

Minutes of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, September 15, 2018

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

Attending:

From Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting: Christa Williams, John Williams, Susan Hartman, Johanna Kowitz, Richard Tucker, Nancy Taylor, Thomas Taylor, Al Connor, Lisa Sinnett, Steve Deasy, Tom Blackwell
From Birmingham Monthly Meeting: Ellen Barnes, Marvin Barnes, Geoff Brieger
From Detroit Monthly Meeting: Sharon Ottenbreit
From Red Cedar Monthly Meeting: Kris Gaumer, April Allison

[1] Two Queries:

Is creating community an end in itself? Why are we gathering this particular meeting community?

– *Emily Provance, Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) traveling minister*

Do we help each other to live with integrity and contribute that integrity to the life of our meeting? Does our meeting encourage its members to support with their time, energy and finances the quarterly and yearly meetings and other Quaker organizations?

– *Faith & Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

General agreement on the value of community. In order to create community, it helps to have a shared, larger goal in mind. The resulting community supports our goals of changing the world.

[2] Roll call:

Ann Arbor	-	9
Birmingham	-	3
Detroit	-	1
Grand Rapids	-	0
Holland	-	0
Kalamazoo	-	0
Pine River	-	0
Red Cedar	-	2

[3] Request from Detroit Monthly Meeting

Sharon Ottenbreit described the Detroit Meeting's experience and difficulties over the past 7 years with finding a replacement meetinghouse in Detroit. The meetinghouse on Fort St. in downtown Detroit that they have owned since the 1980's has been taken by eminent domain for approaches to a new bridge being built between the US and Canada. The reimbursement currently offered by the state Department of Transportation is insufficient to purchase a comparable building. They are committed to remaining in the city of Detroit. They currently meet on Sundays in an activities center at Cass and Sheldon that belongs to the Cass Community United Methodist church. They ask the other monthly meetings for any help, suggestions, strategies or resources they can offer.

[4] Friends School in Detroit

Susan Hartman provided the following written report.

"The Board of Friends School in Detroit is progressing toward dissolution of the corporation. All known creditors have been paid. A committee has been formed to propose a plan for distribution of remaining assets. Our next board meeting will be in October, and we hope soon after that to file a Certificate of Dissolution with the State. (You will recall that GPQM approved our filing of dissolution at its May 2018 meeting.) We will then publish a legal notice to unknown creditors. Apparently current law requires a waiting period of one year after publication during which time unknown creditors may file claims. After that time has passed, we expect to distribute all remaining funds and dissolve the board."

The current Trustees of Friends School in Detroit are Joe Mills, Kevin Howley, Geoff Brieger, Joan Sampieri, Bob Orr, Harriet Greenwood, Jeff Cooper, Marvin Barnes and Susan Hartman.

[5] Michigan Friends Center

Richard Tucker gave a brief report. 2019 will be the 25th anniversary of the construction of Michigan Friends Center. Environmental programming remains active in collaboration with Transition Town Chelsea. This year they lost two major sources of rental income, the Zen Peace Camp which needed more space and the Cello camp which moved out of state. The Board is exploring different marketing strategies for the rental space. They hope to increase the amount of Quaker focused programming.

[6] Michigan Quakers for Environmental Action

Richard Tucker noted increasing overlap between peace and justice concerns and environmental concerns. The group invites discussion of future potential advocacy projects.

[7] Treasurer's Report

Copies of the treasurer's report for 7/1/2017 – 6/30/2018 were distributed. This shows total expenditures of \$12,971 and an ending bank balance of \$3,238.

[8] Finance Committee

No members of the Finance Committee were present. A proposed budget for the 2018-19 year will be needed before the May 2019 Business Meeting.

[9] Assessment for 2018-19

The Meeting approved an assessment of \$43 per member for 2018-19. This amount is the same as in recent years.

[10] Future role of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting

The Meeting was asked to reflect on GPQM's purpose and future role – is it reasonable to maintain 4 meetings a year ?

With the closing of Friends School in Detroit, we are at a unique place of transition. This is an opportunity to reconsider and reformulate where we want to go with Quarterly Meeting. As a quarterly meeting, GPQM could do more outreach and support for the smaller meetings in Michigan. The annual August picnic in Battle Creek draws additional people from Grand Rapids and the western part of the state. There is a wish to continue having four meetings per year (including the August picnic in Battle Creek).

Substantive programs, such as Midwinter Gathering or the program on Right Relationship with Native Peoples at last May's meeting, also bring additional attendees who do not come to a simple business meeting. These programs take advance planning and commitment. This burden falls largely on the Clerk and the sponsoring monthly meeting. In order to expand programming we would need a Program Committee.

[11] Ad hoc Program Committee

Kris Gaumer (Red Cedar) and Christa Williams (Ann Arbor) volunteered to develop and bring to the Meeting for discussion a program format for meetings.

[12] Naming Committee

The Naming Committee, consisting of Peggy Daub and April Allison, proposed the following three candidates for Nominating Committee: Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor), Ann Sprague (Detroit) and April Allison (Red Cedar). All three were approved, with thanks. In order to start a rotation in which one committee member is replaced each year, they will serve three, two and one year terms respectively.

[13] Appointment of Trustees

The Nominating Committee proposed Debs Roush of Ann Arbor for a three year term and George Hebben of Kalamazoo for a two year term as Trustees of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting. Meeting approved.

[14] Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting Bylaws

Searches over several years have not found any copy of the Meeting's current bylaws. It was proposed to form an ad hoc committee to review and draft new bylaws for the Meeting. Susan Hartman and April Allison offered to serve. Meeting approved.

[15] Midwinter Gathering

Planning is beginning for the Midwinter Gathering. Raelyn Joyce will contact monthly meeting clerks to identify a host meeting.

[16] Congregational Sanctuary

Johanna Kowitz from Ann Arbor gave a brief summary of the current congregational sanctuary movement, as this is a concern of multiple monthly meetings. A person at risk of deportation may request sanctuary in a house of worship. This does not mean hiding. The authorities know where the person is, but by policy and tradition they will not enter a place of sanctuary to arrest the person. Schools and hospitals, in addition to churches, are recognized as places of sanctuary. In Washtenaw county, the organizations involved are the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights (WICIR), the Interfaith Coalition for Peace and Justice (ICPJ), an umbrella group called Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary, and at last count 12 participating congregations. A statewide resource is the Michigan Immigrant Rights Commission (MIRC) which provides legal support through a grant from the state Bar Association. Among congregations there are three distinct levels of commitment. Some congregations are educating themselves about sanctuary and deciding what further level of commitment they wish to undertake. Some are ready to offer support to a congregation which is hosting a sanctuary guest. Some have offered living space in their house of worship for an individual or family seeking sanctuary. Ann Arbor Meeting is in this latter category, since we have living space for an intentional community connected to our Meetinghouse.

[17] Songs of Protest and Justice

Steve Deasy of Ann Arbor Meeting gave an hour's concert after lunch of his own and others' songs of protest and civil rights.