

Minutes of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, May 18, 2013

Michigan Friends Center, 1104 Clarks Lake Road, Chelsea, Michigan

Attending:

From Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting: Ruth Carey, Thomas Taylor, Nancy Taylor, Tom Blackwell, Alan Connor, Richard Tucker, Christa Williams, Debs Roush

From Birmingham Monthly Meeting: Ellerie Brownfain, Jonah Brownfain, Ellen Barnes, Marvin Barnes, Wink Covintree

From Detroit Monthly Meeting: Margaret Walden, Leslie Walden, Joel Ottenbreit, Sharon Ottenbreit

From Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting: Amy Ranger

From Pine River Monthly Meeting: Don Nagler, Nancy Nagler, Kyo Takahashi, Mary Takahashi

From Red Cedar Monthly Meeting: Erick Williams, Margaret Nielsen

Guests: Katherine Philipson, staff member at FCNL, Steve Daut, Michigan Friends Center

Joining in the afternoon:

From Detroit Monthly Meeting: Kevin Howley

From Red Cedar Monthly Meeting: Richard Lee

From Birmingham Monthly Meeting: Geoff Brieger, Inge Brieger

From Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting: Helen Fox, Philip Stoffregen, Mark Thames, Joan Sampieri

Guests from Friends School in Detroit: Alicia Harris-Turner, Jane Morgan, Jordan Harvey Morgan

[1] The Meeting opened at 9:55 am with introductions and settled into worship. It was mentioned that a memorial meeting was occurring at this moment for Weaver Habl at Red Cedar Meeting, and that a Peace Pole had been installed the previous week outside the Michigan Friends Center in memory of Lynn Meadows by the Ann Arbor Veterans for Peace.

[2] The Meeting for Business began at 10:30 am

[3] Roll call:

Ann Arbor	- 6
Birmingham	- 5
Detroit	- 4
Grand Rapids	- 1
Holland	- 0
Kalamazoo	- 0
Pine River	- 4
Red Cedar	- 2

[4] Minutes of the September 15, 2012 Business Meeting were read and approved.

[5] The Treasurer's Report for May 18, 2013 (attached) was read and approved. Expenses for the Midwinter Gathering were over budget. In March, the Clerk asked to use funds from last year's carryover to meet these expenses and the Finance Committee approved. Planning for next year's Midwinter Gathering will be done in consultation with the Finance Committee. 89 appears to be the correct membership number for Red Cedar Monthly Meeting. The other number might come from an earlier year.

[6] Steve Daut, Clerk of Michigan Friends Center presented the MFC annual report to the Quarterly Meeting.

The current financial report of Michigan Friends Center shows total assets of \$ 171,483.01 and liabilities of \$886.00. The Michigan Friends Center building accounts for just over \$ 100,000 of the assets and savings accounts just under \$ 70,000. However, the net assets are slowly decreasing rather than growing. Income is from building rentals, cash donations at MFC programs, an annual appeal letter and one foundation grant. Together, these do not quite cover current expenses. The shortfall is made up by drawing from the building maintenance fund. Further details are in Steve's written report (attached).

MFC programs are increasing this year, thanks to efforts by Carolyn Holland and Richard Tucker. There has been a permaculture program held by the Chelsea Transition Town group, an Earth Day celebration, and information booths for both MFC and Friends Lake Cooperative Community at the Chelsea Senior Center Spring Expo. Future programs will center around themes of peace and justice, environmental sustainability and spiritual foundations. Upcoming programs are announced on the Center's web site, mfcenter.org. In addition, the MFC Board has adopted a statement establishing a group to be called the "Friends of Michigan Friends Center" (attached).

Michigan Friends Center and the Friends Lake Cooperative Community have both acted to make the Clerk or Chair of each organization an ex officio member of the other organization's Board, in order to draw the two organizations closer together. The two organizations are separate for historical reasons; whether they should remain separate is a subject for continuing discussion.

[7] Richard Tucker added a brief update about the 50th anniversary celebration for the Friends Lake Cooperative Community, to be held at the Lake over Labor Day weekend, with most activities planned for Sunday. FLCC also has a web site, friendslake.org. A suggestion was made to provide a sign-up page for former members who might be coming to the 50th anniversary celebration.

[8] There was no representative from the AFSC Criminal Justice Program present to give a report.

[9] Katherine Philipson from the Friends Committee on National Legislation gave an informal presentation about the organization's recent activities.

[10] Lunch was provided by Ellen Barnes, assisted by Jonah Brownfain and was enjoyed by all.

[11] Following lunch, the Nominating Committee Report was presented and approved. For 2013-14, the Quarter's officers are:

Clerk:	Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham)
Assistant Clerk:	[open]
Recording Clerk:	Tom Blackwell (Ann Arbor)
Treasurer:	Inge Brieger (Birmingham)
Finance Committee:	Joe Mills (Kalamazoo, convener) Reade Dornan (Red Cedar) Erick Williams (Red Cedar)
Nominating Comm:	Sam Hays (Detroit) [and two positions open]
Trustees:	Margaret Walden (Detroit) Linda Mills (Kalamazoo) Don Nagler (Pine River)
Resident Agent:	Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

Meetings coordinating the Youth Program at Quarterly gatherings:

Fall 2013:	Grand Rapids / Holland
Spring 2014:	Kalamazoo

[12] Friends School in Detroit. The Clerk summarized his written report to the Quarter on the current situation at Friends School in Detroit by saying that he sees problems with the school's Board of Trustees' oversight of the school, with fiduciary responsibility, and with the way in which the school conducts its business affairs. There is a concern that financial shortages may lead the school to depart from the Quaker principles of truth and integrity. The clerk emphasized a lack of reliable information coming to both the Board and the Quarter.

Helen Fox, clerk of the school's Board of Trustees, reported that Ed Harris, the Head of School, had resigned abruptly two weeks before, and the Board accepted his resignation. The Board has subsequently appointed Marta Rhea-Johnson, a teacher and formerly Director of Admissions as Interim Head of School, and Mark O'Hara-Fisher, a math teacher and Dean of Faculty as Interim Assistant Head of School. The Board has decided that the school will re-open in September and already 50 students are re-enrolled. She went on to say that the school's new Strategic Plan has been completed, with input from faculty, staff, Board members and parents. It is based on gradually increasing enrollment and increasing the number of fully paid students. The school currently has 102 students, out of a capacity of 145. The plan aims for 105 students next year and 125 after 4 years. It also aims to increase ethnic diversity to 50% African American, 25% European and 25% other minorities. This will involve developing internal capacities for marketing and development, which have been practically non-existent this year.

During the ensuing discussion, much concern was expressed about the school's inability to pay its bills. The school's average operating cost per student is approximately \$ 11,000 annually, and tuition income covers about half of that. The remainder has been made up each year through a combination of contributions to the school's Annual Fund, Foundation support and by increasing the school's indebtedness. If tuition were increased enough to fully cover the operating expense of the school, the school would become unaffordable for a majority of its present students. One speaker summarized this by saying that the school provides a high quality private education to students who would not be able to pay for it. It was also noted that since shortly after Kevin Howley left as Head of School in December 2010, the school has not had a business manager separate from the Head of School. In closing, the meeting was asked to "hold in our consciousness the lives of small young children in Detroit who through the school are given an opportunity that they otherwise might never have".

[13] The meeting closed with silence at 3:40 pm.