

EarthKeepers' Meeting Minutes

11/10/21

1-3:00 PM, UUCE

Members Present: Betsy H., Ron H., Sue C., Dennis R., Phyllis W., Merrily S. (scribe) We met in a large space, seated around four large tables pushed into a square, so that we each had quite a lot of distance around us. We each checked in. Everyone is doing fine.

Old Business

1. At an earlier meeting Cherise Bock from Oregon Interfaith Power and Light invited Interfaith EarthKeepers to join Green Circles, a chance to network with smaller environmental groups around the state on Zoom. These meetings are every 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. Cherise felt that EKs, with a few years experience, could be helpful getting smaller groups going. Do we have any current EarthKeepers who would commit to attending these Zoom meetings as our representative and would report each month what the meetings discussed?

2. Action: We decided to ask our members to write a blurb for their church bulletins reminding church members to check out our truly wonderful website, InterfaithEarthKeepers.org, in case to find out the newest in environmental issues and education.

3. Ron reported that there is a lot of energy around Divest Oregon. There were over 500 emails and phone calls to Tobias Read, OR Treasurer, and the Oregon Investment Council. Two hundred plus new members joined the coalition. Divest Oregon has 60 organizations with 11 new members, and 3 legislators provided testimony to Oregon Investment Council. There was in person action at the treasury on Oct. 27. And the push continues!

4. Betsy presented the new Earth Care Interfaith Fund brochure which is beautiful. This is the revised carbon offset program, benefitting Long Tom Watershed Council and McKenzie River Trust, originally crafted by members of St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Currently the fund is endorsed by UUCE, Interfaith EarthKeepers, and St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Each church is invited to present the idea and brochure to its "governing body"; once they approved the new version Betsy will get a packet to you to use in presenting the fund to your congregation. As a post script, Dennis is eager for the ECIF to be certified by the international Varied Carbon Standard Program so that the City of Eugene could buy offsets locally. Idea: introduce the idea to your church of collecting one offering per month dedicated to a local organization such as ICIF.

5. Dennis' role has changed with Fossil Free Eugene. He is now a member of the Sustainability Council which will meet Nov. 17th. They have lots of young people interested in helping people transition off of natural gas. Fifty-one California communities have banned fossil fuels. Right now NW Nat. has the power; we need to speak up. See #1 under new business.

6. Dennis—Eugene is the only city out of top 9 OR cities that doesn't have a Heritage Tree Program. The NAACP Environmental Justice Committee has begun partnering with Springfield with urban forestry because they have more "shovel ready" projects. Mayor Vinus is interested, as middle housing increases, in maintaining space for trees. Idea: new trees need to be watered and watched. Is this something the youth in our congregations could do, perhaps as community service. New software call Icanopy assesses the tree cover in the community. Action: EarthKeepers should write letters to the city about our need for more trees to sequester carbon, provide clean air, and lower temperatures. We should also ask for a Heritage Tree Program!

7. Merrily and Sue will be meeting to discuss presentation to Church Women United in February. There is potential to gain membership in EK with this presentation.

New Business:

Merrily learned that the YMCA is using natural gas in its new building, so she wrote a letter to Brian Steffen requesting a rethink. She read parts of Brian's response. He says the building itself will be heated/cooled with heat pumps, but, since they will need so much, the water will be heated with gas. Brian says that, at this time, there aren't heat pumps or solar systems which can heat that much water quickly. There was some discussion about the accuracy of this statement. Group authorized Merrily to adapt her letter and send to UO Campus Planning and Athletics Depts. because they, too, are planning to use natural gas in the new practice building. Action: EKs write letters to UO, too!

2. Ron requests that EKs respond online to the Bicycle Master Plan. (See Ron's email.) This will help Creswell's bike paths become part of the county's master plan. Ron feels this will make this area much safer to bike and contribute to bicycling becoming a viable car alternative.

3. Dennis is suggesting that we propose to our church's youth leaders to connect with Mark Lindberg at First Congregational Church and Sara Sautter, Director of Faith Formation for Children at the UUCE. Children could be

educated/served during this time of pandemic with concerted efforts by youth leaders at area churches.

4. Britni was unable to be at the meeting, but she sent an idea to Ron that EKs should do something about excessive consumption of the upcoming season. We decided that our new Earth Care Interfaith Fund is a wonderful alternative gift idea. Action: We thought it would be great to write a letter to the Weekly, Reg.-Guard, and our own congregations about our ECIF. We also discussed thrift stores, food gifts, handmade items, games and books.

5. Ron is working on how we can Zoom our live meetings. He will contact Kat, tech person for UUCE, for further tech knowledge.

6. We briefly discussed leadership burn out and need to transition responsibility for meetings/ minutes to new brains. Please be thinking if you are called to take a leadership role with EKs.

7. Ethen Perkins, Eugene Friends Church, presented a thorough and informative history of their solar installation as a written report for our Education Session, since he was unable to attend. Since EarthKeepers is beginning to collect information about how various churches have managed solar installations, this report will be included in the hard copy of the minutes. Ethen noted that “reduction in EWEB service fees from both solar panels and heat pump/ insulation improvements was notable and significant.” Thank you, Ethen.

8. Sue reported she will be attending meetings of the PNW Forest Climate Alliance which has 60 different groups. She is particularly interested in the Elliott Forest. We gave her permission to speak as a representative of EarthKeepers.

9. Impromptu Book Recommendation Discussion:
Stronghold, about salmon
Coming Home to Earth, Mark Brocker
Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer

10. Dennis suggested we all go on-line and check out Third Act, Bill McKibben’s new group for grandparents. Let’s all do this and discuss as next meeting’s education segment.

Next Meeting: December 8, 6:30-8:00 pm, Online Zoom event
Facilitator: Merrily (merrily_sutton@yahoo.com), Minutes: Sue C.
Education: TBD

