

Minutes of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, September 17, 2016

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

Attending:

From Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting: Thomas Taylor, Nancy Taylor, Jim Crowfoot, Joan Sampieri, Peggy Daub, Jeff Cooper, Richard Tucker, John Deikis, Tom Blackwell, Al Connor, Phil Volk, Phil Stoffregen

From Birmingham Monthly Meeting: Geoff Brieger, Ellen Barnes, Marvin Barnes, Ellerie Brownfain, Jonah Brownfain

From Detroit Monthly Meeting: Sharon Ottenbreit, Kevin Howley, Paul Savage

From Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting: Raelyn Joyce, Linda Mills, Joe Mills, Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki, Flo Friender

From Pine River Monthly Meeting: Don Nagler, Nancy Nagler

From American Friends Service Committee: Natalie Holbrook

From Friends School in Detroit: Patrick Padgett, Brandy Robinson, Toby Barlow, Felicia Molnar

From Friends Council on Education: Drew Smith, Sharon Dreese

[1] The meeting began at 9:30 with singing led by Thomas Taylor, followed by a half hour of silent worship.

[2] Michigan AFSC Criminal Justice Program

Natalie Holbrook reported for the American Friends Service Committee's Criminal Justice Program. She focused on the AFSC Good Neighbor Project. This arranges and oversees letter writing pairs between prisoners and community members. It is organized on co-mentorship and restorative justice principles. In Natalie's words, it provides an opportunity for people to hear a prisoner's story, and for the prisoner to tell their story. It is an opportunity for them to reflect on what they did and on how they have changed since. The project was started by Ron Simpson-Bays, who now works for a national prison advocacy organization. There are 40 pairings currently, monitored by new AFSC staff member Demetrius Titus. Attention is focused on prisoners serving life sentences and long indeterminate sentences, since these have the most need for contacts outside the prison system, and are often the ones who do the most transformative work. In addition to the Good Neighbor project, AFSC continues to give parole preparation workshops inside the prisons and to answer many letters from prisoners and their families. Natalie observed that she has been doing this work for 14 years.

[3] Roll call:

Ann Arbor	-	11
Birmingham	-	5
Detroit	-	3
Grand Rapids	-	0
Holland	-	0
Kalamazoo	-	5
Pine River	-	2
Red Cedar	-	0

[4] Treasurer's Report

Linda Mills reported total income of \$ 12,469 for the year July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 and total expenditures of \$ 12,493. The cost for the MidWinter Gathering was only \$ 153. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

[5] Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the May 21, 2016 meeting were approved with multiple changes. Among attenders, Kevin Howley is a member of Detroit Monthly Meeting, not Birmingham; Phil Riegl is not a member in Detroit. In item [6], Raelyn Joyce is a member of Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting, not Grand Rapids. In item [16], the current terms are expiring for trustees Patrick Padgett, Joe Mills and Toby Barlow, not Peter Dale.

[6] Report from Friends School in Detroit

Patrick Padgett, clerk of the Board of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit, reported that the building, while not in use, remains in stable condition. The roof repairs are holding; the grass was cut over the summer by a combination of a paid landscaper and the Motor City Mower Gang. The building now has a wireless alarm system and there have been no incidents. The insurance has been paid through October 12. There is market demand for the property. The Board has received a letter of intent to purchase, expressing interest in the property, while neither side has made any commitment to do so. The school corporation had previously borrowed \$10,000 from the Bassett Memorial Fund; \$7,500 has been returned to the fund and \$2,500 is outstanding. Research done by the Nonprofit Finance Fund over the summer was fully paid for by a Kresge Foundation grant for that purpose.

[7] Report on progress to re-open Friends School in Detroit

Brandy Robinson described the current state of plans to re-open the School. The intention is to contract for professional help for the research and planning process. They envision two phases. Phase 1, between now and November, will consist of a market assessment of the need for private education in Detroit and a survey of fundraising feasibility. Phase 2, if signs are positive, will involve a decision whether to stay or move and more detailed planning for necessary renovations to the building, financial systems, staffing levels and Board policy.

A conversation with potential funders was held on August 24 with representatives from the Kresge, Knight and Kellogg Foundations and including the mayor's development officer Ryan Frederick and Bill Pinnick from the Nonprofit Finance Fund. A grant proposal for \$125k to support Phase 1 of the planning process has been submitted to the Kellogg Foundation and they have been told verbally that this request is in line with the Foundation's priorities. The Kresge Foundation will convene another meeting in November.

Drew Smith from Friends Council on Education observed at length that there are other Friends Schools which are incorporated independently of a monthly or yearly Meeting. Friends Council on Education would be willing to provide oversight for a reconstituted Friends School in Detroit.

[8] Discussion of Friends School in Detroit

After lunch, the meeting reconvened to consider how to proceed on Friends School in Detroit. Two printed items of information were available: a one page "Schedule of Liabilities (Unaudited)" for Friends School in Detroit from Joe Mills which shows total indebtedness of \$882,055 as of 8/31/2016; and a 7 page "Summary of reports and actions regarding Friends School in Detroit from September 2012 through September 2015" prepared by Joan Sampieri. There was a general sentiment that everyone would like to see a viable Friends School. However, the Quarter feels an obligation to maintain our stewardship and to see that the debts of the old Friends School are paid off. A condition before making any transfer of control to a new Board by amendment to the School's bylaws should be that all of the existing debt be paid or otherwise accounted for, to the Quarter's satisfaction. The following minute was adopted.

[9] Minute on Friends School in Detroit

Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting recognizes the good efforts of the working group to plan for the continuation of Friends School in Detroit. Friends have a concern about the long outstanding debts of the School corporation. These are not adequately addressed in the current planning process for continuing the School. It is our intention to proceed with selling the school's property to cover the debts on January 17, 2017, or earlier if the planning process comes to a halt, unless all of the debts are paid or otherwise accounted for by that date.

This minute was approved by the Meeting.

[10] Reappointment of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit

Current trustees Patrick Padgett, Toby Barlow and Joe Mills were reappointed to the Board of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit.

[11] Intended replacement of the Board of Friends School in Detroit

At the time when the School's property is to be sold, the Quarter will reconstitute the Board of Trustees of Friends School in Detroit. The trustees of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting are authorized to make the replacments.

This minute was approved by the Meeting.

[12] Planning for Arthur Larrabee's Clerking Workshop

Arthur Larrabee is available to present a workshop on Saturday, March 4, 2017. The estimated total cost to the Meeting is \$2,445. This includes an honorarium of \$1,500 which will be paid from the Meeting's surplus. Registration and further planning will be handled by Geoff Brieger.

[13] GPQM Budget for 2016-17

The Finance Committee recommended a budget for 2016–2017 identical to that for the current year, with budgeted income of \$12,857 and budgeted expenditures of \$13,550. The budget was approved.

[14] Request from Michigan Friends Center

The Board of Michigan Friends Center seeks two members from the Quarter, to be appointed by the Clerk of the Quarter.

[15] GPQM MidWinter Gathering

The MidWinter Gathering is planned for February 26 and 27, 2017, with a program organized jointly by the Birmingham and Detroit monthly meetings. This will extend ongoing discussions on white privilege and racism.

[16] Michigan Quakers for Environmental Action

Peggy Daub provided packets of information about representative Jeff Irwin's "Energy Freedom" bills. In view of the hour, there was no discussion.