

Public Policy and Environmental Action Team Agenda
June 8, 2021
6-7 PM

Facilitator: Sarah Braik

Minutes: Charles Skold

1. Reflection (Sarah)

“Beloved Community is what forms...when you and I are as committed to each other’s flourishing as we are to our own. It’s the community where my first instinct does not need to be protection of myself, my group, my turf, my perspective, because I trust that you and others are already holding me and my community as sacred. That leaves me free to cherish and nourish the other and what she holds sacred. Beloved community is a mutually deferential community that isn’t driven by ego and the desire to guarantee my own flourishing; it’s driven by the desire to participate in a diverse community of peoples who yearn to see each other grow into all that our Creator made us to be ... together.

-The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Evangelism and Reconciliation

2. Diocesan and legislative updates - John Hennessy

- Pine Tree amendment
 - Proposes a constitutional amendment to guarantee Mainers clean air and water
 - Needs to be passed by 2/3 legislature
- Voting rights bills that we supported passed
- Gun safety bills we supported likely not to pass
 - Democrats in the second congressional district unlikely to support
 - Gun lobby still has a lot of power
 - Gun safety advocates rarely get advocacy turnout as high as the other side
- Governor’s budget going to health and human services
 - In areas that have been underfunded for years
 - In areas hit by the pandemic
- Legislature is still meeting and working very fast to get through a lot of bills
- Committee on Indian Relations
 - Matt Dunlap is leading the committee
 - Matt is a lifelong Episcopalian
 - Matt met with Bishop Brown and John Hennessy
 - Tribal sovereignty bill is still in negotiation for the next session
- Bishop Brown gave the opening prayer at the first session back at the Statehouse

- Great symbolism with Bishop Brown walking alongside Ryan Fecteau, the first openly gay Speaker of the House in Maine
- Bishop Brown also had a great meeting with the Governor

3. Ongoing Matters

- Diocesan resolutions
 - Ideas to consider
 - Ban solitary confinement
 - Currently is limited, but we could move to “ban”
 - There’s currently a bill being considered in the legislature-John doesn’t know anything about it
 - Need to look up the research on the harm of solitary confinement
 - Consider the scriptural basis for opposing solitary confinement
 - Volunteers to work on this proposal
 - Dick Farnsworth, Charles Skold, others needed
 - Declaring a climate emergency
 - Being proposed by the Diocesan Climate Justice Council
 - Tribal sovereignty
 - Being proposed by the Committee on Indian Relations
 - Deadline is 1st Monday in September
- Bridging the two Maines
 - Possible Zoom conversations between paired District 1/District 2 or rural/urban parishes using [Conversations across Difference](#)
 - Shall we devote an entire meeting in July or August to discussing this?
 - Yes, Devote the August meeting
 - Encouraged to not start with a specific conflict issue, but to use the guiding questions
- Field trip Wolfe's Neck Barn and Garden Tour
 - Friday June 11 3 PM, followed by drinks and nibbles at Sallie Smith’s shortly after 4.
 - RSVP to Sarah if you have not yet. Sarah will organize carpooling.

7. New Matters

- [Poland Spring sold to investment firm](#)
 - What is our response? Here is a response from a member of 350 Maine: “In my opinion, we are closing in on a time when water becomes more valuable than oil. Unlike oil, water is a necessity for life. We need to find a way to protect this resource in an equitable way. In a capitalist society, everything with potential value becomes commodified unless people demand otherwise. We need to get ahead of this issue NOW!” The Chicago exchange is now selling water futures. We didn’t have time to discuss this but will add it to next month’s agenda.

- Tree canopy
 - Liz Parsons has been working on stronger tree protections
 - Talking points
 - Last year, Portland and South Portland adopted a joint Climate Action Plan, [One Climate Future](#). Multiple strategies for carbon reduction and increased community resilience involve **the integral role of tree canopies**. See for example: TLU 1.7; CR 2.2; CR 2.5; CR 4; CR 5.
 - Mature trees sequester carbon in multiple ways while also offering significant cooling through shade protection. It can take as long as **30 years for new, smaller trees to match what is lost when mature trees are removed**.
 - There is a clear social justice aspect to tree canopy matters in urban areas. The **disparity between low-income and high-income neighborhoods, known as tree equity**, is well-documented across the country. In Portland currently there is intense emphasis on increasing density which typically plays out by constructing buildings with maximum lot coverage. This is especially true with affordable housing projects. Lack of attention to natural surroundings in such cases raises questions about the extent to which lower income people are seen as needing/wanting/deserving trees/beauty/fresh air and so forth.
 - Portland's overall tree canopy has remained at about 25% for the past few decades, with the peninsula being a few percentage points below off peninsula. Given the climate crisis, foresighted urban communities around the country are now working towards 40% tree canopy coverage. This is an aspirational goal for Portland that will involve concerted public and private effort.
 - Based on tree canopy provisions in One Climate Future, Portland Climate Action Team members have suggested to our Sustainability and Transportation Committee that they follow SoPo's lead as the S & T Comm seeks to strengthen and expand our Heritage Tree Ordinance
 - Support the South Portland tree ordinance
 - Perhaps South Portland Mayor may meet with us
 - Perhaps we can write emails or op-eds as individuals or as a committee
 - Mary will get more information and we will discuss particulars at our next meeting
 - [South Portland councilors examine tree protection ordinance: The ordinance could impact anyone in the city wishing to cut trees.](#)
- Google groups
 - Migrating our email list to a user-friendly google group
 - Charles make sure to send out directions with the new google group system
- Ministry of the Month at St. Luke's
 - We are ministry of the month in October and will need volunteers for a table at Coffee Hour-also will need a sign-up sheet, handout and display. Charles and/or Sarah will need to report the vestry at its October 20 meeting.

- Land Acknowledgment
 - Shall we start each meeting with a land acknowledgment?
 - *Discussion tabled for next meeting*

8. Action items

- Banning solitary confinement proposal
 - Dick and Charles to compile resources
- Field trip to Wolfe's Neck Farm
 - Sarah organizing, everyone RSVP
- Tree canopy
 - Mary to send along updates
- Google groups
 - Charles to get the "google group" email system up and running
 - Contacting your legislators about upcoming bills, especially the Pine Tree amendment

9. Next meeting

Tuesday July 13, 2021, 6-7pm via Zoom