

**Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting**

Seventh Month 17, 2016

Present: Margaret Farmer; Rylin Hansen; Jim Hipkins; Jim Barham; Katherine Kowal; Bob Smith; Molly McGiness; Beth Eddy; Mike Eddy; Michael Garofano; Jim Cavener; Bobby Carter; George Gjelfriend; Sharon Smith; Adrienne Weir; Sarah Jane Thomas; Nick Mimkin; Christopher Foreman; Alan Robinson, co-clerk; Gail Hipkins, presiding co-clerk; Barbara Esther, recording clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship. Jim Barham read the following minute:

Recommendation for Minute from RJC:

Our hearts are cracked open by the excessive use of force by police in our nation and in our own community, against people of color, especially young black men and Jerry Williams in particular. We acknowledge that this long history of institutionalized violence has repeatedly broken the hearts and shattered the lives of people in our community.

We recognize that our silence makes us complicit. If we fail to speak now, our silence will be deafening. Therefore, we are called to take the following actions:

- To bear Quaker witness and speak “Truth to power” in our community
- To support the family and community most impacted by racial violence: to stand with them, believe in them, and affirm their vital importance to this city.

Minute 1: Friends approved the minute as presented by the Racial Justice Committee with actions to be discussed and acted on as opportunity presents itself.

Margaret Farmer will make sure that Jerry Williams’ mother receives a copy of the minute.

The clerks will send this minute to the Asheville Citizen-Times as a letter to the editor as well as to other local journals and the Los Angeles Times, and wider Quaker bodies including our yearly meeting.

List of other possible specific actions:

- Hold the family, community, city council, and the police department in the Light as a daily practice
- Engage in community activities to hold city government and police department accountable

- Attend City Council Meetings and Citizens Police Advisory Meetings, reviewing agenda on line in advance of the meetings
- Provide a visible Friendly presence in support of the community impacted by racial violence
- Wear armbands with Asheville Friends Meeting-Quakers printed on them. Racial Justice Committee will explore the printing of the armbands.
- Buy t-shirts with “ Black Lives Matter” (proceeds to go to Williams family) to be sold by an individual
- Call for an end to police use of military equipment and tactics
- Engage in relentless pursuit of racial justice via letter writing and direct contact with policy makers
- Support local businesses owned/operated by members of the Black community
- Provide a list of the Williams family’s needs to our Meeting: food donations, contributions to cover a second autopsy, burial and funeral expenses and the ongoing support for the family of Jerry Williams
- Attend the vigils in numbers identifying ourselves as Quakers. Saturday is a day many Friends can attend. We are encouraged to attend together. This plan will be sent out via the listserve
- Reach out to Jeff Vogues of Express
- Efforts such as dinners of multiracial composition to foster friendships across the lines of race.

The clerks offered to visit with local officials such as the mayor, the city manager and the chief of police on behalf of the meeting. A member of the Racial Justice Committee suggested that someone who knows the history of race relations in the Asheville community accompany the clerks. However, there were Friends who had concerns about the idea of the visit. The offer was withdrawn until and unless we see our way clear in this matter.

One Friend encouraged us to remain concerned with or without all the facts: turn the light on.

Some facts and reactions:

- The real story is not clearly known.
- #Justice4 JerryWilliams is a Face Book source to explore. Friends can also visit www.gofundme.com/justiceforjerrywilliams
- Jerry Williams leaves four children and a wife who is expecting their fifth child. Money is definitely needed by the family.

- Police cameras are only now being purchased in inadequate numbers. However, body camera footage is not to be made public, according to NC law.
- Police are using assault weapons (AR15), which took the arm off Jerry Williams in the first shot fired. Military issue equipment is routinely used in our community.
- Pain in the Black community of Asheville is ever-present. In particular, the family wants to be heard and believed. People in the community are accompanying the family wherever they go, including white community members.
- Witnesses and footage recorded on cell phones were confiscated. Possibly, there is footage in the cloud. Reportedly, Jerry was unarmed, first shots were fired by the police, and Jerry emerged from his vehicle with his hands up.
- Acting in concert with other folk will have a stronger impact.
- Concern was expressed that the possession of a firearm seems to be justification for use of lethal force.
- Concern that we hold the local leadership in the Light, including those working in law enforcement.
- White “accomplices” are requested at the vigils held downtown in front of the Asheville Police Department at 6 pm daily.
- Sustaining our concern may be another way of working.
- We can honor members of the Black community by standing up to say, “This is not okay.” and allowing them to heal and for the white community to take action.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on Eighth Month 14, 2016.