

GREEN Organizing Action TEAM (GOAT) Annual Report for 2019

Submitted February 2, 2020

The GREEN Organizing Action TEAM (GOAT) met monthly in the Meeting Library, typically on the third Sunday of the month at 9:15 AM. Meetings were open to any one and were held in good order. There were changes in membership on the committee as Rachael Neill joined in July and Cathleen Hanson and Stephan Rogers withdrew due to other commitments.

How did we spend our time in 2019?

Some of the committee's undertakings during the past year:

- **December 2018 – April.** Advocated for several legislative actions by attending events, lobbying, and providing information and suggested actions for the Meeting and individuals to take regarding environmental issues before the state legislature and Baltimore city council. The main issues were support of the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA) and the polystyrene container ban. Both pieces of legislation passed, although the CEJA was approved with the continuation of trash incineration and black liquor as energy sources included in the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard. Both sources are polluting. Removal will allow more room in the market for true renewables such as solar and wind.
- **January – April.** Provided boxes for recycling all kinds of electronic media, cables, printers, laptops, etc.
- **April – December.** Used a \$5000 grant from Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) and funds from the Meeting to finalize plans for the installation of a native plant- and pollinator-friendly garden in spring 2019. This included two cisterns to collect water coming off the roof and improve our storm water management. Many volunteers participated in the planting of the garden in April and maintenance throughout the summer and fall. The garden met specifications for Audubon's Bird Friendly Program. A celebration of the garden and resource fair was held on September 22nd. Among the attenders were representatives from Blue Water Baltimore, the Audubon Society, and Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to whom we expressed our gratitude.
- **April.** Showed the film "High Tide in Dorchester County", a documentary on the impact of sea level rise in one of the most vulnerable counties in the US. We were delighted to have one of the filmmakers and a leading environmentalist, Tom Horton, join us for the evening and a lively question and answer period after the film. Promoted the event via Evite, social media, and email to other OWP congregations. Collected email addresses in order to expand our reach for future events.
- **September.** Organized a group to attend and support the Young People's Strike for the Climate in downtown Baltimore.
- **October.** Participated in the Toxic Tour of Baltimore to identify and learn more about areas in the city where high levels of toxic materials exist.
- **All year.** Used a survey about workshops and topics of interest to the Meeting community to plan several workshops on the topics of Home Energy Management (October), Plastics: the Problem and how to Reduce/Eliminate Use in Our Lives

(November, December, and January (2020). Workshops on Rain Barrels (February 2020) and Bird Friendly Gardens (March 2020) were scheduled.

- Contributed GOAT Noats to several monthly newsletters with information about legislative action, upcoming events, our activities, and environmental issues.

What is the Spiritual State of the Committee?

At each meeting we use silence as a frame that helps us understand the context of our work and make spirit based decisions. Our sense is that GOAT both helps anchor each of us at Homewood Meeting and anchors the Meeting by providing an expression of the Meeting's commitment to care for the environment. Committee members felt accountable to and supported by one another in our work, which lifted up our relationships rather than downplaying or undermining them.

We faced an intra committee challenge and handled it well. Polly Heninger resigned as Clerk of the Committee in the summer. Happily for us, Polly will continue as an active member of GOAT. She provided extraordinary leadership throughout the period when we became a standing committee. We did an analysis of all the roles and duties that Polly had with the committee and it was clear that she had carried a very heavy burden for a long time. Through an ongoing discussion from late spring to early fall, we discerned that it was best to have three people serve in three roles – Clerk, Liaison to the Meeting, and Budget Manager. We share the responsibility of Recording Clerk on a monthly basis. Through this process we recognized the huge contribution that Polly has made but also came to a greater understanding and appreciation for the gifts of each of the committee members.

Our biggest challenge continues to be maintaining our optimism in the face of the enormity and urgency of the climate crisis, from global destruction of nature to environmental justice for all. There are so many paths to follow that it is sometimes difficult to focus on what is effective and feasible. Our strengths include a great deal of knowledge about climate issues and events, a willingness to share with each other, and a clear sense that we are better together than alone. Each of us brings different skills and interests. Every member participates. We work well together and enjoy doing so. We are truly a team.

What are we looking forward to in 2020?

In the coming year we expect to continue to develop the garden and conduct at least two public workshops on cisterns and rain barrels and gardening to support pollinators, both activities we proposed in the CBT grant. During the 2020 Maryland legislative session, we will facilitate the engagement of the Homewood community in support of legislation to ban plastic bags, ban of the toxic pesticide chloryporos, and to advance the use of renewable energy for the generation of electricity. We have a procedural issue that we need to address in 2020. Although the original team was not comprised of all of the members of the current committee, most of the current members were on board when we became a committee of the Meeting.

Members in 2019: Carol Beck, Caitlyn Behnke, Gary Gillespie, Cathy Hanson, Polly Heninger, Bess Keller, John McKusick, Rachael Neill, and Stephan Rogers.