

Minutes for Ninth Month Meeting for Business

September 9, 2007 12:00 Noon

We began with a period of silent worship.

The clerk read the following:

“And there are always those who have an idealistic opinion of Friends and do not feel that they are “good enough” to join. All they have to do is look around them to realize that our Society is not one of saints but of seekers (and even sinners), yearning for Divine Guidance in their lives and in the world around us. Membership in the Religious Society of Friends brings no halos, no plaques for perfection, no passports to heaven. Perhaps membership comes closer to being a learner’s permit for the life-long journey towards truth and fulfillment.”

From the Meaning of Membership in the Society of Friends

Leonard S. Kenworthy

Attendance:

Adrienne Weir, Phil Neal, Margaret Farmer, Margaret Normile, Gary Briggs, David Clements, Kristi Gjelfriend, Gjeorge Gjelfriend, Katherine Kowal, Steve Livingston, Joy Gossett, Ellen Frerotte, Ellen Oldham, Julie Moser, Kitti Reynolds, Laura Maynard, Bobby Carter, Raelin Hansen, Peter Buck, Alan Robinson, Jim Cavener, Robin Wells

Barbara Esther—Clerk

Lynnora Bierce—Recording Clerk

Review of Agenda – We approved the agenda with additions.

Introductions: Julie Moser and Alice Powell both attended MfB for the 1st time.

Approval of 8th Month Minutes – Friends approved the minutes as published.

Treasurer’s Report

Adrienne Weir, the treasurer, had not received the report from the accountant, Palin Spruance, in time to report to the business meeting.

Membership Items

Raelin Hansen—Clearness Committee Report—Peter Buck

On the stifling afternoon of the 10th day of the 8th month, 2007 Raelin Hansen and her Membership Clearness Committee met. We enjoyed an hour and a half of free-ranging conversation of: the heart and practice and future of Quakerism and Rae’s own spiritual journey, seasoned convictions and gifts. The thoughtfulness, honesty and humor of our meeting made the discernment of the committee easy and clear. And so we warmly recommend to the Asheville Friends’ Meeting that Raelin Hansen be received as a member of our meeting.

The committee consisted of: Phil Neal, Ellen Frerotte, Joyce Rawlins-Davies, and Peter Buck.

Friends approved Raelin Hansen for membership.

Bobby Carter—Transfer of Membership **Friends approved Bobby Carter’s transfer of membership from Columbia Friends Meeting.**

Gary Briggs Membership Transfer – The clerk read a letter of transfer from Durham Friends Meeting. **Friends approved that the clerk answer the letter stating that we welcome Gary Briggs into our meeting and heartily approve the transfer.**

The following letter was sent to our meeting from Durham Friends:

Dear Steve,

Gary Briggs has requested transfer of his membership for Durham Monthly Meeting to Asheville Friends approved his transfer during Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on 12th day, 8th month, 2007. We always appreciated our communications with him, but we also consider it appropriate that his membership be with Asheville Friends Meeting, where he lives and worships.

Sincerely, Teresa Graedon
(Outgoing) Clerk, Durham Monthly Meeting

Julie Moser—Request for Clearness Committee

August 26, 2007

Dear Barbara and Friends,

I write to you today with joy as I seek to become a member of the Asheville Monthly Meeting. Please consider this letter as an application to membership, and please forgive me if I should approach this in a different manner.

I'm not sure what information is most helpful to you as you consider me for membership. I know that typically a Clearness Committee interviews each applicant, and I will be happy to share more information if that occurs. Until then, I would like to share a brief look at the path that led me to the door of the Asheville Friends Meeting two months ago.

I grew up without religion or spirituality, save for funerals and weddings. My one experience with church came during a troubled youth when a friend tried to save me from self-destruction. The unsupervised male pastor who led the all-female youth group abused his power, and while I was able to disengage before any harm was done to me, it was too late for my friend. Given that this was my only experience with religion, it wasn't until almost 20 years later that my mind, heart, and spirit began to seek God.

Little did I realize four years ago, when I woke up at 4 a.m. to a room devoid of all light and sound with a stark and strong feeling of absolute nothingness, where my path would lead. After much study, in-church experiences, and prayer, I truly believe that God led me to the open, welcoming door of the Asheville Monthly Meeting for a purpose: to grow in light of Christ alongside others whose paths pursue Peace, Love and Truth.

My experiences while at meetings have made my long-in-slumber spirit sing and have fueled, as opposed to frustrated, my journey. I don't need, nor do I desire, a pre-packaged, easy to understand, scripted religion that works like entertainment. I relish the hard work and worship that leads to continued spiritual growth, and I hope to be able to walk my path alongside others who, like me, are at different places on that path.

What speaks to me most about my time at the Asheville Monthly Meeting is the way the God speaks, and doesn't, through a human voice that lifts the spirit when it can and isn't afraid to be vulnerable. To me, this blend of patience, humility, honesty, and the willingness to share a story when moved by God to do so even at the risk of faltering is what makes worship real.

I still have much to learn (or forget). And while I sometimes forget the exact descriptors that embody Quakerism, the principles of community, harmony, equality and simplicity are already central in my life, even if I sometimes fail at realizing them (though I've found great lessons in these failings). I long, not only to continue my journey among Friends, I also long to contribute to the larger

Thank you for your consideration.

With fondness, Julie Moser

We considered the formation of a clearness committee to help Julie with finding clearness regarding joining the Society of Friends, which may be a lengthy process because she is new to Friends. Julie did not name a preference of Friends, but that she wanted a good cross section. The clerk said that we will have no problem find Friends in this meeting with differing perspectives. A Friend suggested we read Julie's letter requesting a clearness committee to the Meeting. When asked she agreed to let it be heard. The recording clerk read the letter published above.

A clearness committee was formed with Jim Cavener (convener) Laura Maynard, Peter Buck, Katherine Kowal and Joy Gossett (to serve as an alternate w/ Katherine). Friends approved.

Committee Reports:

House and Grounds Report

This report contains no requests for action. It is strictly informational.

1. We have satisfied the fire marshal by completing the following:
 - a. RE cleared the upstairs hallway of bookcase and phone and established care for children under age 2.5 in the library.
 - b. We replaced all of our fire extinguishers.
 - c. We hired Bob Payne to install emergency lights at the upstairs doorway. While he was here, he also installed an overhead fan in the meeting room and brought the ceiling wiring up to code.
 - d. Alan Robinson tackled the downstairs fire door so that it now closes automatically and can be opened by a small child. He also replaced the doorknobs on the bathrooms so we aren't locked out by accident.
 - e. Adrienne Wier is mowing our lawns, including the backyard egress from the stairs.
 - f. We installed five smoke alarms in the upstairs rooms.

The fire marshal approved of these items and will re-inspect us in three years.
2. Other completed projects are:
 - a. We hired Scott Evans to paint the Meeting House.
 - b. We had the Meeting House inspected for lead. There are certain maintenance procedures that we will install and two windowsills that need replacement or covering.
 - c. We published a comprehensive list of all tasks that must be attended to when cleaning the Meeting House.
 - d. We cleared the upstairs porch and the downstairs alley of all debris.
 - e. We cleaned out the refrigerator and published guidelines for its use.
 - f. We had the roof repaired where it showed signs of leakage.
 - g. We cancelled certain telephone services that were costing us \$260 per year and replaced them with a \$32 answering machine.
 - h. We hired a tree service to fell a dangerous dead tree and to sever some vines that were strangling others.
3. Ongoing and future Projects in progress.
 - a. Thanks to Gary Briggs, our Rental Program runs smoothly. We are reviewing the guidelines to make changes that he recommends.
 - b. We have engaged Rusty Maynard to design a replacement for the back stairs, for which we intend to provide our own labor.
 - c. Upon completion of the new backstairs, we may want to install additional emergency lighting upstairs.
 - d. We are looking for a way to silence our "singing" pipes.
 - e. We are also looking into replacing our thermostats.

YITL, gjeorge gjelfriend (clerk)

Discussion followed, with Adrienne Weir reminding Friends to be aware of the removal and

continued presence of lead paint in various places in and around the Meeting House.

Friends expressed thanks for the committee's work which allows us to have a place to worship.

Friend pointed out that the grounds are being taken over by undesirable vegetation. Gary would like to personally organize a workday to do some necessary yard work.

Steve Livingston gave appreciation to Gjeorge Gjelfriend for leading the House and Grounds committee in the recent surge of attention to the work of keeping the House sound and safe.

Report Accepted

Nominating Committee Report— The committee brought the following nominees forward:

Adrienne Weir as Treasurer	Approved
David Clements as Asst. Treasurer	Approved
Bobby Carter—House and Grounds	Approved
Betsy Rose Weiss—Spiritual Enrichment	Approved
Laura Maynard—Released from nominating	Approved with thanks

Naming Committee—request to meet. The committee was present and agreed to meet after MfB

Hospitality Committee – A request was presented to have this committee reinstated.

Friends approved the reinstatement of Hospitality as a standing committee.

Friends discussed the need for this committee and the number of ways that this kind of committee is helpful to the meeting.

The clerk pointed out that some of this work is already being done—but without the support of a committee. One Friend felt that money should be budgeted for hospitality.

Another Friend spoke about the possibility of financial support for the Orphan's Thanksgiving.

A Friend pointed out that the Orphan's Thanksgiving is not an official AFM event.

Several Friends saw the need for a Hospitality Committee. Nominating Committee will seek Friends to serve on the committee.

Laura Maynard

Other Items:

City View Friends Church invited us to participate in a Peace Workshop with Chuck Fager on November 3, 2007. Friends recalled the time when the pastor of City View Friends Church first came to worship with us. Friends recognize that Friends United Meeting churches are struggling with their relationship to FLGBTQC. Friends noted that there have been some changes in welcoming Friends of all sexual orientations within FUM circles and that we are working on making connections with all kinds of Friends, including NC Yearly Meeting, FUM. The clerk reminded Friends there is always a possibility of transformation. Their thoughtful care in consulting us to be sure we had no conflict with the date was appreciated. The workshop will be an opportunity for fellowship between our meeting and City View Friends Church. We will inform our community about the workshop via e-News and announcements at close of meeting. A Friend mentioned some differences between City View and Asheville Friends Meeting. Some Friends are not completely ready to accept the change of heart that City View's website seems to indicate is true, but feel that joining them in the workshop might be an opportunity to see if a connection is possible.

Personal Concerns

Orphan's Thanksgiving—Ellen Oldham spoke in favor of keeping the tradition going, and called for participation from those who are interested. Steve Livingston was not easy with letting the issue go—it is a perception that the Orphan's Thanksgiving is already a AFM event, and as such should be considered an official meeting function. Some money could be budgeted for purchase of a turkey, as we already have a person with an interest in continuing the Orphan's Thanksgiving, and several people interested in participating. Adrienne Weir, treasurer, stated that we have contingency monies for such support.

A Friend reminded us that taking money out of contingency leaves less money for outreach. The clerk asked whether the Orphan's Thanksgiving could be given up to \$50 and a report given in the Twelfth Month business meeting.

We did not find unity within the meeting to budget money from the contingency fund, but some Friends felt moved to give money directly to the cause. The meeting may visit this issue next month.

The meeting expressed its gratitude to Ellen Oldham for organizing the Orphan's Thanksgiving and supports her leading, recognizing the value of this event to the life of our meeting.

Approved

Workday on the grounds—Gary Briggs will organize a workday for this purpose.

Food issues—George Gjelfriend requested that food be left in the kitchen to be out of sight and less of a distraction. This will be our practice on Meeting for Business First Days.

Approved

Marriage Process - David Clements requested that the topic of marriage under the care of meeting be revisited soon.

The clerk ended our meeting with the following reading:

“Our life is love and peace and tenderness; bearing one another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations against another, but praying one for another and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

Isaac Penington

We concluded with a period of silent worship

1:42 pm