

Minutes of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, October 14, 2017

Michigan Friends Center, 7748 Clarks Lake Road, Chelsea, Michigan 48118

Attending:

From Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting: Cassie Cammann, Christa Williams, John Williams, Richard Tucker, Becky Morehouse, Joan Sampieri, Nancy Taylor, Thomas Taylor, Jeff Cooper, Peggy Daub, Karen Connor, Al Connor, Bill Riccobono, Blair Ellis, Lisa Klopfer, Tom Blackwell
From Birmingham Monthly Meeting: Geoff Brieger, Inge Brieger, Harriet Greenwood, Pam Melick
From Detroit Monthly Meeting: Sharon Ottenbreit, Pam Melick
From Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting: Jana Norlin, Wayne Norlin
From Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting: Raelyn Joyce, Joe Mills, Linda Mills
From Red Cedar Monthly Meeting: April Allison

[1] Michigan Friends Center

(The report from Michigan Friends Center was moved to the morning session to avoid scheduling conflicts.) John Williams reported. Michigan Friends Center's role has evolved since it was founded to become now a place for learning, meditation and spiritual retreat. They have maintained an active series of programs in the past year with topics mainly from three categories: peace and justice, environment and spiritual growth. Users of the Center now are more often local to Chelsea than was true with the earlier statewide focus on Michigan Quakers. Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting and the Friends Lake Cooperative Community are the two founding organizations of Michigan Friends Center. The Board of Trustees, currently five members, is seeking additional members both among Quakers and from the local community. John Williams will retire from the Board next year.

[2] Program

The morning program included singing, led by Thomas Taylor, and worship sharing around queries arising from Greg Woods' plenary talk for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting last July "Reviving Quakerism in the New Millenium".

[3] The meeting for business began at 1:15 pm.

[4] Roll call:

Ann Arbor	-	11
Birmingham	-	3
Detroit	-	1
Grand Rapids	-	2
Holland	-	0
Kalamazoo	-	3
Pine River	-	0
Red Cedar	-	1

[5] News of monthly meetings

It was announced that Pine River Meeting has become a worship group. Members from the Red Cedar Membership and Outreach Committee will visit Pine River every month or two. In addition the Fremont worship group has become very small and may be laid down when Theresa and Herb Lindsay move out of state. The North Manitou worship group is also small. The Holland Meeting is small and continuing.

[6] Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the May 20, 2017 meeting were approved.

[7] Treasurer's Report

The treasurer presented a revised annual report for the year ending June 30, 2017 which includes the accounting for Arthur Larrabee's clerking workshop as line items rather than on a separate sheet. This shows a deficit for the year of \$ 802 and a bank balance as of July 1, 2017 of \$ 3,370.58. The further update to October 2017 on the back may not show a late clearing check. The treasurer's report is accepted up through July 1, 2017.

[8] Finance Committee

The Finance Committee consists of Joe Mills, Joan Sampieri and Erick Williams. Membership in the Quarterly's meetings is down from 304 to 266 members, according to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting records. The committee's proposed budget for 2017-18 retains the annual assessment of \$ 43 per member, omits any contribution to Friends School in Detroit, retains the \$ 200 contribution to the Institute for Global Education and adds a \$ 200 contribution for the Kalamazoo Friends Meeting Peace Park Ministry. Questions were raised about the contributions to Quaker organizations, in particular to the Friends Lake Cooperative Community, but also about the size of the contribution to the American Friends Service Committee. Richard Tucker said that in December there will be a year end report from the Friends Lake Cooperative Community. The annual contribution to AFSC is honoring a commitment made by the Quarterly Meeting years ago in order to keep the Michigan Criminal Justice Program operating. The following two minutes were adopted.

[9] Budget for 2017-18

The Meeting accepts the proposed budget for 2017-18 as presented by the Finance Committee, with a correction to raise the contribution to Michigan Friends Center to \$ 1,200. The contribution to the Friends Lake Cooperative Community has the lowest priority and is to be paid only if there is no shortfall. If there is a budget shortfall, Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting will reconsider the contribution to Friends Lake Cooperative Community at its May meeting.

[10] Budget for future years

For future years, the Finance Committee is requested to look at the budget with fresh eyes, considering the role of the Quarterly Meeting going forward and apart from the history. More information is needed about the relationship between the Meeting and the Friends Lake Cooperative Community.

[11] Changes in Monthly Meeting status

Mathilda Navias from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting had asked that the Quarter consider whether it wishes to continue handling requests from any groups in Michigan wishing to form a new Monthly Meeting, or from existing Meetings considering possibly disbanding or merging with another Monthly Meeting. In states other than Michigan, such a request would go to the LEYM Advancement and Outreach Committee and a new meeting would be recognized by the Yearly Meeting directly. LEYM's Advancement and Outreach Committee offers resources and support for this process, in addition to those within the Quarter. After consideration, the Quarterly Meeting decided to continue in the role of handling such requests. The Clerk will communicate this decision back to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

[12] Juneteenth Certificate

A certificate honoring the role of Michigan Quakers in harboring fugitive slaves and in the abolition of slavery was presented a number of years ago in Lansing to the Society of Friends in Michigan, represented by Raelyn Joyce and Don Nagler. It was decided that this should rotate amongst the Quarter's meetings for this year on a monthly basis, to be in Grand Rapids for the month of April, and would have a permanent location at Michigan Friends Center. The following rotation was agreed: Ann Arbor for November and the remainder of October, in Birmingham for December, Detroit for January, Red Cedar for February, Kalamazoo for March and Grand Rapids for April, returning permanently to Michigan Friends Center in May.

[13] Appointment of Trustees for Michigan Friends Center

Two new Trustees are needed for Michigan Friends Center. Since there were no volunteers, a Nominating Committee will be appointed by the GPQM clerk.

[14] Minute of appreciation

The Quarter minutes its appreciation to John Williams and to Richard Tucker for their continued efforts in recent years to guide both Michigan Friends Center and the Friends Lake Cooperative Community into the new millenium.

[15] Friends School in Detroit

A Purchase and Sale agreement for the Friends School in Detroit property was signed on October 4, 2017, with an expected closing of January 23-24. The trustees anticipate that the property will be redeveloped for residential use. This sale could still fall through. The purchaser and price were not disclosed.

The next challenge for the Trustees is appropriately disposing of the school's contents and finding a permanent home for the school's records. The Midwest Auction Company has already auctioned off major items, but many childrens books, desks, bookcases and chairs remain. The Trustees seek help from Friends in finding organizations who will accept these as donations and would come to pick them up and put them to a productive use. The School's records are being reviewed by a Records Committee and the most significant will be preserved by the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan.

[16] Minute of appreciation

To the nine members of the transitional Board of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit the Meeting minutes its appreciation for their tremendous efforts in handling the closure and dissolution of the School.

[17] Re-assessing the purpose of Quarterly Meeting

There was open discussion of the question: What is the purpose of the Quarter for us ? It may be useful to offer some very brief history. Before Quarterly Meeting started there was a "Green Pastures Association" in the 1940's in which Quakers from around the state gathered annually for a few days of fellowship at a site close to the present location. This was primarily a social organization and involved young families and members from young meetings which had started in college towns in the 1930's. The Quarterly Meeting was formally organized from this group in 1957. Jumping ahead, in September 2014, an ad hoc Re-visioning committee for the Quarterly summarized the results of their survey of members and monthly meetings saying "Friends valued fellowship, worship and the educational programming offered by GPQM. . . . A primary goal of GPQM is to nurture the spiritual life of Friends within its meetings and worship groups." Others observed that there are a number of questions we don't address around the differences between Meetings within the Quarter, differences in weight and wealth, in racial composition, between meetings in non-academic or academic towns, and questions of distance – there are some very remote meetings. Would addressing these questions be a way to draw us together ?

It was noted that the MidWinter Gathering does draw participants, including many who do not come to regular Quarterly Meetings. Greg Woods' plenary talk at last year's Lake Erie Yearly Meeting is an example of a program of interest. The social role of the Quarter, and maintaining contacts around the state are important and desirable. From Detroit Monthly Meeting there was a minute that "Detroit Monthly Meeting has concerns about the stucture and praxis of GPQM and supports re-evaluating the value of having Quarterly meetings. The Meeting supports considering laying down or redefining GPQM's purpose, particularly with a focus as a platform for educational functions and fellowship. It also supports moving towards a called meeting format for GPQM after the legal issues surrounding the laying down of FSD have been resolved." Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting noted that they have needed to simplify their structure and budget in order to keep the doors open as a place for worship. They would encourage a parallel process of simplifying the association of Monthly meetings for social and spiritual engagement. Someone mentioned developing the culture of democracy: meetings are a social space; we need to take control of our lives. Quarterly meeting could be an example of this practice.

It was noted that Green Pastures is the only quarterly meeting within Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

[18] MidWinter Gathering:

Raelyn Joyce announced that Kalamazoo Meeting will host the MidWinter Gathering this year and mentioned as possible programs either a presentation on the situation in Palestine and Ramallah Friends School or a workshop on Right Relationships with Native Peoples presented by Friends from New York Yearly Meeting.