To: Oldenburg Town Council

FR: Claire Whalen, OSF, Chair Oldenburg Renewable Energy Commission (OREC)

RE: March, 2020 Report March 2, 2020

Michael Cambron and Claire Whalen, OSF have completed their sharing of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for the town of Oldenburg for the three institutions, namely, Sisters of St. Francis (with Steve Kristoff in December), Holy Family Parish Council (in January), and Oldenburg Academy’s Facilities Board Committee (in February). For each institution data comparison was made for their own GHG data collected by Whalen, but not included in the Inventory report. Cambron and Whalen will share the GHG report with the Executive Committee of Southeast Indiana Regional Planning Committee on March 4, 2020 at their office in Versailles.

The recommendations listed in the GHG Emissions report will be the focus of OREC’s Earth Day event. The date will be April, 19, 2020 from 3-5:00 pm. Location of the event will be decided at OREC’s next meeting on March 4th. OREC members will be joined by the two local high school environmental clubs and their moderators for planning the activities. Details will be shared in press releases and posters.

Three OREC members attended the public hearing by the Indiana Senate’s Utilities Committee at the State House in Indianapolis on February 27th to give their testimony to this Senate Committee to reject HB 1414. These members are Michael Cambron, Richard Cartwright and S. Annette Grisley, OSF.

The bill, HB 1414, recently passed in the House and is now in the Senate. It deals with retirement of electric generation facilities which would delay Indiana’s transition to clean energy, and in doing so, would cost utilities and their customers unnecessary expenses. It seems to be a deliberate attempt by coal interests to convince Indiana lawmakers to block electric utilities from retiring expensive coal fired plants in this decade without slow and costly litigation efforts.

Mike Cambron sent me a short report from the February 27th public hearing on HB 1414. He told me that the Senate Utility Committee voted in favor of HB 1414 at the first reading.  (Do you know that Sen. Jean Leising is on that committee?) At the hearing there were many people voicing opposition to the bill.  The bill has undergone a number of amendments and is not as severe as initially worded.  The current version of the bill is only in effect until the end of 2020 and according to the state Utility companies there are no plans to retire any coal fired power plants this year.  So it doesn’t make sense now to pass this changed bill.

One of the webinars available this month was “Energy Justice and Solving Climate by 2030.” This was a SSF production (Security and Sustainability Forum). The recording is available on the SSF website. The presentation focused on the need to move quickly this decade to transition to 100% renewable energy in all aspects of society. With that in mind, the webinar focused on climate justice for all, especially citizens who may not be able to afford clean energy alternatives, but who could be caught paying more for energy via the grid. This is not a US problem. But all countries will face this need. The webinar emphasized the need for citizens to speak up and demand fairness in this transition decade. The justice aspect also includes clean energy jobs for all and assistance/retraining for workers in declining energy industries.