

**Minutes**  
**Public Policy and Environmental Action Team**  
**March 11, 2025 6-7 PM**  
**Via Zoom**

Facilitator: Sarah

Minutes: Sarah

Present: Eleanor Roberts, Kathy Coughlin, Barbara Ryland, Sam Allen, John Hennessy, Meredith Tipton, Dick Farnsworth, Mary Linneman

1. Territory Acknowledgement:

The Cathedral of St. Luke sits on unceded Wabanaki territory. We acknowledge that we have benefitted from the exploitation and subjugation of those whom our forebears failed to understand and honor.

We also acknowledge the legacy of colonization embedded within the technology, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day, leaving significant carbon footprints and contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect indigenous people worldwide.

Let us acknowledge all this, and take collective responsibility to make good use of our meeting time, and to work towards dismantling the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, to preserve lands and waters for future generations, and to support indigenous sovereignty.

2. Reflection

“It is not the task of the church to try to develop social theories or strategies to make America work; rather the task of the church in this country is to become a polity that has the character necessary to survive as a truthful society. That task carried out would represent a distinctive contribution to the body politic we call America (Citizen by C. Andrew Doyle, p. 63).”

From John Hennessy’s recent sermon:

I want to close this reflection with words of Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, who shared this message with the church during his ceremonial seating at Washington National Cathedral last month. Bishop Rowe said, **“in this world order, falling comes before rising. In God’s kingdom, immigrants and refugees, transgender people, the poor and the marginalized are not at the edges fearful and alone. They are at the center of the Gospel story.”** Bishop Rowe goes on to say, **“we are not backing down in our proclamation of the Gospel just because other people who understand it differently are bigger or think they are more powerful or louder or have a vision that denies humanity.”**

3. Announcements

- a. Friday, March 14th from 9am – 10am the One Climate Future Team will be joined by Dan Burgess, Director of the Maine Governor’s Energy Office, to discuss the recently released State Energy Plan. Sign up for this Zoom get-together (and future Coffee & Climate events in 2025) through [this Zoom registration link](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
- 4. Diocesan and legislative updates
  - a. Weekly Legislative Report
    - i. [MEPPN - MCC - Weekly Legislative Report 3-10-25](#)
    - ii. [EDOM - Public Policy Initiatives by Subject Area \(Updated 3-3-2025\)](#)
      - 1. Maine Senate passed the supplemental budget with only 2 Republicans voting against it.
      - 2. Priorities: highlighted bills include two MaineCare bills: they are trying to take services away from low income people and new Mainers. We can’t sit idly by. Gun bills are being printed. We will oppose every measure that rolls back bills already passed and all bills expanding gun access, i.e allowing teachers to carry guns. Trans students: legislator that was censured for doxing a minor has sued Ryan Fecteau. She has an astonishing number of followers. Bill to help Maine Area Agency on Aging asking for 5 million dollars to keep Meals on Wheels functioning. With federal funding they still fall short. There is a terribly long waiting list. None of these bills have been scheduled for a hearing yet. We are asked to monitor the weekly reports for opportunities to testify.
      - 3. The US House just passed their controversial budget. One Democrat voted YES - Jared Golden.
  - b. Environmental bills: these are all Environmental Priorities Coalition picks. None have bill numbers yet.
    - i. [Achieving 100% Clean Electricity by 2040](#)
    - ii. [Make Polluters Pay](#)
    - iii. [Energy Fairness Act](#)
  - c. [Wabanaki Alliance’s current bill tracker](#)
    - i. From Committee on Indian Relations Mar. 10 minutes
      - 1. There are two public hearings coming up this week: tomorrow - on free access to state parks for Wabanaki citizens - Dick Farnsworth has submitted written testimony on our behalf; on Wednesday in Judiciary - LD 812 & 813 on state recognition of the Kineo Band of Maliseets and others, which WA opposes. WA believes tribes should go through the federal process rather than establishing a state process. We discussed pros and cons of

testifying on this bill. We don't seem to have anything new to say, but WA has asked allies to join them in opposing this bill.

2. There are other bills that will be coming up for hearings in the future that we should consider supporting publicly. We decided that the bill sponsored by Rep Billy Bob Faulkingham, LD 958 on eminent domain is the most important for us to support with testimony - next Wednesday, March 19.

ii. From Maulian Bryant

1. LD 812 and 813. These are from Rep Jennifer Poirier and will be heard in Judiciary at 1pm on Wednesday 3/12. These are two bills addressing a state recognition process for tribes that do not or have not met federal recognition like the Wabanaki Alliance Tribal Nations. The WA opposes this bill and we welcome opposition testimony. This is the third attempt at passing a state recognition bill and you can find the committee information and tribal opposition here.
2. <https://legislature.maine.gov/backend/app/services/getDocument.aspx?doctype=test&documentId=141977>
3. <https://legislature.maine.gov/billtracker/#Paper/HP0037?legislature=130>
4. <https://legislature.maine.gov/billtracker/#Paper/HP0210?legislature=131>

- d. Senator Brenner's Zero waste bill: no update
- e. [Conservation Lobby Day](#) – 8-Noon April 3rd Sarah could go if she has a ride.
- f. [NRCM's State House Action Day](#) – April 8th Dick may want to attend this one. He will get back to Sarah

5. Ongoing matters

- a. Looking for new PPEAT Co-Chair to serve this year alongside Charles
- b. Update on review/update of our [flier](#)
  - i. Dick got a copy of the full report of the Racial Equity Steering Committee and he'll report on this for the next PPEAT meeting and for the updating of the flyer.
  - ii. Creation Care Team
    1. They are working with Solar Faithful and the Bishop on publicizing this opportunity for congregants of any Maine faith community to buy into a solar farm. They are still planning 2025 goals.
- c. Follow up on the Racial Equity Steering Committee of City Council
  - i. This was covered under 5.b.i.
- d. Food Waste

- i. St. Luke Composting (Ruth & Mary)
  - 1. April 13 forum; coffee hour sign ups
    - a. Have info from G to G with a slide show; most food waste is residential; will be talking about composting; Dick will get countertop buckets; Will ask people to donate food as we are hosting coffee hour.
- e. White Christian Nationalism forum
  - i. George is enthusiastic; we are looking for someone to present.
- f. Jill Saxby
  - i. Dick will contact the Maine Council of Churches to connect with her.
- g. Citizen book discussion update (Sarah)
  - i. This group began meeting a few weeks ago at Laura Lyon's home. There are two participants plus Sarah. The conversation has been quite fruitful.
- h. Report on Portland and South Portland Conservation Commission activities
  - i. Eleanor reported that Portland doesn't have a conservation group in the same way as other towns and communities in the area. Most of Portland is pretty developed. [Portland Trails](#) and [Friends of Casco Bay](#) are probably the closest, with a lot of great events and resources. They testify on water quality issues, they focus on storm water, which is the highest source of pollution. They host regular educational meetings called Coffee Talk. [The Portland Climate Action Team](#) is doing a lot of good work as well. Eleanor also mentioned a powerful [coastal sea rise map](#) maintained by Portland Waterfront Resilience
  - ii. South Portland: Mary reported that the Conservation Commission has a new Chair, Peter Wilson. Mary will talk with him tomorrow. He is joining the Land Trust Board and Mary is on it. They have a new trail. There is a lot of environmental action in So Po. No Yard South is very active in preventing housing from going so close to the water (which will be steadily rising over the century), brownfields and oil tanks, no parking available. They withdrew their application and may come back with a version that won't require a zoning change. The Comprehensive Plan is looking at zoning. Mary is working with So Po school board on environmental costs of artificial turf. It was defeated by the citizens but there is a group trying to get it back on the ballot. Mary will keep an eye out for how we can be involved. Stacy Brenner is looking to introduce a bill calling for a 3 year moratorium on artificial turf.
    - 1. South Portland is having an Earth Day celebration with music and art, etc. on April 26 from 10-2. That is also the kick-off of a program called Climate 2n--Something Wonderful, with events

throughout the year culminating on Earth Day 2026. You can learn about it and register for it on this [webpage](#).

- i. Preparedness Committee (now called Walking Together) update
    - i. Resources from Faithfully Supporting Our Vulnerable Neighbors webinar
      - 1. Mary reported that March 9 was designated Refugee Sunday in the Diocese of Maine. Walking Together sponsored a coffee hour with a tree with tags listing ways people can be involved. Connie Schmaltz and Laura Lyons working with Hope Acts. There is an opportunity to be trained to be gatekeepers at the door. Opportunities to contribute money to the discretionary fund that George disburses. Elizabeth Stover had buttons made “Immigrants Make America Great.” T shirts are being designed.
      - 2. [The Baptismal Covenant found in the Book of Common Prayer](#)
      - 3. [Diocese of Maine’s document outlining considerations for clergy and lay leaders about “sanctuary”](#)
      - 4. [Immigration Resources from the Maine Council of Churches](#)
      - 5. Maine Council of Churches webinar on Thursday, Feb. 13, [Here We Are. Send Us! Part II](#): Sharing resources for a faithful response to threats of harm to the LGBTQ+ community
      - 6. [The Episcopal Church Immigration Action Toolkit](#)
      - 7. [The Washington National Cathedral Sanctuary Ministry](#)
      - 8. [Refugee Sunday Toolkit](#)
- 6. [Indivisible](#) is growing exponentially
  - 7. Action steps
    - a. Attend the Friday, March 14th from 9am – 10am State Energy Plan webinar. [Zoom registration link](#)
    - b. Keep an eye out for John’s legislative updates and Environmental Priorities Coalition updates for opportunities to submit testimony.
    - c. Check out [Wabanaki Alliance’s current bill tracker](#) for opportunities to testify for tribal bills.
    - d. Sign up to attend [Conservation Lobby Day](#) – 8-Noon April 3rd and/or.
    - e. [NRCM’s State House Action Day](#) – April 8th
    - f. Volunteer as co-chair of PPEAT
    - g. Mark the April 13 composting forum on your calendars
    - h. Join one of the community environmental groups linked in these minutes.
    - i. Join Walking Together.
  - 8. Next meeting: April 8, 2025 6 PM