

FMW Newsletter, 4.2017

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Minutes

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

12 March 2017

The Clerk opened the meeting at about 12:20 pm. In the absence of Betsy Bramon, Recording Clerk, Grant Phelps Thompson, Alternate Clerk, served as temporary recording clerk. About 39 members and visitors were present.

[Query for Worship Sharing](#)

How am I living my faith with this renovation?

Speaking out of the silence, a Friend reflected on the duty of paying forward, holding our property in trust for succeeding generations as they held the property in trust for us. We were reminded that none of us are able to see into the future. Instead, we are called upon to demonstrate our faith with optimism and enthusiasm. A leap of faith re-energizes and deepens our faith.

A Friend reminded us that expenditures on property do not relieve us of our obligation to continue and enlarge our commitment to address today's problems; we must be mindful of the effect that present day choices may have on our ability and financial capacity to act later.

Friends observed on the ways the meeting can serve the broader community by making our facilities welcoming and available. Personal simplicity by individuals can help make this renovation possible, a gift to future needs that we cannot now foresee. The facility exists as a part of a longer stream of history; those who made the present building possible were part of that history; this renovation will be our contribution to the ongoing stream of history. Our campus can serve as a place nurturing social change, a physical expression of our faith as it facilitates not only our own work but also the work of many working beyond the membership of Friends Meeting of Washington.

This is not principally a financial issue, important as those matters are. The core of the project is about letting our lives speak in every possible way. Not acting bars many from being a part of our Meeting's life; physical barriers beggar our strength and richness.

Welcome of Visitors

Christine Sloat, Sarah Radomsky, Sasha Rindisbacher, Greg Melchior, Charlie Melchior, and James Barton were welcomed as first time visitors

Clerk's Report

A car hit Suren Avanesyan last Sunday while he was running. His recovery is expected to be lengthy. The Avanesyans are grateful for the expressions of love and support they have received from FMW. With advance notice, the family can welcome visitors.

Molly Tully is making an excellent recovery and is finally pain free. She is in a rehabilitation hospital learning to move with her new hip. She welcomes visitors.

The Peace & Social Concerns Committee plans to provide overnight hospitality to people attending the Climate March on the last weekend in April. Please contact Mike Duvall if you are interested in helping by staying overnight or by providing breakfast for the marchers.

Our "fence ministry" was mentioned in the latest issue of *Quaker Journal*, which focuses on race and anti-racism. An article by Lauren Brownlee of Bethesda Friends Meeting quotes the line beneath our "Black Lives Matter" banner: "How does your life help to end racial injustice?"

Kim Acquaviva's new book, *LGBTQ-Inclusive Palliative and Hospice Care*, is now available. She will be speaking at an event co-hosted by Politics & Prose Bookstore and Busboys & Poets. Event details will be posted on the Meeting's listserv.

Major Items for Discussion

Marriage & Family Relations Committee: Debby Churchman reported that the Marriage & Family Relations Committee recommends that the marriage of Sarah Radomsky and Sasha Rindisbacher under our care be approved. (The ceremony is planned for September 9, 2017.) The request will lie over for a month as is our custom.

Sanctuary Taskforce: Elaine Wilson announced that the Peace & Social Concerns Committee has agreed to take the ad hoc Sanctuary Taskforce under its care, with the condition that all major proposals go first through the Committee.

Membership Committee: Gray Handley for the Membership Committee presented the name of Nicole Else-Quest for membership in the Meeting. The request will lie over for a month as is our custom.

Mortgage Agreement: Robin Appleberry spoke on behalf of Trustees. Trustees request that we enter into a mortgage agreement with Sandy Spring Bank for up to \$2.9 million and to sign a construction contract to build the project. Friends were reminded that materials were provided in advance outlining the proposed renovations, including its physical and financial implications. A copy of a single page summary is attached to these minutes.

A Friend asked clarifying questions concerning the terms of the mortgage and progress of fundraising.

A Friend raised a number of issues that remain as concerns. The Friend thanked Property Committee for attending to some of the issues that had been raised in the past concerning accessibility. But these renovation plans do not fully address all of accessibility issues. Not all of those issues are within the control of Friends Meeting of Washington. Friends were urged to work with the City to improve access, particularly regarding the grading on Phelps Place NW.

It was asked if Finance & Property Committee is comfortable with the financial aspects of the plan. Are we knowledgeable about the activities of those to whom we rent our property? Are we comfortable that our temporary approval of serving of alcohol on a limited basis will be sustained in the long run? A Friend, knowledgeable about the finances of the Meeting, responded that recent experience and projections have led him from concern to feeling more comfortable with moving forward with the Trustees' recommendation. Although the Finance & Stewardship Committee has not taken a formal

position on this proposal, Committee members (and the Financial Coordinator) have been active members of the discussions throughout the process. A Friend pointed out that the views of many deeply involved in the Meeting's financial affairs have been expressed during extensive discussions. In the past, capital expenditures have been made under the direction of the Trustees; this practice is in accordance with the Handbook section describing the duties and authority of Trustees.

It was asked whether we are being faithful to our historic Quaker witness by risking becoming overly dependent on rental income to pay for this renovation. A Friend spoke about the dynamic nature of the Meeting in recent years, partially made possible by improvements that have already been made. Delaying the further improvements contemplated by the renovation plans put that progress at risk.

The Meeting approved the request by Trustees to enter into a mortgage agreement with Sandy Spring Bank for up to \$2.9 million and to sign a construction contract to build the project. Steve Coleman stood aside. Friends expressed thanks for the generosity of our Friend for standing aside.

Friends expressed gratitude for the hard work of many Friends over the years who have put time, care, and attention to bring us to this point.

The Meeting concluded at about 2:20 pm with about 20 Friends and visitors present, to reconvene as way opens on April 9, 2017.

This ends the minutes and reports of the Meeting for Business

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 1: Peace & Social Concerns Networking Day, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm BYM's Peace & Social Concerns Committee will hold a networking day for people in Quaker monthly meetings to meet and exchange ideas and resources. The keynote will be an interactive "Debate into Dialog" program, which will give Friends practice in a technique to resolve controversies within our own meetings and in our communities. Friends will then be invited to choose between two or four one-hour workshops on addressing climate/environmental issues or making a difference in criminal justice; and helping refugees and immigrants or working for economic and racial justice. Please register ASAP at peace@bym-rsf.org The event will be held at the Friends Meeting School in Ijamsville MD.

April 1: Help make breakfast for our vulnerable neighbors. Convene at 6:15 am at **So Others Might Eat.** For more information, contact Betsy Bramon at betsy.bramon@gmail.com

April 2: Author Talk At a time of deep concern about attacks on minority groups and religious communities, many of us ask ourselves what would we do if targeted persecution became more prevalent in the United States. Author Mary Dingee Fillmore will visit FMW to talk about these issues

as reflected in her new historical novel, *An Address in Amsterdam*. It is the story of a young Jewish woman who joins the anti-Nazi underground, set against the backdrop of how the people of Amsterdam responded to Nazi persecution. Sunday, April 2, 2017 from 12:15 – 1:45 at FMW.

April 2: William Penn House Potluck & Dialogue Tonight's topic is racial and economic diversity in Quaker camps, presented by Dyresha Harris and Jamie DeMarco. Bring a dish to share. 515 East CapitolSt.SE, www.williampennhouse.org, 202.543.550

April 3: A White Historian Confronts Lynching, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, Bethesda Library Historian Susan Strasser and poet Marcia Cole discuss the historical context for lynching, and read Cole's "A Bitter Suite," For more information, see www.susanstrasser.net and www.historyworthwhile.com

April 5: Help make sandwiches for the **Grate Patrol** to take to our vulnerable neighbors, starting at 5:30 pm. For more information, contact Steve Brooks at sbrooks@uab.edu

April 7 – 9: Practicing Forgiveness as a Spiritual Discipline, Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA This workshop uses presentations, guided meditations, quiet worship, practical exercises and group and individual time to work on forgiveness. For details, go to www.pendlehill.org

April 8: Ribbon-cutting Dedication Ceremony The School for Friends successful *Small School, Big Future* capital campaign enabled us to expand our program, renovate our space, and secure our location at Church of the Pilgrims. Let's celebrate this wonderful accomplishment on Saturday, April 8. An open house will be held from 4:00-6:00pm, with a dedication ceremony from 4:30-5:00pm. Refreshments will be served, children are welcome.

April 20 – 23: Waging Peace: AFSC's Summit for Peace & Justice. Help the American Friends Service Committee celebrate its 100th anniversary by attending this summit t the Sheraton Hotel in Philadelphia. Keynote speakers include Erica Chenoweth, author of the empirical study of civil resistance and non-violence, and Oscar Arias, two-time president of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Peace Laureate. Registration: <https://www.afsc.org/summit>

April 27 – 30: White Privilege Conference, Kansas City, MO An inspiring opportunity to work with a thousand or more other people to combat racism and white privilege in our society. For details, see: www.whiteprivilegeconference.com There is a Quaker discount and opportunity for hospitality through Friends General Conference. Contact: ministryonracism@fgcquaker.org

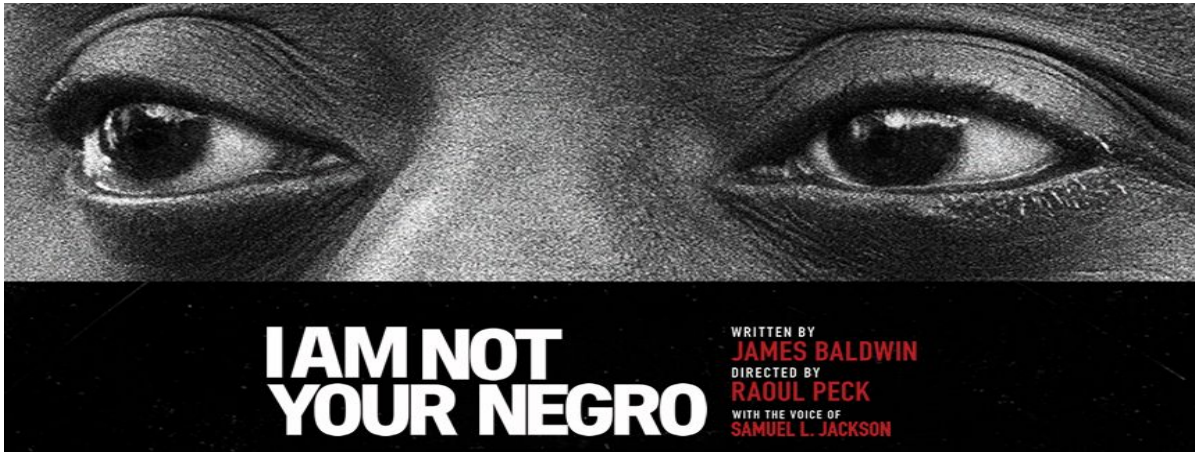
April 28 – 29: Hosting Climate Marchers Friends Meeting of Washington will be opening its doors and floors to marchers this weekend. Please notify Mike Duvall (moduvall@gmail.com) and/or the office if you are willing to staff this effort, either by staying here overnight or helping to make, serve, and clean up breakfast.

Coming up:

July 2 to 8: The Gathering, Friends General Conference, Niagara University, Niagara Falls, NY This year's theme is "Ripples Start Where Spirit Moves. Join 1200 Friends and sing, dance, chant, eat, talk, attend a workshop, get a (free) massage, go for a hike, attend lectures and movies, worship, study the Bible, or just relax. For more information, go to <http://www.fgcquaker.org/connect/gathering>

July 31 to August 6: BYM 2017 Annual Session, Hood College, Frederick, MD, “Growing Toward Justice—Acting on Faith.” All children from birth through 8th grade may attend at no cost. For information about meetings, workshops, plenaries, and registration, go to <http://www.bym-rsf.org/events/annualsession/>

Thinking About Race – (April 2017) James Baldwin



Excerpt from *Review: “I Am Not Your Negro” Will Make You Rethink Race* – by A.O. Smith in the New York Times, February 2, 2017.

“Baldwin could not have known about Ferguson and Black Lives Matter, about the presidency of Barack Obama and the recrudescence of white nationalism in its wake, but in a sense he explained it all in advance. He understood the deep, contradictory patterns of our history, and articulated, with a passion and clarity that few others have matched, the psychological dimensions of racial conflict: the suppression of black humanity under slavery and Jim Crow and the insistence on it in African-American politics and art; the dialectic of guilt and rage, forgiveness and denial that distorts relations between black and white citizens in the North as well as the South; the lengths that white people will go to wash themselves clean of their complicity in oppression.”

This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each Monthly and Preparative Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, david.etheridge@verizon.net.

RANDOM HAPPENINGS

One of the interesting side effects of the new Trump Administration is that Friends Meeting of Washington has become the go-to place for small nonprofits wanting to practice resistance and push for social justice. They are being joined by one of the biggest political responses since the 1960s.

For example, in December, a couple of nice women came by looking for a space to hold a volunteer fair for progressive organizations seeking help. They thought they might find 10 of them, and attract perhaps 150 people over the course of a few hours who'd like to help them out. This is a long story, but in the end, they had more than 20 groups and 1,340 people showed up at our door—mostly Millennials, mostly people who had no idea there was a Quaker meeting anywhere in the DC area (or even what a Quaker meeting might be).

In March, the Mercy Corps, the Ocean Conservancy, and the National Coalition of Family Farmers (fabulous food!) held multi-day strategy meetings here. Then a couple of Brits came across the pond to give a week-long course on collaboration across different sectors, teaching groups how to speak with each other in areas where they fundamentally disagree (you think we might need this?). A group of Jewish people in support of Palestine held two meetings here, and another Jewish group concerned about the steep rise in anti-Semitism held a Shabbat dinner in our Assembly Room. The Democratic Socialists of America have found us and love our space. The Literacy Lab—which works with Americorps volunteers to increase literacy in the DC Public Schools—held their celebration day, which features Zumba (the music makes you wiggle), yoga, meditation, coloring, scrapbooking, taco making, and more. Super fun.

There's a noticeable increase in social justice activism among FMW Friends as well. Several of us have been attending meetings organized by Sanctuary DMV, which is bringing together nearly 100 local congregations to support the undocumented in our Metro area. We expect to bring a speaker from that group here to talk with FMW as a whole soon; stay tuned. A few of us went to the Indigenous People's March on a cold, rainy/sleety/snowy day in March, carrying our "Quakers for Equality" sign. We must have found everyone at the march who'd ever attended a Quaker meeting or met a Quaker—they all kept coming up and wanting to talk. The next day, a group that is suing the government over their decision to skip the environmental impact study and okay the Dakota Access Pipeline came to our Meeting House to present a panel discussion, which was livestreamed—quite wonderful.



J.E. McNeil has given three Active Bystander Trainings so far at our Meeting House, and is now giving them at Langley Hill, Adelphi, and in her home state of Texas. And a group of young Friends has started the "I Can't Keep Quiet Chorus" which rehearses here on the weekends.

April will see two major marches—for Science and against Climate Change. FMW will open their doors and floors to the climate marchers; Peace & Social Concerns is looking for folks to help out with that.

And nearly every day it seems there is a new threat to a long-cherished program or benefit to the poor and vulnerable. Trusting that we will be there with our rooms, our voices, and our willingness to engage in deep listening.