**Reports from George Banziger to Green Sanctuary Committee**

**For meeting of January 21, 2024**

**George Banziger**

ReImagine Appalachia – I participated in the online two-day Strategy Summit conducted by RA. The first session (January 16) covered clean & efficient manufacturing in Appalachia. Presenters included projects involving clean-energy manufacturing in Ohio, clean-energy supply chains, coal-field development, outreach programs for survivors of abuse, training in processing for critical minerals, hemp manufacturing (as an alternative to plastics), Solar Holler (transforming coal fields to solar fields), projects targeting job opportunities for those previously involved in the criminal justice system. In the break-out session, “Make What in Appalachia?” several ideas for manufacturing in Appalachia were raised including: biomaterials (industrial hemp), green steel (defined as utilizing sustainable practices from mining and transport to heating from hydrogen rather than coal, and using scrap steel), transporting with green-fueled barges, and materials for LEED-certified buildings, repurposing abandoned oil/gas wells for geothermal energy, and processing rare-earth metals from coal tailings.

 On the second day (January 17) of the Summit presenters were recipients of U.S. Department of Energy awards and included projects involving growing food crops in rural WV, training formerly incarcerated persons (one project utilizes training in solar installation at Blue Rock Station with the Warmkes), promoting union jobs in central Appalachia. I was the note taker for a break-out session on community benefit agreements (a requirement for applicants to Department of Energy grants). CBAs involve principles related to local hiring, hiring of under-represented groups, health & environmental standards, employment at prevailing wages with health benefits, access to public transit for workers, affordable housing, community amenities (e.g. green spaces, access to grocery stores) etc.

Citizens Climate Lobby (I serve as the group leader for the Marietta chapter)– Our Marietta CCL chapter is working toward greater collaboration with the Mahoning Valley chapter (Youngstown area) and toward that end has developed a press release explaining this development. Members of the Akron-Canton CCL chapter, most of whom are in OH 06 CD, are interested in this collaboration as well. Sam Hattrup, Congressman Bill Johnson’s Legislative Director has agreed to meet with us one more time (January 23) even though Johnson’s last day officially is January 21. Johnson has been hired as the new president of Youngstown State University. Sam cannot do any lobbying, and we cannot lobby Johnson’s office until a successor is officially in place. This will be done after the primary election (March 2024) and after a special general election (June 2024) for Johnson’s successor. We have been lobbying Senator Brown’s office about some recent legislation (Clean Competition Act).

Organization of Clean Energy & Climate (I serve on the advisory group of the OCEC non-profit)- There have been several potential and promising applications for the heat-exchange project that utilizes & captures heat from data centers at the project site (between Marietta & Belpre, just off Route 7. The 5,000 sq ft greenhouse has already been built and will be utilized for growing vegetables during winter months. A new opportunity for the greenhouse has emerged in the past month in the form of a partnership with Rural Action, which will utilize a portion of the greenhouse for cultivation of native trees. I am preparing a grant application to the Anterio Foundation to support this activity.

 The most significant project being developed relates to the proposed aquatic center, which will likely utilize the technology of OCEC for its heating. Dr. Greg Krivchenia, who has provided a generous lead gift for the project, and Mark Krivchenia have organized a group to plan this effort. One site, along with other options, to be considered for this aquatic center is the OCEC project site.

 A fish hatchery is currently being built at the project site and will begin operation soon.

 Dr. Tao Wu, Executive Director of OCEC, is preparing a grant application to the U.S. Department of Energy involving “hydropower,” which will utilize special devices to harness the power of Ohio River water and heat for the Marietta Water Treatment Plant.

Devola Pollinator Project – With the help of Gary Conley of Rural Action and Jen Johnson of Native Roots Inc, I am acquiring seeds of native plants and some native plants themselves for planting in my own plot. The plot is in an area disturbed and dug up for the recent Devola Sewer Project. I have asked other residents of Devola, whose yards are similarly disturbed, to do the same and have received statements of interest. I am considering providing the seeds which I am purchasing to others in Devola in order to give them a “nudge” toward the development of a pollinator corridor in Devola.

Save Ohio Parks – No update on activities during the past month. The organizing group for this project is meeting this weekend.

Injection Wells – I talked to Bob Lane who has a lawsuit against injection well companies. Bob Lane’s attorneys went to appeals court in Pickaway County. Discussion in the court led the attorneys to believe that at least one judge seemed favorable to Bob’s case. No judgment yet from this court yet. Bob told me that the successor named to the state senator position of Frank Hoagland (our district), Brian Chavez, is the owner of Deep Rock Disposal Co.