

Order of Worship, 11/8/15

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Friends Meeting of Washington

Order of Worship

Monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

November 2015

Queries

Do you provide religious education, including study of the Bible and of Friends' history and practices, in your Meeting? Do you ensure that schools under the care of Friends exemplify Friends' principles? Do you support and strive to improve the public schools?

Advices

Education has long been important to Quakers. Friends feel that education is a lifetime effort to develop an open and informed mind and a seeking and sensitive spirit.

It became apparent to early Friends that some form of education would be necessary for leadership and ministry if the Society were to be effective in promoting Truth. In 1668 George Fox urged that schools be established for girls as well as boys. John Woolman, in 1758, cautioned Friends to "watch the spirit of children" and "nurture them in Gospel Love." And, in 1831, Joseph John Gurney exhorted, "We shall never thrive upon ignorance."

Friends are concerned to educate for individual growth, community responsibility, a knowledge of God's world and a sense of wonder at continuing revelation in this changing universe.

- Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice

Voices

There is a truth that lies beyond scientific theories and religious doctrines which are always being disproved and outmoded. Religion should welcome every discovery of science, which in rolling back the boundaries of the known world makes the miracle of creation that much more wonderful, that much more divine. Personal religion, like science, should always be rolling back the boundaries making new discoveries, discarding inadequate concepts, enlarging its vision.

- Bradford Smith, 1963

Welcome of Visitors

Clerk's Report

Major items

Marriage and Family Committee – Jim Bell

Annual report

Marriage of Lydia Pecker and Carl Johnson accomplished in Good Order

Membership committee

- Neil Robert Froemming application for membership, 2nd reading
- Scott Breeze application for membership, 2nd reading

Nominating Committee – Harry Massey

Nomination of David Beavers (A) to Capital Campaign Committee

Ministry and Worship

- Update on collection of harassment policies
- Recommendation to create a Harassment Policy Task Force

Peace and Social Concerns – Beth Cogswell and Brian Lutenege

- Minute/follow up on the Worship Sharing prompted by the queries shared with us by BYM's Unity with Nature Committee
- Banner on Black Lives Matter (Elaine Wilson)

Trustees – Dan Dozier

Report on Renovation Project

Report on Baltimore Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting

Other business

Hunger and Homelessness Task Force annual report – CJ Lewis and Steve Brooks

Healing and Reconciliation – David Etheridge

Update on participation in a workshop on the Stephen Ministries

Marriage and Family Relations Annual Report,

November 2015

The committee worked with the couples Mike Hubbard and Ryan Ashworth for an April wedding, and Lydia Pecker and Carl Johnson for an October wedding. Both marriages were under the care of the meeting and were accomplished in good order.

The committee also sponsored two all day workshops facilitated by Jane Connor. The first was entitled “More than Friends” that was held in February and approximately 22 persons attended from area meetings including FMW participants. The second workshop was held in October and entitled “I Love you but...” that was attended by 23 persons from area meetings including participants from FMW.

The marriage timeline and procedures chart was updated and added to the committee’s web page. F T Clark was also registered with the city of Washington, DC to officially sign marriage licenses.

Ministry & Worship Report on Anti-Harassment Policies

Blair Forlaw, Clerk

Ministry and Worship has gathered sample anti-harassment policies that we believe can be helpful to FMW as we consider revisions to ours. I have attached the existing FMW policy (two documents), the policy used for FGC gatherings, and two from other, secular sources.

We note that:

- 1) The existing FMW policy includes many important principles that were clearly violated by the unwelcome advances and communications described in the Meetings for Listening that we convened in August and September
- 2) The other sample policies we gathered are more specific than FMW's current policy, and they are therefore likely more effective in clearly defining boundaries and consequences of harassing behavior
- 3) The FMW policy does not have any enforcement mechanism, and this is a huge weakness. "An anti-harassment policy with no monitoring and enforcement is worse than no policy at all," we feel.

We recommend the creation of a task force to consider these documents and draft a new / revised policy for the Meeting *as soon as possible*. We believe that this task force should include representatives of appropriate committees, representatives of the women (and men?) who received unwelcome advances and inappropriate communications, representatives of Young Adult Friends, and an attorney.

While we did not discuss the names of any potential committee representatives, we do recommend any or all of the following from among those most knowledgeable about reported harassing activities: Betsy Bramon, Liz Pomerleau, Zoe Plaughter.

I would like to emphasize our recommendation that the Meeting move quickly to put this process in place. Our responsiveness is essential to restoring confidence and trust.

Minute on Sustainability

The Friends Meeting of Washington of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) notes with deep concern the dramatic impacts of climate change around the world. The world's scientists have eliminated any doubt about the reality of climate change and the major contribution of human activity as its cause. The same scientists call for immediate and large-scale action on climate. We affirm the need for urgent action. Lacking a peaceful analogy, in the U.S. we need a societal redirection as quick and as large as we did for World War II.

A recent Worship Sharing at FMW took note of two types of actions concerned Friends might focus on: internally-focused, life-style or "sustainability" actions and externally, system-change, "climate actions." It is clear that both are needed. If we only make personal changes, the larger social-political-economic system, driven by the fossil fuel industry and others profiting from the current system, will overwhelm our individual or FMW-focused efforts.

In the great Quaker tradition which always incorporated both these emphases, FMW and its Members have undertaken both types of action.

On the internal side, recognizing the impact our own religious community has on the planet, FMW has implemented numerous efforts over the past few years to reduce the ecological footprint of our property both as part of our regular maintenance and independently:

- Installation of more efficient heating and cooling equipment in all three of our buildings to replace radiators as well as the installation of programmable thermostats in each room to ensure that energy is not wasted when rooms are unoccupied.
- Conducting an energy audit to identify potential areas of energy savings throughout our property (many of which have been implemented)
- Sealing of leaks
- Switching to energy efficient LED lighting wherever possible and installing the most efficient fluorescent lighting where these bulb types remain

Further, FMW's upcoming renovation project may reduce the overall energy usage of our property. It will also make better use of green space on our campus including the addition of a green roof for efficient storm water management.

Members are advised to be aware of the impact of personal decisions on the environment, such as:]

- Purchases, large and small, many and few, frequent and infrequent;
- Transportation;
- Alternative utility resources, i.e. bulk purchases of solar panels in DC through DC SUN;
- Recognition of biodiversity, that people are only one species on the planet;
- Green construction or renovation choices such as bird friendly windows;
- Contribution that renters might make, even demand, in their housing;
- Life style changes, including family size.

On the external side, Members and Attenders of FMW have supported a wide range of climate action:

- Working with Friends Committee on National Legislation to support a national tax on carbon as advocated by Citizens Climate Lobby.
- Organizing education and demonstrations as part of Earth Quaker Action Team to get PNC bank to stop funding “mountain-top removal” coal mining in Appalachia as one form of “extreme extraction” of fossil fuels.
- Working with Sierra Club, DC Environmental Network, the Institute for Local Self Reliance, the Energy Justice Network, Chesapeake Climate Action Network and many other local groups to develop and continually improve a Sustainability Plan for the District.
- Marching and sometimes getting arrested with 350.org locally and in NYC in a call to reduce carbon emissions.
- Working with Divest DC to end investment by the District in the stocks of fossil fuel companies.
- Working with the National Institute for Peer Support to give potential climate activists a place to reflect on their role in all these efforts, to support each other as they take action to eliminate racism in the climate movement and to support climate justice work by communities of color.

We list all these organizations to give our Meeting a better sense of the local opportunities for both internal sustainability and external climate action.

FMW is currently forming an ad-hoc Sustainability and Climate Action Task Force that will look into these issues in more depth and recommend additional opportunities to reduce our Meeting's impact on the environment and increase our Meeting's involvement in these external actions needed to change the current carbon-based society.

SHORTER STATEMENT MINUTE (to be put back into longer statement or to stand alone.)

Minute regarding Sustainability and Climate Action by Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW)

In accordance with Quaker testimonies regarding care of the Earth, we encourage Friends to examine their personal ecological footprint and look for ways to incorporate energy efficiency practices into their own lives. We also encourage Friends to undertake the personal work which is required to face the enormity of this crisis and to take the external actions necessary to change the system which drives it. Finally, we also call on other Meetings both within and outside Baltimore Yearly Meeting to examine their property's sustainability practices and their Meetings commitment to climate action.

**A Meeting of Trustees,
Capital Improvement Task Force (CITF),
Capital Campaign Committee (CCC)
and Finance & Stewardship Committee**

November 1, 2015

Present:

Trustees: Jim Bell, John Scales, Tom Goodhue, Dan Dozier (clerking and recording), Martha Solt, Faith Williams, and Virginia Avanesyan. Mary Campbell joined later.

CITF: Merry Pearlstein, Ylene Larson, Neil Froemming, CJ Lewis, Ken Orvis

CCC: Grant Thompson, David Etheridge, Justin Connor, Todd Harvey

F&S: Jim Bell

We began with some moments of silence at about 10:15 AM.

Friends agreed on an agenda that was focused on discussing the construction costs, fundraising; and next steps.

A Friend suggested that uncertainty is the enemy of fundraising and the CCC is concerned that the Meeting has not fully developed a simple, trustworthy narrative about the project and costs, given the recent rise in cost estimates.

How did this happen and what can we do?

Friends discussed the fact that a trustworthy narrative is critical along with a sense of positive momentum and a clear understanding of what steps the Meeting will take. We need to know about where we are and where we are going with clarity, while being honest and transparent about all information related to the project.

The positives are that it appears that at least Friends here and probably the whole Meeting is committed to solving our problems.

We discussed the reasons for the increased costs estimates and why. We are disappointed with unreliability of both the earlier professional cost estimates and schedule forecasts from the A&E firm. We believe that there are several reasons for the increase in cost estimates including the failure of the earlier estimates to properly value major items like the cost of stone facing and the cost of shoring and sheeting; the cost of meeting the new storm water management standards established by the DC government; the cost of adding campus-wide fire protection required by the Fire Marshall; and additional work to address structural concerns in the QHCH infill section. For example, the previous estimate estimated \$60 thousand for “masonry”, while the new estimate puts that number at more than \$300 thousand, plus overhead, of which \$194 thousand is just for stone veneer, mostly for the elevator tower.

The current estimate is that the whole project may cost up to \$3.2 million, which includes about \$250 thousand construction contingency and more than \$100 thousand for permit and legal costs.

Monarc Construction, our preconstruction contractor, will this week receive the full construction document set from the architects and will begin soliciting competitive bids from multiple subcontractors. They will be working with us and the architects for the following four weeks to do value engineering and identify cost saving options and will then provide us with a revised and more reliable cost estimate in about 4 weeks after they receive the construction documents. The reality is, however, that we do not expect substantial cost reductions from this effort.

Friends discussed various options to manage the costs and whether the project could be staged — that is whether some significant aspects of the project could be postponed to a later date. After extensive discussion, the general sense seemed to be that it will probably not be possible to stage much of the project without a major increase in overall project costs.

We discussed three choices: 1) abandon the project; 2) redesign the project; 3) go forward with smaller changes.

We may be able to make some changes. The next cost estimate from Monarc will provide a clearer idea of what options we have and the costs and benefits of possible changes.

One option is to go forward, with modest changes, to accept the higher projected cost and try to identify an appropriate funding plan. We agreed that we cannot postpone making the financial decisions about the project. Once we submit permits, changing them is very costly. The question is, can we afford to build a project that costs \$3.2 million. Contributions, investment income from Friends Fiduciary, fundraising and rent are our sources of revenue. The first question we must answer is whether we can pay for a \$3.2 million project; whether undertaking a \$3.2 million project is reasonable for FMW. We know our sources of funds and we can consider how to raise the funds.

One Friend suggested that we should consider a professional fundraiser to advise us. Another suggested that he hoped that we consider the role of our four committees within the Meeting discernment. If we don't really believe in this, how can we ask the rest of the Meeting to support it? If we go forward with the project, we need to communicate that we believe in the project. We need to be transparent, clear and honest.

Friends all agreed that we intend to go forward with the project, making cost savings where reasonable and not abandon the project or fundamentally redesign it, subject to careful analysis of financial feasibility.

On funding issues the question of whether we can commit to a \$3.2 million project requires assumptions about our cash flow, including: 1) Meeting revenue, including contributions, event and long-term rentals; 2) Meeting operating expenses and capital expenditures; 3) Capital Campaign donations; 4) withdrawals from our investments and investment revenue; and 5) financing costs.

We reviewed the spreadsheets Neil prepared showing project costs, financing costs and revenue (copy attached) which, given certain assumptions, show several scenarios under which the Meeting could pay for the cost of the construction. All the scenarios involved major long-term borrowing, requiring about two decades to fully retire all the loans. That time might be shortened by faster fund-raising or increased rental or investment income.

Friends agreed to:

1. Go To Meeting for Business with an update on costs and status of the project in November;
2. Establish a project finance 'scrub' committee to gather and present information to MfB and the Construction Group;
3. Assuming the finance scrub committee and the Construction Group (of Trustees, F&S, Property and CCC) agree, request additional funds from MfB in January, 2016.

We agreed to establish a subcommittee of financing experts to scrub the numbers and advise us how to proceed. Members of this subcommittee may include: Merry Pearlstein, Neil Froemming, and Grant Thompson. Ed Husted has agreed to review the work of the group, but does not have time to participate in developing the work of the subcommittee to develop spreadsheets.

A Construction Group Subcommittee will meet by phone this week. The members of this Group include Neil, Ken, Grant, Dan, Merry, and Jim.

Grant discussed the work of the CCC. They had slowed over the summer. Fundraising at this Meeting is challenging — we have little information about our donors and we don't know each other very well. However, the Committee has developed a plan and thinks it workable. The CCC first wants to raise money via first donations, but 'charity loans' from Friends may also be a source of funding. It was noted that such loans in other situations have often ended up becoming gifts. CCC will put together a video and email presentation about the plan and the finances.

The meeting ended with a few moments of silence at about 1:00 PM.