marietta’s city council. Since no media were in attendance, Dawn submitted an article and picture afterward, which was published in the *Marietta Times*. Mike and Adeline Bailey had worked on the display signage to include a couple of changeable areas, but some further modifications are required. Cindy Taylor suggested adding information about solar power and other environmental topics or events. The need for a subcommittee to keep content current on the announcement areas of the sign was discussed, including getting keys for updaters to install the changeable signage.. Adeline and Dawn have volunteered to deal with immediate updates until other volunteers step forward. Vic Elam’s suggestion that long-term planning for signage updates could be coordinated with the proposed new Wayside Pulpit was presented to the Board of Trustees, who agreed with the formation of a new committee to keep consistent messages to the community on both signs. The potential for issues with “controversial” messages was discussed, (such as suggesting action on the Save Ohio Parks campaign). George Banziger commented that the Chalice Lighters grant encouraged outreach that showed UU principles and practices, one of which would be care for the environment.

**Ecological Restoration projects - Mark Krivchenia**

Mark was unable to report at the meeting, as he was working on seed collection/processing

# Air Quality Monitor for FUUSM

# Decisions about Jonathan Brier’s proposal that GSC sponsor a monitor at FUUSM is on hold until more information is presented.

**Updates: CCL, Fracking on public lands/Save Ohio Parks, Injection Wells, ReImagine Appalachia, SAI /OCEC, new Devola project - George Banziger (report at end)**

**Highlights:** .

**Fracking on public lands/ Save Ohio Parks.** The recent OBLM meeting for approval of nominations to bidding resulted in an uproar of objections from SOP and other attendees. George commented that we should all be outraged. Anne Sparks, who also attended the meeting, said that issues of climate change were not considered, all parcels were approved, and that Salt Fork would be surrounded by fracking operations. She suggested that articles available from the AP and Cleveland.com for help in understanding the issues and getting the word out to the public. A video on the SOP website is also helpful. Both George and Anne said contacting Governor DeWine with objections and concerns was the best action for now.

**ReImagine Appalachia** has their annual strategic planning meeting on the agendas (Please see George's report for date).

**CCL OH 6** meets tomorrow (Monday, November 20) at 7 p.m. on Zoom. The Mahoning Valley chapter will conduct the meeting.

**Congressman Bill Johnson** has been offered the presidency at Youngstown State University; no report of his decision yet.

**SAI/OCEC projects** George is working as a volunteer with Organization of Clean Energy and Climate, a new, non-profit research center being developed just off Route 7 South. OCEC is seeking federal grant funding for a solar array to supply electricity to SAI.Tech, the bitcoin mining data processing center producing the waste heat that will be directed to a greenhouse operation.

**Devola native plant corridor** George has introduced a project to plant land disrupted by recent sewer line work in Devola with native seeds. He has had good response from the community. Rebecca Phillips said she will share seeds and information originally prepared for her class on native plants.

**Injection Wells** Anne reported that the court-ordered closing of several Athens area injection wells has been appealed, resulting in a stay on the closings until evidence is presented. A hearing is scheduled for December 5. (Migration of the radioactive fracking “brine” into Washington County production wells and water is part of the contamination being investigated.)

**FaCT Ohio updates**

**"Greenies" program: Ginnie McNeil** sent Dawn information about the project, which is currently on hold. The Friends group grant program declined to fund the project at this time. Ginnie is looking at next steps.

**December Confluence submission: Green holidays**

To create an article for the December *Confluence*, Dawn asked for ideas for celebrating the holidays in more environmentally conscious ways. Patty Troisi will send her a list of ideas; Rebecca said donate instead of buying gifts for those who already have enough; Cindy suggested shopping local and shopping at farmers markets.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Adeline Bailey, scribe

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

**Addenda**

**Reports for Green Sanctuary Meeting – November 19, 2023**

Save Ohio Parks

 Oil & Gas Land Management Commission meeting November 15 (I attended):

 -Most “nominations” approved; two parcels not approved- one erroneously claimed as ODNR property is actually OSU property; some nominations around Salt Fork S.P. were redundant. As part of their approval process, the Commission adopted (and slightly revised) an “addendum” prepared by the Executive Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. This addendum included items such as 500-ft set back for well pads, prohibition from using state park roadways, limiting noise and light from fracking, restrictions during hunting seasons, requirement for new steel in casings). I am skeptical about the ability of ODNR to enforce these restrictions.

 -Next step – bids in January

 -Press coverage- articles in Columbus Dispatch, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Marietta Times (November 16 edition), AP, and others

 -I have photos – will display on Zoom at our meeting.

 Salt Fork State Park will be completely surrounded by fracking well pads and equipment.

 [-The only option at this point to stop this process is to contact the governor (write or call):](https://www.google.com/maps?daddr=39.960602,-83.000503" \t "_blank)

 [Riffe Center, 30th Floor, 77 South High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-6117. (614) 644-4357](https://www.google.com/maps?daddr=39.960602,-83.000503" \t "_blank)

ReImagine Appalachia

 Strategic Planning Summit – January 16-17, 2024

Citizens Climate Lobby

 Mahoning Valley Chapter will plan and preside over November 20 meeting of CCL OH6.

 Congressman Bill Johnson offered presidency at Youngstown State University. Not yet decided.

 Unscheduled meeting I had with him on November10 at the Galley Restaurant

Organization of Clean Energy & Climate

 Seeking federal funds for solar panel array to power computer servers. Other options for electricity: power purchase agreement with Pickering Electric, river water idea from Buckeye Hills Regional Council.

 Seeking partnership with Nature-Miracle for three-dimensional unit in existing greenhouse. OSU Extension Agent, Marcus McCartney, advised vertical indoor gardening (30 feet).

 Other ideas for applications of recycled heat: hot water for hospitals (discussions with Memorial Health Systems for new facility in Athens), oil & gas industry (use heat instead of chemicals for evaporating brine waste), building technology.

 Applications for local grants submitted in September: not awarded by Marietta Community Foundation nor by Parkersburg Area Community Foundation. Will re-apply to MCF.

Native Plant Corridor in Devola

 My message on Next Door Devola sent on November 13:

 *The Devola sewer work and resultant disturbance to our domestic landscapes give us a unique opportunity to carry out small steps toward ecological restoration. Americans spend, collectively, three billion hours on lawn care per year. Lawn irrigation consumes over eight billion gallons of water daily. Over 40 million acres of U.S. land are taken up by lawns; this compares to 20 million acres of national parks. The machines that we use to mow our multitude of lawn areas are not required to have emission controls. By contrast, a healthy ecosystem built upon native plants produces oxygen, cleans water systems, captures carbon, builds topsoil, and prevents floods.*

*Another advantage to an ecosystem based on native plants is that this biosystem is friendly to pollinators, which are in trouble. As one group of pollinators, honeybees are essential to the multi-million-dollar fruit industry. Moving away from non-native grasses that are unfriendly to helpful insects and to the environment in general will also save us some time, money, and effort otherwise spent on lawn mowing.*

*Each household in Devola whose yard has been disturbed by the sewer installation can take a small step toward ecological restoration by designating a portion of the yard to native plants and “shrink the lawn,” to use the slogan offered by Dr. Douglas Tallamy of the U. of Delaware. We have a source of native plants and seeds in nearby Mineral Wells WV (nativerootsinc.com). I have information on how to prepare a plot for native plants and seeds (**gbanziger497@gmail.com**), as does our OSU extension agent, Marcus McCartney, who is willing to provide advice on this matter and on soil testing. Of course, with the overpopulation of deer in our community, we will need to concentrate on deer-resistant plants, of which there are many choices, e.g., bee balm, mountain mint. If enough people embark on this investment in ecological restoration, we can establish a native-plant corridor in Devola that is friendly to pollinators and other important insects. I will start a small plot of my own in the mostly sunny area of our backyard near our new sewer device. (re: attached photo). BTW, late fall is a good time to put in native plants and seeds.*

 Several positive responses and questions resulted. Over 550 views!

George Banziger