Harrisburg Friends’ Eco-Justice and Environmental Action Plan – Initiated May 10, 2020

Upon the recommendation from the Worship and Spiritual Growth and Wider World Committees, Harrisburg Monthly Meeting approves the following:

Minute: In 2018, Climate scientists told us that climate crises will occur sooner than expected. We are experiencing global catastrophe. All living things will suffer, particularly the most vulnerable. Immediate action must be taken. As human beings, we must understand that we are part of nature and not separate from it – recognizing that this means living in unity with God.

Our historic testimonies of stewardship, peace, simplicity, equality, and integrity call us to make climate justice a clear and urgent concern for corporate witness.

Harrisburg Monthly Meeting will create and implement an Eco-Justice and Environmental Action Plan to address these climate crises and other environmental issues. Harrisburg Monthly Meeting will review its Plan annually for completion and renewal.

Plan of Action– Past, Present and Future

1. HMM’s building improvement history (past ±10 years)
   a. Lighting retrofit—old to new fluorescent lighting throughout the Meetinghouse
   b. Replaced the parking lot pole light with an LED-type light
   c. Installed new insulation in the roof over the Meeting Room and Library
   d. Air-sealed the building (new weather stripping on exterior doors and sealed openings in the exterior of the building)
   e. To support Occupy Harrisburg (2011-2012)
      i. Replaced our water heater with an instantaneous, condensing unit
      ii. Added raised-bed vegetable gardens which were cultivated for several years
   f. Replaced the water cooler with a new, efficient unit with a bottle filler
   g. Install motion-activated exterior lights
   h. Replaced our HVAC systems serving the upper level, lower level, and nursery addition with condensing furnaces and high-efficiency air conditioning units (SEER 15)
      i. Remove window-type air conditioning units and install central air conditioning as part of the furnace upgrade

2. Legislative focus
   a. Started an FCNL Advocacy Team in 2016 with a focus on criminal justice reform
   b. Active in the PA Council of Churches (as PYM representatives)
   c. Joined Active Heeding God’s Call, Harrisburg- community vigils supporting families of murder victims
   d. Helped to start Dauphin County’s first Bail Bond fund
   e. Helped to redirect the location of the Federal Courthouse (now under construction several blocks to the northeast of our Meetinghouse)
f. Many public meetings on the environment, social justice, and anti-racism topics

3. Environmental actions
   a. Potluck meals include vegetarian and vegan dishes
   b. Preserving mature native trees (Sweet Gum and Red Oak trees) on the Meetinghouse grounds
      • The Native Sweet Gum tree (Liquidambar styraciflua) is a long-lived (up to 400 years of age) host tree for over 30 species of butterflies and moths including the Luna and Promethea moths.

In the Springtime, the flowers provide nectar for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. In the fall, tiny seeds in the prickly pods are eaten by many species of birds including Chickadees, Mourning Doves, Wrens, Sparrows, Cardinals, Juncos, Purple Finch, Towhee, Grosbeaks, Pine Siskens, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and most of all the American Goldfinch. Native Oak trees serve as host trees for over 500 species of Butterflies and Moths. The Native Red Oak (Quercus rubra can live up to 400+ years of age) specifically is a host tree for the following butterflies and moths: Red-Spotted Purple, Banded Hairstreak, Imperial Moth, Cecropia Moth, and Rosy Maple Moth. The survival of birds, butterflies, and moths are dependent upon mature native trees for food, shelter, and the continuity of their life-cycle. Without birds and insects, the human species would gradually cease to exist. Birds and insects can survive very well without humans, but we cannot survive without them.

4. Going forward (post-COVID)
   a. Public meetings - worship and community education and advocacy
   b. Future tenant
   c. Pollinator garden (Oval shaped area contained by the circular pathway below the Library steps)
      i. Definition - an area planted and designed with specific nectar and pollen-producing native plants in a manner that attracts pollinators such as insects, birds, butterflies, and moths. Plants are grouped in naturalized ‘clusters’ according to mature height and time of their bloom period. This particular garden will encompass seasonal, year-round interest. Species selected for this garden will include: Clethra alnifoila (Summersweet), Viburnum dentatum (Arrowwood), Hamamelis virginiana (fall-blooming native Witch Hazel), Hypericum densiflorum (Dense Hypericum), Aster divaricatus (White Wood Aster), Mertensia virginica (Virginia Bluebells), Polemonium reptans (Jacob’s Ladder), Sanguinaria canadensis (Bloodroot), Aster novae-angliae (New England Aster), Pycnanthemum muticum (Clustered Mountain Mint), Monarda didyma (BeeBalm), Phlox divaricate & paniculata and others. There will be an overlap of similar species with the Rain Garden.
      ii. Benefits: Native plants supply food in the form of pollen and nectar that are necessary for birds, insects, and bats (pollinators). Pollinators are essential workers for the fertilization (pollination) and reproduction of 75 percent of the world’s flowering trees, plants, and agricultural crops (our food sources). Studies have shown that gardening and spending time in Nature have positive mental and physical health benefits for families and individuals.
iii. Community outreach - Educational and experiential events on the relevance of native plants and the important role we can all fulfill as stewards of our immediate and local environment. Fundraising through native plant sales at the Meetinghouse or through local events.

iv. PennState pollinator garden certification - provides an incentive for others to follow our example.

d. Rain garden (Northwest side of the property below the parking lot including the berm)

i. Description - Shallow, constructed depressions that are planted with deep rooted native plants.

ii. Purpose: Rain gardens are strategically located to capture runoff from hard surfaces such as a roof, parking lots, driveways, or sidewalks. Appropriately selected beneficial native plants will filtrate run-off water and sediment, prevent erosion, and attract birds and other pollinators. Native species that are included in Rain gardens are indigenous to the immediate area. Included in this particular area are Cornus amomum (Silky Dogwood), Rosa palustris (Swamp Rose), Physocarpus opulifolius (Common Ninebark), Ilex verticillata (Winterberry), Sambucus canadensis (American Elderberry), Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal flower) Asclepias incarnata (Swamp Milkweed), Eutrochium fistulosum (Joe-Pye Weed), Matteuccia struthiopteris (Ostrich Fern) and others. There will be an overlap of species with the Pollinator garden.

iii. Construction consists of but is not limited to a gravel reservoir with root and ponding zones

iv. Tax credits and tax reductions are available for businesses and non-profits w/ impermeable surfaces

v. Other benefits: filters pollutants from stormwater runoff; reduces maintenance of drainage area; recharges groundwater, provides pollinator habitat and is visually aesthetic

vi. Educational opportunities include: providing a teaching model for community businesses, non-profits, neighborhood schools, and homeowners

e. Building improvements to lessen our impact on the ecosystem

i. New windows

ii. New roof

iii. Solar panels

iv. Ceiling fans in the Meeting Room

Note: The above Plan is a working and evolving document. “Addressing these climate crises” requires the efforts, resources and skills of all persons in the Meeting.

As Pennsylvanians, we uphold the Environmental Rights Amendment of the Pennsylvania Constitution, which states, “The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.”

As Quakers, we move forward with faith. ‘I do believe it possible that we may make the drastic changes needed to save Earth for human habitation...I believe that we will do it, because we cannot look our children in the eye if we do not try...O deep in my heart, I do believe we shall overcome, but “some day” may be too late. George Fox said, “Ye have no time but this present.” ’ – Elizabeth Watson, 1992.