

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

Present: Sharon Smith; Edie Patrick; Gita Larsen; Bobby Carter; Mike Eddy; Beth Eddy; Jim Barham; Sarah Jane Thomas; Steve Livingston; Adrienne Weir; Pat Johnson; Rusty Maynard; Kitti Reynolds; Rylin Hansen; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

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

"The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life."

Jane Adams, Sociologist and Activist.

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

**Minute 1: Friends approved Sixth Month Minutes with a syntactic change in the Nominating Committee report.**

Announcements:

50 the celebration-We are working on plans for the September 3rd celebration.

Glory Elizabeth Ward was born on Saturday, July 1, 2017. The whole family is doing well, all five of them attending meeting today. We rejoice in Glory's presence in our Friends family.

Committee Reports:

House and Grounds Committee - Jim Barham

The tree felled and still in the front yard has been fun for the kids to climb on, but we had hoped to have the trunk sawn for lumber. The uppermost section of trunk is not suitable for sawing into boards and could be left as a climber for the children. The question of liability was brought up. There has been no consideration of whether or not our insurance would cover any possible injury. As a natural object, the trunk and stump can be thought of as part of the yard.

**Minute 2: The meeting approved moving the trunk to be retained to the side of the yard, and sending the other two trunk sections to be sawn into boards.**

Ministry and Counsel Committee - Kitti Reynolds

The situation arose last week that a Friend needed a place to stay for a couple of nights. Our upstairs room in the northeast corner is equipped to shelter someone for such a stay.

**Minute 3: Friends approved the use of the room upstairs in the northeast corner of the house for emergency or short-term stays. The guidelines will include not leaving personal items on the premises. Requesting such use should be made of the clerk and**

**others on the Ministry and Counsel Committee, in consultation with the meetinghouse use coordinator. The maintenance of the room, cleanliness and washing of sheets and towels, etc. will be handled by volunteers until another plan is organized.**

Racial Justice Committee - Steve Livingston

(see attachment)

Our understanding of the meaning of endorsement is still forming. Endorsement of a ministry is a step the meeting hesitates to take. What seems to be clear is that we do not practice the recording of ministers. Past actions of an individual can influence how we feel about endorsement of that person's work. If endorsement is recognizing and giving approval, we are still struggling with endorsement as representing our monthly meeting, especially in light of the Friends who have decided to worship separately from those attending First Day meetings for worship, and not to share fellowship with the meeting as a whole.

The meeting is asked to make known our support and to endorse the ministry Sharon Smith is led to undertake. Several Friends expressed their support and a sense of some progress in awareness of racism that is felt as a result of Sharon's presence. The discomfort of letting go of the notions and very real advantages to being part of the white population was noted. We are all messengers, listeners and actors in bringing to fruition our goals in becoming a multi-racial, multi-cultural community. Suggestions included that specific travel minutes could accompany Sharon as she travels in her work and that pass-through or advised giving be considered as a way that Friends might support her concern. We acknowledge a rift in the Asheville Friends Meeting that is a consequence of the ministry Sharon has brought. In the broader community of Friends Sharon is perceived to be representing our meeting, although we have not made a formal acknowledgment of that. The assistance of the Divine in our undertakings is the overriding concern of many Friends. Her anger, scolding, name-calling approach has been instrumental in dividing Friends. Reflection of Spirit rather than having Friends take sides could lead us to work together instead. Are we able to do this work even though it makes us uncomfortable? How can we handle the pain that growing and exercising the new anti-racism "muscles" formed produces?

**Minute 4: Friends acknowledge with gratitude the work of Friend Sharon Smith in guiding the formation of our Racial Justice Committee, a SAYMA URJ Committee and in assisting in arranging for Avis Wanda McClinton to attend the yearly meeting gathering. Sharon's presence in our monthly meeting has moved us in ways we did not anticipate toward a more full knowledge of racism in our selves and in our society at large. Supporting her ministry with the goal of forming a multi-racial, multicultural, loving community requires all of us to continually work under the guidance of the Spirit.**

Requests were made for the following (to come from our general fund): \$102.00 toward Avis Wanda McClinton's attendance at SAYMA; \$202.86 plus \$326.37 for the cost of Sharon's visitation to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Gathering. The clerk has asked the RJC to consult with the Scholarship Committee and with Finance Committee to season these requests.

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on Eighth Month 13, 2017.

## Attachment 1:

Racial Justice Committee Meeting 6/29/17 Present: Sharon Smith, Steve Livingston, Gita Larson, Adrienne Weir

After our usual opening silence and sharing of our “growing edge of racism awareness”, we talked about “grass roots reparations”. Grass roots reparations is a term referring specifically to giving one's time, resources, and funds to people historically or currently oppressed by the white supremacist paradigm, without waiting for an act of Congress. We acknowledge for example that the vast disparities in wealth between white and black citizens did not come about in a vacuum as a result of our individual actions. White people owe our success to the advantages afforded by white privilege, and white supremacy and white privilege are designed to be an impediment to success for people of color.

The word “reparation” implies the repayment of a debt incurred through injustice. How can we White Friends address the injustices of white privilege and institutional racism unless we are willing to give generously what our whiteness has helped us accumulate?

Asheville's Racial Justice Committee was well represented at the Yearly Meeting Gathering at Warren Wilson College last month. The Committee wants to emphasize to the Meeting the essential leadership and guidance of Friend Sharon Smith in discerning and bringing to the Yearly Meeting the vision, mission, goals, and recommendations of the ad hoc SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice Committee. We witnessed a much greater level of awareness and acknowledgement of the influence of racism among ourselves, but we saw that some Friends were still struggling with acceptance and a few were still locked in denial. After several hours of labor, Friends did approve creating a standing SAYMA URJ Committee as well as the vision and mission statements proposed by the ad hoc committee, but Friends were not ready to unite with the ad hoc committee's goals and recommendations, and the committee's budget was not set.

Sharon's work at the Yearly Meeting level is really just beginning, and her ministry would be greatly facilitated by a minute of support from us, her monthly meeting. Besides the open acknowledgement of and support for her ministry, this would potentially provide access to sources of funding that would be of great help to Sharon.

The RJC Committee is grateful to Asheville Friends Meeting for providing scholarship funds so that Avis Wanda McClinton could attend the SAYMA Gathering. Avis reported that she felt deeply nourished both spiritually and personally at the Gathering, and it was clear that SAYMA Friends felt blessed by her presence and participation. The expenses of attending Yearly Meeting were minimal because Gita and Sharon provided hospitality and some of Avis' meals. The Committee requests that they be reimbursed from the Meeting's scholarship fund for the cost of Avis' meals, so that this money does not come out of RJC's budget. \$102

The weekend after YM Gathering, Sharon was again called to Philadelphia, to stand in support of Avis Wanda McClinton at yet another Philadelphia Yearly Meeting called meeting on racism. Sharon witnessed PYM's continuing struggle with personal and institutional racism, and racism denial. The called meeting came about in part because of the demotion of a person of color employed by the YM, but also because of Upper Dublin Monthly Meeting's treatment of Avis. And yet, Upper Dublin's actions were not on the agenda, and weighty Friends were loathe to allow any discussion of it.

Without Sharon's presence, the meeting would have proceeded as if the impetus for the meeting had vanished from the pages of Quaker history. Sharon made certain that that did not happen. No other Friends of Color were supportive of Avis, except that one Friend who had been demoted. The Committee seeks approval from the Meeting for reimbursement of expenses incurred, so that these funds do not come out of the RJC's budget. Plane tickets \$326.37 other expenses \$202.86

At the request of the ad hoc SAYMA URJ Committee, Sharon is currently seeking to organize a Friends of Color retreat, hopefully to take place here in Asheville. Plans are just getting underway, but tentatively it would be at a retreat center like Bon Clarcken or Montreat.

Several of us on the committee will be participating in a webinar led by Dr. Mary Ann Canty Merrill, an anti- racism consultant in Denver CO. Explore the devastating impact of white supremacy on

mental health, both for those victimized by it and those complicit in maintaining it. If other Friends are interested The webinar will take place on 9/14 and again on 10/12.

We ask again for the Meeting to endorse Sharon's anti-racism ministry, acknowledging the great volume of work that she has done and is doing, and the effectiveness of her efforts. We believe that undoing white supremacy is the most important work we Quakers are involved in at this point in time, and that Sharon's contribution to this effort is invaluable.