

**Public Policy and Environmental Action Team Agenda**  
**July 13, 2021**  
**6-7 PM**  
**Via Zoom**

Facilitator: Charles Skold

Minutes: Sarah Braik

Present: Sarah Braik, Charles Skold, Liz Parsons, Dick Farnsworth, Barbara Ryland, Kathleen Coughlan, Mary Linneman, Ralph Cordes, John Hennessy

1. Reflection (Charles)
  - a. Charles showed a clip from a [TED talk by Bryan Stevenson](#) Stevenson says that the opposite of poverty is justice, not wealth. Ultimately the character of a society is judged by how they treat the poor, the condemned, the incarcerated. Charles recommended we all watch the entire thing.
2. Diocesan and legislative updates from John Hennessy
  - a. Overall theme of legislative session a solid A, though there were some dissapointments. Voices of faith weighed in on over 100 issues. One legislator invoked her Lutheran faith on the house floor.
  - b. Maine is the first state in the country to require manufacturers to pay for recycling the materials their products are made of
  - c. Bill asking legislature to fund \$100,000 to preserve Frances Perkins' homestead in Newcastle passed-this will leverage a significant amount of federal funds. Perkins was Episcopalian.
  - d. Next week is the final day when the legislature has the opportunity to override governor's vetoes. She vetoed the gambling bill and it doesn't look like there will be the votes to override.
  - e. The sovereignty bill will be addressed next session. There is a huge coalition of groups and people who will work on getting it passed. There will be a lot of emotional responses that we need to be aware of.
3. Ongoing matters
  - a. Diocesan resolution: ban solitary confinement
    - i. [Report from Dick Farnsworth John Hennessy and Charles Skold](#)  
ECUSA's official policy is to ban prolonged solitary confinement. We want it banned completely. There is a bill in the Maine legislature, LD 696, that will be carried over in January that we may want to support. We could take this to General Convention if it passes at Diocesan Convention.

- ii. There is a separate bill dealing with other congregate settings not jails or prisons
  - iii. Next steps:
    1. Understand the exact language of the Maine Diocese's current stance on "limiting" solitary confinement
    2. Write proposal for Maine Diocese to support "banning" solitary confinement
    3. Testify in support of LD 696, possibly with suggested amendments
    4. Dick will invite Rep. Lookner, who is interested in redefining the criminal justice system and sponsor of the bill, to join us in September or the following month.
  - iv. Deadline is 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September
  - b. [Poland Spring sold to investment firm](#)
    - i. What is our response? Shall we develop a task force? Gus Goodwin is willing to be on it. Liz will chip in.
    - ii. [PPH article](#)
  - c. South Portland [tree protection ordinance](#) update
    - i. Mary spoke to Barbara Dee (on the Conservation Committee) and she sent Mary the draft. It is very complex and has met a lot of opposition. It is being revised to be more simple as a response to complaints. Final draft will be discussed on August 23. It will not be available for the public to look at til the Friday before the meeting. Mary will send the information to anyone who requests it. The South Portland Land Trust, City Council, and Conservation Committee are all in favor.
  - d. Google groups update
    - i. We will be moving to this soon. Charles will provide instructions.
4. New matters
- a. The Diocesan Climate Justice Council has an opportunity for several people to collaborate with Rev. Jenny Reece on a Diocesan-wide creation-centered service on Sept. 12. The service needs to be planned during the next 3-4 weeks. The topic is lamentation and hope. Barbara Ryland is interested and she will email Jenny. Cathy will talk with Jenny to see what it will entail.
  - b. Shall we start each meeting with a land acknowledgment? Eleanor has said it is better to talk about territory. We can check with the Maine tribes. Mary will work with Sarah on this.
  - c. Sarah signed us up to pray for the UN Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 being held Nov 1-12 between now and November 12. She asked everyone to add this to their daily prayer.
  - d. Sue Inches has written a book [Advocating for the Environment, How to Gather Your Power and Take Action](#). John has worked with Sue on the privatizing CMP

issue. She is impressive and would be a terrific speaker. John may invite her to speak to the Diocesan Climate Justice Council and to Diocesan Convention, and he will also check on her availability to meet with us.

- e. Greenfaith is encouraging actions from people of diverse religions on 17-18 October, two weeks before UN climate talks, to send a clear message to governments and major financial institutions: **destroying the planet is against our religions.**
    - i. **Sunday, 17 October:** Religious communities will hold a public action at their place of prayer calling for decision-makers to act. Together, we'll take creative action such as unfurling banners on religious and spiritual buildings, posting our demands on doors of local, regional, or national governments, banks, and major investment houses, or ringing bells, sounding the shofar, calling the Azan, etc, as we did on 11 March.
    - ii. **Monday, 18 October:** On the morning of 18 October, wearing religious garb or t-shirts with catchy slogans or carrying religious signs, we'll line up outside of local, regional, and national governments and finance institutions en masse to deliver our demands to officials. Either at the beginning or end of the action, religious people may choose to hold a meditation or pray-in.
    - iii. [Sign up to organize an action with Faiths 4 Climate Justice](#)
    - iv. Liz and Sarah and Barbara will meet to discuss this.
5. Action items
    - a. Dick will approach Grayson Lookner for September or after
    - b. John will approach Sue Inches
    - c. All: Invite someone new to the August meeting
    - d. All: Pray for COP 26
  6. Next meeting Tuesday August 10, 2021. We will devote the entire meeting to discussing Bridging the Two Maines and will invite others to join us. Dick will help Charles and Sarah to structure that meeting. Mary is not sure she can help but would like to be involved.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Braik

