

**GREEN Organizing Action TEAM (GOAT) Annual Report for 2020 (Final)**  
To be Submitted March 7, 2021

The GREEN Organizing Action TEAM (GOAT) met monthly, typically on the third Sunday of the month. Our first three meetings of the year were held in the Homewood Library before the pandemic forced closure of the building. Several meetings were held via Zoom, and a couple of meetings were held outdoors. Meetings were open to both members and attenders of Homewood and were held in good order. Gary Gillespie served as Clerk throughout the year. After several months as a visitor to the committee, Stan Becker joined GOAT as a committee member.

**How did we spend our time in 2020?**

GOAT's undertakings during the past year included:

Ø **December 2019 - March 2020.** Advocated for several environmental bills by attending events, lobbying, and providing information and suggested actions for the Meeting and individuals to take regarding environmental issues before the state legislature. The main pieces of legislation were the Climate Solutions Act and the Ban on Chlorpyrifos, a pesticide with effects to ecosystems and humans. The pesticide ban passed the legislature but was vetoed by Governor Hogan. Advocates are working on an override vote early in the 2021 session. The Climate Solutions Act, a complicated and multifaceted piece of legislation, did not get to full votes in the chambers before the last three weeks of the session were canceled. A new bill, Climate Solutions Now Act has been introduced in both the House of Delegates and the Senate in 2021.

Ø **January** Bess Keller concluded a three-session workshop on reducing our dependence on single-use plastics in the home and elsewhere. The group met a fourth time and agreed to participate in a survey on how their efforts to make changes have gone and settled on a hands-on project for reducing plastic use. Due to complications related to the pandemic, this was not scheduled.

Ø **January - July** We researched options for adding solar panels to our rooftop array. We found a vendor and a plan that suited our needs. With financial support from the Trustees, we were able to move ahead with installation which was completed in July. Our goal is to raise our rooftop electricity output to 120% of our current usage to allow for the addition of some air cooling in the building for more comfortable use in the summer.

Ø **February** Co-sponsored and hosted a Rain Barrel Workshop presented by Blue Water Baltimore that drew 8 participants.

Ø **March** Co-sponsored and hosted a Wildlife Gardening Workshop presented by the Audubon Center of Patterson Park with 35 people in attendance.

Ø **Throughout the Growing Season** A dedicated group of individuals joined together as an informal garden club to water, weed, and maintain the native plants garden. The garden continued to grow and thrive with plants in bloom throughout

the year. The garden was used by the First Day School for eight meetings for classes, activities and projects during 2020.

Ø **Throughout the Year** We contributed GOAT Noats to each monthly newsletter with information about legislative action, upcoming events, our activities, and environmental issues.

### **What is the Spiritual State of the Committee?**

At each GOAT meeting we used silent worship as a frame that helps us understand the context of our work and make spirit-based decisions. Our sense is that participation in GOAT both helps each of us to be better members of Homewood Meeting and anchors the Meeting in its commitment to care for the environment.

We implemented the leadership plan that we created last year. This involves a division of duties to share the load. Gary serves as presiding clerk, organizes the monthly agenda, and facilitates the meetings. Carol tracks our budget and communicates with outside agencies that have provided us with funding. John McKusick handles some aspects of communication between GOAT and the Meeting such as the GOAT Noats and, with Gary, periodic reports to the Meeting.

We faced a challenge that stymied us initially, but has stimulated a lot of discussion. A committee member expressed a leading to contact the CEO of ExxonMobil (EM), one of the most egregious fossil fuel companies in terms of carbon pollution. The idea was to lay out and document briefly our concerns about EM business practices and the impact on climate disruption. In the letter, we requested a meeting with the CEO to discuss the impact of his company on the environment, to listen to his viewpoint, and to share our concerns about EM. The letter was approved by GOAT although not without concerns. We presented it to Monthly Meeting for Business in July. Support was expressed for the themes of the letter. However, the Meeting raised concerns and did not unite with the letter. It was sent back to GOAT for seasoning and further crafting. GOAT worked on the letter and brought a revision to Meeting for Business in September. Some Friends were concerned about the efficacy of the letter and the effort to meet with a CEO. Some Friends suggested that GOAT redirect its energies to other potentially more effective strategies to “keep fossil fuels in the ground”. The Meeting did not approve the letter as a document speaking on behalf of HFM. This did not preclude individuals from sending a letter on their own.

The development, review, and revision of the letter played out over the course of several months and required a lot of time and energy. This difficult experience helped us to realize that we needed to consider our mission and reconsider processes for making decisions and establishing priorities. We started that process with a mini-retreat of the committee in November. John facilitated a structured discussion in which we reviewed the Mission Statement for GOAT, confirmed that the mission statement reflected what we aim to accomplish, and inventoried how we operationalize two key concepts – sustainability and climate justice. We carefully documented the discussion. Bess Keller then created a menu of possible actions and identified the level for each, e.g., local, regional, national, or

international. At our next meeting in December, we decided to focus our efforts on supporting environmental legislation in the Maryland General Assembly through the closing of the session in April 2021. We will discuss post-session plans in late winter or early spring.

A big challenge in 2020 continued to be how to maintain our optimism and energy in the face of the enormity and urgency of the climate crisis, from global destruction of nature to environmental justice for all. The Trump Administration continued to be hostile toward the environment in general and willfully negligent in addressing climate disruption. There are so many paths to follow that it seemed difficult to focus on what is both effective and feasible for us to take on. 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 strive at all times to be a team.

### **What are we looking forward to in 2021?**

We are hopeful that the new Biden Administration will be a strong advocate for the environment and for justice. Early signs are promising. On the state level, we will support the Climate Solutions Now Act, a sweeping environmental bill. Enactment of this bill could be a real game changer in terms of the state's pathway to a green economy.

We hope to attract new members to the committee. We have plenty of work to do, ranging from gardening to legislative advocacy; we have jobs that can fit a variety of skills and interests.

We continue to have a procedural issue that we need to address in 2021 relating to succession of the committee members. 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. So the effect is that most of the committee member terms will be completed within one or two years of one another.

Members in 2020: Carol Beck, Stan Becker (part of year), Gary Gillespie, Polly Heninger, Bess Keller, John McKusick, Rachael Neill.