

The United Church of Canada
Shining Waters Regional Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Social and Ecological Justice Commission
Thursday, April 27, 2023**

The Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on April 27, 2023 via Zoom. The meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

Members Present

Susan Eagle (Chairperson), Lois Brown, Esther Collier, Don Ford, Jennifer Gordon, Irene Green, Won Hur, Brian McIntosh

Staff: Jeffrey Dale, Celio deAndrade Santos, Rachael Howes

Regrets: Kim Uyede-Kai

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Won Hur offered an opening prayer. As an acknowledgment of the land, each person was asked to take a moment to remind themselves of the land on which they are collectively meeting, the many different places and many different Indigenous groups that are represented by us that come together. Susan Eagle 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 Don Ford / Esther Collier that the agenda be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Irene Green / Don Ford that the Minutes of the meeting of the Shining Waters Social and Ecological Justice Commission held March 21, 2023 be adopted as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Business Arising

Letter re: Bill 23 – there still has been no response to our letter to the Ontario Government on Bill 23. The question was raised about whether there is a way to do something about the non-responsiveness of this government. Susan suggested that probably the way to do that is to find a friendly opposition party member who is prepared to use question period to raise that question. Susan undertook to track down the NDP folks who they connect to

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through ISARC to ask if there is a possibility that they would entertain that as part of a strategy when they are developing their questions.

Banner estimates

Susan Eagle has spoken with Paul Burke of Flags Unlimited who will make two Shining Waters banners at no cost to the regional council.

Budget - update

An update of the Commission's budget will be circulated by email.

Regional Meeting

Report back from planning meeting (Susan and Esther)

Esther reported there was a recent meeting to talk about the United Church Women (UCW) program on Women for Change in Zambia. The idea is to make a compilation video of five minutes or less for use at the regional meeting. The commission's environmental themed presentation is pretty much solidified. There are quite a few sources of videos that have information that we can share.

Follow-up from proposal to Regional Meeting 2022

The commission's proposal that was passed at the 2022 regional council meeting authorized work to be done around creating an advocacy liaison person with the provincial government. Susan sent it to the Social Justice Network of Ontario Regions (SJNOR) but they have not met yet, so there is no response to date. She also followed up with Tina Conlon to ask for it to be raised at the Executive meeting, as to whether or not they see that they have any responsibility for follow-up on the matter.

Proposal for Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI) Advocacy by Communities of Faith

Susan Eagle has submitted a proposal titled, *Working for a Guaranteed Livable Income for all Canadians*, to the regional council from the sub-committee on Homelessness & Poverty/Income Inequality. It had been circulated to the commission prior to the meeting. Susan provided an introduction on the proposal and some background on the issue.

MOTION by Irene Green / Esther Collier that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council submit the proposal, *Working for a Guaranteed Livable Income for all Canadians*, to the regional council meeting in May 2023.

MOTION

CARRIED

Brian McIntosh joined the meeting.

Proposals for Community Ministries

Jeffrey Dale reported that the final drafts of the two proposals on community ministries have been submitted for the regional council meeting in May. Once they have been published by the region, the commission members will be notified.

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Table Display – budget

It was suggested that the Commission have a display table at the regional council meeting in May. There was discussion around what could be included on the table. The sub-committees will be responsible for a list and acquisition of what they want included. There are some budget funds available for resources. Those requests and finalizing of the table display will come to the next commission meeting.

Staff Reports - Jeffrey Dale

Jeffrey and Jennifer Gordon have met around youth engagement and what the church is able to do. The idea is that youth really are looking for their own voice, and they might appreciate holding their own events. What we could bring as a church is a lot of capacity to help facilitate that in offering space, perhaps money, and perhaps some coaching and guidance. It could link to our mandates in environmental, GLI, or poverty issues. It might be a way of engaging youth authentically. Jennifer asked if a few people from this commission might be willing to mentor with a phone call before and after the event and attend the event. Brian McIntosh and Don Ford offered their assistance. A proposal will come to the next meeting.

Jeffrey reported that there is a lot of hate on social media specifically towards transgender people and people who utilize drag as part of their life. He suggested that this commission support an email statement going out to the region regarding this.

MOTION by Don Ford / Won Hur that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council support an email statement to be sent out to the Shining Waters Regional Council regarding the recent onslaught of transgender and gender diversity hate, with Jeffrey Dale crafting the email, sharing their experiences, and including resources for communities of faith.

MOTION

CARRIED

Jeffrey suggested this commission authorize a letter being sent from the regional council to the Ontario Government regarding their recent decision on the Ontario Police College eliminating tuition fees and pre-educational requirements.

MOTION by Don Ford / Irene Green that the Social and Ecological Justice Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council support letters being sent from Shining Waters Regional Council to the Ontario Government regarding their recent decision with Ontario Police College in eliminating tuition fees and pre-educational requirements.

MOTION

CARRIED

After the letter is drafted, it will be circulated to the commission members for information and feedback.

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Reports from sub-committees

Ecological Subcommittee (*Esther, Don, Won, Jennifer, Susan*)

The June 21st workshop on green design is coming together; Esther has met youth in Richmond Hill who are looking for places where they can practice leadership skills and might be willing to host, so she will reach out to them to see if they are willing to do some hosting during this workshop. The registration will go up on the website on May 15th. Jennifer suggested that if anyone has an example of a problem in their congregation that they'd like people to re-think through the ideas of being environmental and designing for justice, please let her know.

Homelessness & Poverty/Income Inequality (*Susan, Brian, Irene*)

- ISARC – no report
- Guaranteed Liveable Income National Group - *Irene, Esther, Susan*
Esther reported that the national group is asking justice committees of regional councils to make GLI part of their reports to their executive to keep it on their radar. Also, they are interested in preparing a speakers list.

Israel/Palestine (*Lois, Brian*)

- There is a planning group of five people working on the photo exhibit *Dispossessed but Defiant*, from Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East. It is a major installation on colonialism, indigenous lands in this country, South Africa and Palestine. They are trying to partner with Humber College Lakeshore Campus to perhaps house the exhibit there, if not, it will be somewhere else in Etobicoke. The exhibit will be from September 28 to October 5; still working on promotion and logistics and final decisions. This will also be done in conjunction with the hosting of the Kairos regional Great Lakes St. Lawrence gathering at the end of September. It also falls in line with September 30th National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. A promotional flyer should be available in June.
- PalNet has created a divestment resource for trustees in congregations who are considering how to divest from companies that are operating in the occupied territories primarily. This will be published on the Shining Waters website with online resources.

Deferred items

- connect with Toronto United Church Council (TUCC) around property management and greening our churches

Next Meetings: Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 1:00 pm and Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 1 p.m. Brian McIntosh will be on sabbatical starting in May. It was suggested that there be an in-person meeting perhaps in the Fall.

Closing – Susan offered a closing prayer and the meeting closed at 3:00 p.m.