

Report from the Climate Crisis Committee to Meeting for Business on 12/5/2021

- by Bob Redfern and Ed Dreby for the Committee

As we think Friends already know, our meetings with Councilwoman Christine Reuther about the incinerator, CRCQL, and the Solid Waste Authority, led us to begin attending meetings of the County's new Sustainability Commission, where we learned about the County's new Office of Sustainability and its recently appointed leaders, Francine Locke and Sharon Jaye.

On Tuesday 11/30, we had a very useful meeting with Francine, Delco's Chief Sustainability Officer, who oversees six of the county's departments and works with the Sustainability Commission that's made up of leadership from those departments and about a dozen appointed citizens who represent a variety of interests and stakeholders.

Bob began by providing Francine with some background, that led us to begin attending meetings of the Sustainability Commission.

Then Ed asked three questions:

- First, can we refer to their work as Sustain Delco, and should we call it a program, project, or initiative? Francine said "yes," but suggested that we call it a movement.
- Second, has POWER Metro had any contact with the Office of Sustainability? We asked because our Committee meets tomorrow morning and will be hosting the staffer for POWER Metro. Francine said she came from Philly, where she worked for Philly's sustainability program in the city's school system, so she knew of POWER there, but didn't know they wanted to have a climate justice project in Delco.
- And third, does Sustain Delco's focus on "equity and inclusion" include the concerns for police accountability and criminal justice. And might the focus be on "justice, equity, and inclusion?" Francine didn't say equity and inclusion includes police accountability and all that entails, but she seemed to suggest that she thinks it should, and the committee with responsibility for this focus is yet to be formed. We're pretty confident that she will ask and the committee will agree to include those issues/concerns.

We told her that we've been trying to increase participation in the opinion Survey about the climate crisis and she thanked us for that. Francine indicated that the survey responses had increased to 500, a big improvement from the week before. We said we'd continue doing as much we can before the December 15th deadline.

We then asked about the idea of trying to assemble a Delco inter-faith sustainability network, and Francine was eager for us to do that. We explained that this would not happen easily or quickly, and asked if we succeed, whether Sustain Delco would treat the network as one of the NGOs the Office of Sustainability would consult and work with. And she assured us that it would

Then we asked, if we could request it, whether she'd welcome an invitation from the Southeast Delco Interfaith Council to give a presentation about Sustain Delco at one of their future meetings. Again, an enthusiastic "yes."

So when the Committee meets tomorrow, we will consider how to move forward with the idea of helping to create a Delco interfaith sustainability network. We're eager to find out whether POWER might make creating a faith-based sustainability network one of its projects in Delco. If that happens, it would make our effort far more likely to succeed.

As those who came to yesterday's memorial service for Pru Haines know, our initial project of participating in Media Borough's composting project is good to go. And we urge everyone who doesn't have some other commitment to register for and participate in Wednesday's evening's Eco-Justice Webinar, Electrify Your Life. It begins at 7:30, and the link is in the newsletter and can be found on PYM's website. It will be an excellent introduction to the task of reducing our carbon footprint.

We will report in January about what we will be doing as a result of our meetings with the Office of Sustainability and POWER Metro, and what we learn from the Electrify Your Life webinar.

We're glad to answer questions about any of this.