

March 15, 2022

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Social and Ecological Justice Commission
Tuesday, March 15, 2022**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on March 15, 2022 by video conference. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

Members Present

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Tina Conlon, Moon-Ja Park, Cameron Watts

Staff: Jeffrey Dale, Rachael Howes, Kim Uyede-Kai

Absent: Lois Brown,

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. Cameron Watts gave an opening prayer. He gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region.

The chairperson constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ.

There was a time of check-in.

Agenda

MOTION by Tina Conlon / Cameron Watts that the agenda be approved as circulated

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Cameron Watts / Tina Conlon that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held February 23, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Business Arising

Social Justice Mid Winter Event - Evaluation and Follow-up

- attendance seemed low, otherwise pleased with event – it engaged people and the speakers motivated people;
- the speakers were good, appreciated Eleanor’s transparency; appreciated Rob Oliphant’s style;
- being together with others was good; break out rooms were good;
- there was feedback that people were grateful for the event;
- felt people got a great experience;
- cognizant of how important preaching is to clergy; and we don’t do very much continuing education about it;
- it was focussed and timely;
- it highlighted the relevance of the Commission;
- it was felt that we should do another one;
- we will think about how we use the recording of the speakers;
- we will think about timing and who should be included next time.

Staff report – Kim Uyede-Kai

Kim reported

- The Living Into Right Relations Circle (LIRR) meets monthly and membership is growing; primarily communities of faith that have either a right relations committee or Indigenous justice committee in their church and didn’t realize that there was a space to gather to talk with other churches doing the same thing. There are eighteen communities of faith now connected as opposed to six. Previously, some thought it was a closed circle but that was never the case. A number of churches are doing some significant work.
- One of the issues that came up was the idea of land tax or lease to Indigenous peoples as something they want to learn more about. There is a group of Anglican and United Indigenous folks who are proposing that property sales tax of 1% should be going to Indigenous work from the sale of each congregational property/buildings. Shining Waters already designates 10% to Indigenous work and ministries that come from sales of buildings. There are fewer sales of buildings these days because of the United Property Resource Corp. (UPRC) is re-developing. This group is starting to think about other congregations possibly setting aside a percentage of their income for Indigenous work as a way of saying this is our contribution to Indigenous land lease.

Annual Meeting

Update on Planning - *Susan Eagle*

The agenda planning group met last week; the regional annual meeting will be held online May 27 and 28, over two afternoons, noon to 5 p.m. It was proposed to have a theme speaker each day. There will be time for proposals. Focus themes were identified and speakers were suggested. The scripture theme is from 1 Corinthians 12:7

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Proposals – *Susan Eagle*

Proposals move policy forward as a church; they can also help us act and reflect on policy we already have. Susan posed the question, ‘is there something we should be raising?’ The Commission discussed items that are timely that could be put forward – the Bradford bypass; the aquifer in our region; indexing of social assistance. Other than a proposal, we could pose some questions on different areas for people in Ontario to ask their political candidates for the upcoming election to discern how they are going to vote. The deadline for submission of proposals for the regional meeting is April 29th.

This item will come to the next Commission meeting.

Kim Uyede-Kai left the meeting.

Updates

SJNOR (Social Justice Network of Ontario Regions) – *Tina Conlon, Jeffrey Dale*

SJNOR is planning for a Spring meeting; the objectives will be twofold: education to highlight a critical step of inter-related social justice issues in our province prior to the upcoming provincial election campaign, and building connections and breaking down silos to extend the opportunities to share information and perspectives on social justice ministries beyond the currently appointed members of SJNOR to include many additional united church folk from across Ontario. They are looking at two meetings on a Sunday evening maybe 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. on April 24 or May 1. There will be breakout rooms around specific issues.

Tina was asked to follow-up with the planning group on the Commission’s concerns about it being focussed in such a way that we are able to promote it to our region, and that maybe they need to look at the day, the length of time, the way in which they are focussing the conversation, and to be clear if they are targeting the activists who are already involved, or if they are looking a reaching out to people who have not been involved who might be interested.

Staff report – *Jeffrey Dale*

Jeffrey reported;

- The Community Ministries working group met for first time today; started with conversation and some history about the community ministries themselves; they will meet again.
- He has a meeting with PalNet today about the resource they want to create for the Shining Waters website. They will develop it initially and then the Commission will look at it.

UNJPPI (United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel) **Follow-up** - *Tina Conlon*

There is a gathering related to the 2019 Cry for Hope from Palestinian churches. Regions that are supporting it are Pacific Mountain, Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls and three maritime regional councils. This Commission has already endorsed the gathering. It is taking place on May 6, 7, 8 at London, ON.

Tina would like to attend. The cost is accommodation (\$119 per night), registration (\$225 per person), and a contribution to a travel pool.

MOTION by Cameron Watts / Moon Ja Park that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council cover the cost of two people to attend the UNJPPI event in May 2022, up to a maximum of \$500 per person.

MOTION

CARRIED

It was proposed that Tina and Lois Brown attend. Whoever attends on our behalf will be asked to share a report with the Commission at a future meeting, as well as what follow-ups we might do as a Commission and as a region in light of the event.

Closing: Susan Eagle offered a closing prayer and the meeting ended at 3:01 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

Deferred Items

- Justice for workers (item deferred from December meeting) - *Tina*
- Decent hours and scheduling in long-term care workers, equal pay/benefits regardless of status (temp/contract workers, migrants)
- Reach Out Response Network, in February 2021 – *follow-up Tina*
COP26 Climate Summit - follow-up

