

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Fourth Month 9, 2017

Present: Adrienne Weir; Satchel Loftis; Steve Livingston; Lynnora Bierce; Kitti Reynolds; Katherine Kowal; Edie Patrick; Sharon Smith; Scotty Utz; Margaret Farmer; Gita Larsen; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Patti Hughes, read the following:

"No Matter what happens next, there is one thing certain: tomorrow will bring opportunities for you to make a difference. So raise your voice. Connect with your community. Cultivate your courage. We have a lot to do together."

Author unknown, Source AFSC 2016 Annual Report

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Budget 2017 will be presented for approval next month, but a copy with highlighted areas showing changes that might need special attention will be available on line when the proposed budget is posted for our review.

Minutes for February, March and April will be approved in our May meeting for business when our switch to mail chimp will be more familiar to Friends. Suggested corrections can be sent to the clerk and recording clerk in advance.

Committee Reports:

Racial Justice Committee - Gita Larsen
Racial Justice Committee Meeting 3/30/17

Present: Sharon Smith, Margaret Farmer, Steve Livingston, Scotty Utz, Lynnora Bierce, Adrienne Weir

After our usual opening silence and sharing of our "growing edge of racism awareness", those of us who had attended the workshop with Vahisha Hassan and Holly Roach at the Meetinghouse on 3/25 shared our impressions. Though much of the material was already familiar, each of us came away with valuable new information and ideas. We felt the workshop was extremely well organized and well presented, that the two facilitators worked well together and were well-versed and experienced in their presentation. We were especially grateful that so much of what we received was given to us by people of color, both presenters

and attenders, since most of us white Friends rarely have opportunity for deep examination of our own racism issues with people of color.

We want to report to the Meeting that Friend Avis Wanda McClinton was read out of Upper Dublin PA Friends Meeting last month, with the collusion and cooperation of Abington Quarterly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Avis had been following a leading to identify and commemorate the African slaves who were buried on Meetinghouse grounds there and at nearby Meetings, and in the course of her work there was a series of incidents that revealed systemic racism within the monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. Friend Sharon Smith served on Avis' support committee and her support was vital in sustaining Avis' ministry, but the monthly and yearly meetings resisted and opposed her well-informed insistence on steps to address the White Supremacist structure that aggrieved and oppressed Friend Avis and stood in the way of effectively fulfilling her call.

The Committee wants to emphasize to the Meeting the essential leadership and guidance of Friend Sharon Smith in addressing this most vital issue of institutional racism within the Society of Friends, at Asheville Friends Meeting, in our Yearly Meeting, and in the wider Quaker world.

Racial Justice Committee had planned to have a movie of the month every month, but we skipped March because we have been getting a big project organized, and we are happy to report that on April 29, we will present in conjunction with Asheville SURJ and the Unitarian Universalist Church two showings of the documentary film "13th", which describes how the "exception clause" of the thirteenth Amendment perpetuated slavery to the present day. We have secured the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Community Center for the event, the event will be free and open to the public, and we will be bringing in Max Parthas, a passionate Abolitionist poet and speaker, to lead a community conversation about the film.

We ask that the Meeting join with the committee in co-sponsoring this event, so that the name of the Meeting as a whole will be associated with it, and not just the committee's.

The clerk asked what would be asked of us if we co-sponsor the event. Besides the nominal support we might contribute to the snacks provided for those in attendance.

Minute 1: Friends approved co-sponsorship with SURJ of Asheville and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville of the showing of the movie *13th* with discussion to follow, open to the public, at Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Community Center on April 29, 2017. Friends are encouraged not only to attend but to contribute to the provision of healthy snacks at the showings, one at 12:00 noon and a second at 7:00 pm.

Ad Hoc Death and Dying Committee - Jim Cavener

The Death and Dying Committee would like to ask people at the business meeting if they would be willing to sign up to form a committee to investigate the possibility of starting a

memorial garden on the grounds of AFM. This committee could also research other possibilities to honor those among us who have passed on. We are looking to discern if there is interest in the Meeting for this possibility.

Minute 2: We approve the continuation of a (renamed) Ad Hoc Dying, Death and Disposal Committee to add a new focus on the variety of ways one can dispose of remains and how we might memorialize Asheville Friends who have died.

House and Grounds Committee may be involved and a tableau of choices for memorials will be presented for our approval. Those particularly interested in the subject are invited to join in this work.

It may be essential for some people not serving simultaneously on the Care and Nurture Committee to bring new energy to this work. A different clerk can be selected by the committee, given that Margaret Normile is already clerking Care and Nurture Committee and is ready to step down from the Dying, Death and Disposal Committee. Our email can be a valuable instrument in extending this invitation to join the Ad Hoc Committee on Dying, Death and Disposal.

A friend reminded us that some meetings are sending minutes of concern regarding the burial and commemoration of remains of former slaves to Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting, Abington Quarterly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Ministry and Counsel may work with Racial Justice Committee to draft such a minute.

Finance Committee - Pat Johnson

Our books are in good order. Pat and Satchel Loftis have been working on the best way to present reports so that everyone is clear about how the accounts work. While the Nominating Committee tries to find a treasurer, Satchel will serve as acting-treasurer. He can prepare but will not sign checks; that will be the responsibility of the clerk and members of the Finance Committee. A glossary of terms will be revisited to assist in general understanding.

Announcements:

Letter from Molly McGinnis - We received a very appreciative letter and contribution from Molly, a Friend from California who visited with us.

Retreat - We seek ad hoc committee members to plan a meeting retreat. Katherine Kowal and Sharon Smith have expressed interest in working on that committee. Others are asked to volunteer so that the committee can begin its work.

50th Anniversary Celebration - We are in beginning stages of planning for this celebration, including the date for the event. We may prepare a certificate to record the attendees present. Exploration of the history of the meeting will also be featured. Jim Cavener and Patti Hughes

are willing to join Barbara Esther and Alan Robinson on the planning committee. Sharon Smith offered her abilities in organization after the SAYMA gathering in June.

Our clerk, Patti Hughes will be traveling on April 23 to celebrate the 100th celebration of AFSC (American Friends Service Committee).

A Friend reminded us that the SAYMA Guide to our Faith and Practice describes the responsibilities of the Ministry and Counsel Committee differently from the description of the committee on the board in our foyer. Our board uses the word “supervises” whereas the F&P Guide in its lengthy description characterizes the work of the M&C committee as being a “responsibility” for quality of worship as well as for the religious development, counsel and pastoral care of members and attendees. All committees have been asked to review the committee’s purpose and activities, including the M & C Committee. Also questioned was how the committee members can fulfill their obligation to the work of the committee if these Friends are not present in the community for long periods of time. This concern is shared by others, and particularly by the Care and Nurture Committee, which does not have clarity in its role in reaching out to Friends who have made a choice to stop attending Asheville Friends Meeting. We were asked to hold those Friends absent from our midst in the Light as we closed our meeting today, to meet again as way opens on Fifth Month 15, 2017.