

BRainerd LAKES UNITED ENVIRONMENTALISTS (BLUE) JUNE 8TH MEETING MINUTES

Brainerd Lakes United Environmentalists (BLUE) held our monthly meeting on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 7 p.m. The meeting took place in Gregory Park. Dean Borgeson, Judi and Richard Schiller, and Doug Olson joined the BLUE meeting.

BLUE meeting participants approved the Thursday, May 11 BLUE meeting minutes.

BLUE will not host a table at Arts in the Park on Sunday, July 2 because there are not enough volunteers to staff the table. Hopefully, BLUE can host a table at Arts in the Park next year. Ideally, the 2024 Arts in the Park event will be held on the last Sunday of June instead of the first Sunday of July as this would create fewer conflicts for potential BLUE table volunteers. (BLUE hosted a table at Arts in the Park in 2021 and 2022 when Arts in the Park took place on the last Sunday of June.)

Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace (BACP) plans to march in the Brainerd Fourth of July parade. The Brainerd Fourth of July parade will be held on Tuesday, July 4. The parade begins at 6 p.m. The parade route will be the same as last year's. A map of the Brainerd Fourth of July parade can be found at: <https://brainerdcommunityaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Parade-Route-Map-scaled.jpg>. BACP is encouraging BLUE, Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America (BLA DSA), and Brainerd Lakes Pride members to join the BACP parade unit. [Brainerd Community Action sent an email to Doug, who turned in the parade unit application for BACP, confirming BACP will be in the Brainerd Fourth of July parade. Doug will send out a notice for the parade to BACP, BLUE, BLA DSA, and Brainerd Lakes Pride after receiving a notice from Brainerd Community Action with Brainerd Fourth of July parade information.]

BLUE endorsed the Empathy Coalition's work to re-establish the Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission. The original Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission met between 1998 and 2011. The Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission investigated complaints of housing, employment, education, and public facilities discrimination. The Commission promoted the work of individuals and groups who wanted to make Crow Wing County a welcoming place for all residents. The Crow Wing County Board disbanded the Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission in October 2011 after accusations the Commission was "too partisan" and "redundant." The Empathy Coalition's goal is to persuade the Crow Wing County Board to re-establish the Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission. The Empathy Coalition wants to be an ally for people who are discriminated against, bullied, and excluded. [BACP, BLA DSA, and Brainerd Lakes Pride endorsed the Empathy Coalition's work at their June meetings.] [Dean emailed Sally Boos, one of the Empathy Coalition's leaders, to inform her of BLUE's endorsement of the Empathy Coalition's work. Sally emailed Dean with an invitation for BLUE to host a table at the "More Variety = Better Society" event on Saturday, August 19. The Empathy Coalition and Crow Wing County Democratic Farmer-Labor Party are hosting this event. The event will be held at the recently opened Lyman P. White Park from 3 to 10 p.m. Lyman P. White Park is located at 512 East River Road, Brainerd. BLUE will discuss if we can host a table at this event at our July meeting.]

Dean mentioned BLUE has \$158 in funds.

Meeting participants discussed various ways BLUE could deposit funds. Dean suggested the possibility of the Brainerd United Church of Christ (UCC) accepting donations on behalf of BLUE. The Brainerd UCC would need to approve this plan. Doug suggested Pat could open an individual bank account under her name for BLUE donations in her capacity as BLUE treasurer. Pat could also re-open the BLUE P.O. Box, which expired at the end of 2022. Before the BLUE meeting, Pat, who could not join the meeting, suggested BLUE funds could be deposited in the BACP account and be counted separately through good bookkeeping. Meeting participants agreed to table the discussion until the July BLUE meeting. A decision can't be made without the involvement of BLUE treasurer Pat.

Meeting participants discussed the possibility of BLUE and BACP merging in the future. As noted at the May BLUE meeting, there is a lot of overlap between BLUE and BACP membership. Meeting participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a possible BLUE/BACP merger. Advantages: Because the two groups have many of the same members, it would be very convenient for people who are BLUE and BACP members to meet once a month, instead of having two separate meetings. This is especially true for BLUE/BACP members, such as Judi and Richard, who travel long distances to join the meetings. Holding joint BLUE/BACP events would be easier if done by a merged organization instead of needing to get the approval of both groups' membership. A merged BLUE/BACP organization would have one treasury and one P.O. Box. The merged organization would use BACP's existing bank account and P.O. Box. Disadvantages: BLUE and

BACP work on distinct issues, environmental protection and peace, respectively. Working on both environmental and peace issues could be difficult for the merged organization. There is the possibility one of these issues would end up not receiving the attention it deserves. This would be especially true if there was a crisis which took up much of the group's time (i.e. mining in Tamarack, Line 3 tar sands spill, major escalation of the Ukraine War, a war between the U.S. and China, etc.). The merged organization's meetings could be very long. The typical BLUE or BACP meeting lasts an hour. During the winter months, when the groups meet on Zoom, the meetings usually last 40 minutes. There might not be enough time, especially during the Zoom meetings, to discuss both environmental and peace issues. Some members of the merged organization are more passionate about one issue than the other. If the new group spent the majority of its time on one issue (i.e. spent more time on peace than environmental issues), some members could drift away. Doors open to BLUE might be closed to a merged BLUE/BACP organization. While BACP's peace activism is much more accepted than it was during the height of pro-war sentiment (2001-04), there are still some people who consider BACP "unpatriotic" or "too radical." Mainstream organizations which are willing to work with BLUE might not want to work with a merged BLUE/BACP organization. The discussion about whether BLUE and BACP should merge will continue at the Monday, July 10 BACP meeting and Thursday, July 13 BLUE meeting. A decision will be made based on what a majority of the groups' members decide.

BLUE plans to hold an environmental justice vigil before the July meeting. The environmental justice vigil will be held on Thursday, July 13. The vigil will be held at the intersection of Sixth and Washington Streets, Brainerd, across from the historic Brainerd water tower. The vigil is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. and last nearly an hour. Signs will be available for vigil participants. The vigil will demand the Biden Administration do far more about climate change. The vigil will call on the federal government to shut down Line 3, Line 5, and the Dakota Access Pipeline. The vigil will demand the cessation of leasing federal land for oil, gas, and mineral exploration, drilling, and mining. The BLUE climate justice vigil is inspired by vigils and rallies held by Honor the Earth and other environmental organizations between Thursday, June 8 and Sunday, June 11. The End the Era of Fossil Fuels vigils and rallies demanded the Biden Administration do much more about climate change.

BLUE will hold our monthly meeting in Gregory Park at 6 p.m. after the climate justice vigil ends. Gregory Park is located at 511 North Fifth Street, Brainerd. BLUE meeting participants will meet at a table across from the Brainerd UCC. The Brainerd UCC is located at 415 Juniper Street, Brainerd. If bad weather prevents a vigil and Gregory Park meeting, the BLUE meeting will be held at 5 p.m. in the Brainerd UCC Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Hall is located in the doorstairs section of the Brainerd UCC. If the weather is extremely hot (i.e. 90 degrees and above), there will be no vigil nor in-person meeting. BLUE will meet on Zoom at 7 p.m.

Doug mentioned BACP helping sponsor the Stage North Theatre production of *The Laramie Project*. *The Laramie Project* is a play about the reactions of Laramie, Wyoming residents to the brutal murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard on October 12, 1998. *The Laramie Project* will be performed in the Franklin Arts Center auditorium on Thursday, October 12, Friday, October 13, and Saturday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, October 15 at 2 p.m. The Franklin Arts Center is located at 1001 Kingwood Street, Brainerd. Doug will bring cards made by Stage North Theatre Company artistic director Gary Hirsch promoting *The Larmie Project* to the July BLUE meeting. BLUE members can share the cards with family, friends, and co-workers encouraging them to watch *The Larmie Project*.

In place of a meeting, BLUE may hold a social at Dean's home in Crosslake in August. The BLUE social would be held on a Saturday during mid-afternoon. The August 2022 BLUE social had a good turnout. A date and time for the BLUE social will be set at the July BLUE meeting.

[On Friday, June 16, Pat emailed Dean and Doug about receiving official confirmation from the Minnesota Secretary of State's office about the cancellation of Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment. This means the dissolution process for Brainerd Lakers United for the Environment is complete. A copy of the Minnesota Secretary of State's office email confirming the cancellation and the cancellation form Pat sent to the Minnesota Secretary of State's office is attached to the BLUE meeting minutes.]

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

BLUE Meeting Minutes Submitted by Doug Olson

BRAINERD LAKERS UNITED FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (BLUE) JUNE 8TH MEETING AGENDA

The June monthly meeting will be held in the SW quadrant of Gregory Park (weather permitting). As usual the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month. If necessary, we will meet across the street in the First Congregational United Church of Christ at 415 Juniper Street Brainerd, MN 56401. Please reply to the cover email if you have any questions or anything you wish to add to or change in the agenda.

CURRENT BUSINESS:

Approve last month's minutes.

Discuss BLUE not participating in the Brainerd Community Action 'Arts in the Park' festival on Sunday, July 2nd this year.

Discuss BLUE's participation in the BACP unit marching in the Brainerd Fourth of July parade will be held on Tuesday, July 4.

Discuss BLUE endorsing the efforts of the recently formed Empathy Coalition to re-establish the Crow Wing County Human Rights Commission.

Discuss how to handle BLUE funds going forward now that no bank account or P.O. Box are available.

Discuss the possibility of BLUE integrating with BACP going forward.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion to identify possible future events or actions for the group.

Treasure's report