

Michigan Friends Center Report to Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

May 16, 2015

The Michigan Friends Center has had an active year, with a number of sponsored programs many of which are in partnership with Friends Lake Cooperative Community or Transition Town Chelsea. Our facility is used once a month for a Chelsea Worship Group Meeting and hosts meetings or retreats for AAFM and GPQM. It is also used for a number of meditation retreats and two week long summer camps, the Ann Arbor Zen Center Peace Camp and a Cello Camp where participants camp but use the Center for meetings and some meals. In collaboration with FLCC we recently published the first of a planned Quarterly Newsletter. The Center is administered by an appointed volunteer Board and a part time paid facility manager. Maintaining a full Board has been a continuing challenge, in part because of the limited number of candidates within driving distance. Currently the Board consists of Quaker members, John Williams (Clerk), Richard Tucker (Secretary) and Heather McRae Woolf, and Community members from Chelsea, John Gourlay (Treasurer) and Patrick Zieske (Program Committee Chair). We request that GPQM help us identify two additional Quaker Board Members. If these individuals are at a distance they could Skype in to Board Meetings which are held 6 times per year. Alternatively, if monthly meetings can not identify a Board member, could they identify a Meeting Representative.

Over the last year and a half we have been working with the help of an architect, Nick Durrie, on improving access to the building and making the Center feel more inviting. We developed a plan to reconfigure the main entrance, replace the decks and build a ramp to allow wheel chair access. With the help of GPQM and AAFM we raised about \$6,000 and began the project which you saw as you entered. We are about to start a public fund raising campaign with the help of a matching donation. Major work remaining is to expand the parking area, improve lighting using solar powered lamps, pave a parking and unloading area, and center the main entrance door. We expect to have this work completed by fall. As finances permit the second stage is to develop a coat room just inside the entrance and relocate the storage area. Later we would also like to widen the entrance road to the center and add an exit loop that was envisioned in the original site plan.

With an improved facility we hope to increase use of the Center. Currently our income is about half from donations and half from use fees. We need to increase both to develop a balanced budget with a building reserve fund to deal with maintenance and major repairs.