

Public Policy and Environmental Action Team Agenda

March 9, 2021

6-7 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83128114367?pwd=dFpKUHprVVlndnhhTWRuenNVSnZlQT09>

Or dial +1 929 436 2866

Meeting ID: 831 2811 4367

Passcode: 330947

Facilitator: Charles Skold

Minutes: Sarah Braik

Present: Heather Murdoch Curry, Liz Parsons, Meredith Tipton, Charles Skold, John Hennessy, Eric Buch, Mary Linnemann, Barbara Ryland, Connie Binham, Ralph Cordes, Gus Goodwin, Kathleen Coughlan, Dick Farnsworth, Sarah Braik, John Leddy

Reflection (Charles)

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won
James Weldon Johnson

Diocesan and legislative updates - John Hennessy

- a. [130th Legislative Report](#)
- b. MCC meets tomorrow and John will bring our input
- c. LD 2 discussion begins tomorrow at Civic Center-our #1 priority- racial impact statement for every bill, many of us testified for it. This was a party line vote- Republicans wanted to make a general impact statement which strips the legislation of any impact. We want to pass the majority report. Please call your legislator to support it. Legislative staff in each committee will make that determination. Pilot program first then will expand to full racial impact statements. A lot of the piloting occurred last year.
- d. Voting legislation

- i. LD 253 - An Act to Strengthen Maine's Election Laws by Requiring Photographic Identification for the Purposes of Voting (Cebra - R - Naples) OPPOSE
 - ii. LD 557 - An Act to Require Photo Identification for the Purpose of Voting (Johansen - R - Monticello) OPPOSE
 - iii. LD 580 - Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Regarding Early Voting (Moriarty - D - Cumberland) SUPPORT
 - iv. UU has been leading voice of faith in good government bills, but PPEAT should present written testimony to speak for the diocese-we have time to organize our thoughts and John will help format and submit. Liz, Charles, Dick and Gus will work with John H. Stacy Abrams urges us to contact our federal legislators to support H.R. 4 the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2020. John is meeting Thursday with Sen. Collins to talk about H.R. 1 and 4. King, Pingree and Golden are already supporting.
 - v. Betsy Sweet principal lobbyist for open primaries-more people will engage in the primary and be invested in the outcome-though diehard Republicans and Democrats tend not to be in favor. This evens out the intense partisanship when moderates and independents participate.
- e. Legislation related to Maine Climate Council goals
- i. [LD 340 \(link\)](#), An Act To Allow for the Establishment of Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Programs, is currently under consideration by the Legislature's Committee On Energy, Utilities and Technology. This bill would implement one of the funding recommendations of *Maine Won't Wait*, and the committee has scheduled a work planning session for the bill on March 4th.
 - ii. [LD 226 \(link\)](#), An Act To Limit the Use of Hydrofluorocarbons To Fight Climate Change, is currently under consideration by the Legislature's Committee On Environment and Natural Resources. This bill would implement *Maine Wont Wait's* recommendation to replace hydrofluorocarbons with climate-friendly alternatives in Strategy B, Modernize Maine's Buildings, and the committee has scheduled a public hearing for the bill on March 15th.
 - iii. Diocesan Climate Justice Council submitted their testimony supporting the Pine Tree Amendment ([LD 489](#)). Chloe Maxmin wrote the legislation. [The Green Amendment Newsletter](#)
 - iv. Last session bill around tribal sovereignty-there was a slight opening for increased gambling in Maine but we didn't make a big deal about it. Now there is a stand alone bill to open Maine up to more gambling on tribal land. The Episcopal Church is opposed to gambling. We defeated the Sanford Casino but not the Bangor Casino a few years ago. If we oppose

this legislation are we setting up a double standard by allowing private corporations but not tribal organizations to benefit from gambling? Tribal officials cannot collect property tax because all the land belongs to the tribe, not to individual owners, so how can they raise revenue? This is very challenging. If we could get the tribal sovereignty bill passed then the responsibility would be on the sovereign tribes, not the voters. John recommended that we not take a stand on this gambling bill and put our weight on the tribal sovereignty bill. Can legislature help tribes find other ways to raise revenue? This was tried 18 years ago but nothing has happened. Penobscots tried mail order pharmacy but got into legal problems. We shall discuss this again next month.

- v. We will oppose religious exemptions for vaccines
- vi. There will be 6+ gun safety bills and Episcopal Peace Fellowship will ask us to support
- vii. Frances Perkins homestead to be a national heritage site-John testified for this. She was a lifelong Episcopalian. This would cost \$100,000, which some object to. This died last year in appropriations.
- viii. Restorative justice, including closing Maine Youth Center will be big this year. Another bill avoids placing youth in detention but applying restorative justice instead. Restorative Justice is a lot of work and needs buy-in from everyone. Needs to be lots of training and constant support.

Ongoing matters

- f. Rachel Talbot Ross/Pete Buttigieg update (John)
 - i. No response from either Rachel very busy but lives 3 doors down from John
 - ii. Should we meet with Sen. Collins to be bipartisan?
- g. Diocesan Climate Council update (John)
 - i. This Council is open to anyone in the Diocese who wishes to join. Rev. Jenny Reece is the Chair. Contact Sarah or John if you would like to join or FMI.
 - ii. Diocesan Earth Day service is being planned by Eleanor Prior and a few members of the Climate Justice Council for a date TBD
- h. Portland-South Portland [One Climate Future](#) plan and the [Maine Climate Council's plan](#) and also how this Team could be involved. Julie Rosenbach or Lucy Perkins, or a member of a Council working group to be invited to one of our meetings. Mary hasn't contacted them yet but will-for May or June-half hour session.
 - i. [Equity subcommittee](#): co-chairs Ambassador Maulian Dana of the Penobscot Nation and Portland City Councilor Spencer Thibodeau.

- i. Bridging the two Maines: Possible Zoom conversations between paired District 1/District 2 or rural/urban parishes
 - i. Discuss [Conversations across Difference](#), National ECUSA resource for facilitating this kind of conversation. We could host this kind of discussion at one of our meetings and invite others or host a special event inviting others.
 - ii. Report on The Racial Justice Council MLK Day event-Ralph did not attend but John Leddy-given the virtual limitations it was very successful, but missing some of the joy and excitement of actual presence.
- b. Report on Maine Council of Churches legislative training
 - i. Stories of how faith advocates have made a difference. Very well put together and very diverse, with music and worship. The important to be involved from our spiritual standpoint-to have an Episcopal voice. . There are three more sessions March 16, April 6 and April 27. [To register and FMI.](#)
- j. [Faith Climate Action Week: Sacred Ground: Cultivating Connections Between our Faith, our Food, and the Climate](#)
 - i. [Kiss the Ground](#) screening- Charles and Sarah can talk to Eleanor, anyone else interested can email Sarah or Eleanor
- k. [Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored](#): Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 18-21, 2021. There may be a registration fee-contact John H re: Diocese covering the cost if you would like to attend.
- l. May St. Luke's *Dawnland* screening cancelled

New matters

- m. Diocesan resolutions
 - i. Bill to ban solitary confinement-the ECUSA has no policy to ban it but they do ban prolonged solitary confinement. It is very damaging to one's mental health
 - ii. ICE
 - iii. Deadline 1st week in September. We will discuss this next month.
- n. Cumberland County Food Security [Forum](#) March 12 9AM-12 Noon
- o. [Stations of the Cross: Confronting and Contemplating Climate Change](#): A practice for individuals and churches March 20-April 2
- p. Netflix Amend 6-part series on 14th Amendment-documentary on history and how it changed who we are as a nation. We are all citizens.
- q. New Book: [The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline and New Hope for Beloved Community](#) by Canon Stephanie Spellers (Bishop Curry Staff) Coming out any day now .

Action Items

1. Testimony for those who signed up to prepare it
2. Reviewing [Conversations across Difference](#)

Next meeting Tuesday April 13, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Baik