

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Draft

Third Month 11, 2018

Present: Jim Barham; Nick Mimken; Gita Larson; Adrienne Weir; Edie Patrick; Pat Johnson; Beth Eddy; Mike Eddy; Katherine Kowal; NancyLynn Sharpless; Pat Campbell; Sarah Jane Thomas; Rylin Hansen; Bobby Carter; Steve Livingston; Jim Cavener; Rusty Maynard; Patti Hughes, clerk; Barbara Esther, recording clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Patti Hughes, did the following: Friends were asked to sit and look into the eyes of another Friend for one minute. We then reflected on the experience of thinking about things we know about the other Friend, how similar it was to holding another Friend in the Light. It also reminded a Friend of an exercise called Mystery Circle, with two concentric circles of people sitting opposite each in turn, thanking that person non-verbally for who they are and what they do.

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Minute 1: Friends approved the Twelfth Month, 2017, minutes with changes in December the RJC discussion of committee work and description of that work. It is noted that committee descriptions have not usually been presented for meeting approval.

Minute 2: Friends approved the First Month, 2018, minutes with the following changes: *White Friends in AFM have had difficulty getting into RJ training sessions due to the overwhelming number of white applicants* to replace a rather clumsy sentence. Embedded was misspelled. [*Note: Webster lists imbed as a variation of embed.*]

Minute 3: Friends approved the Second Month, 2018, minutes as written.

As of December 2017, corrected or approved minutes will be sent to Steve Livingston to replace the draft minutes with the approved minutes, the date of approval at the bottom of the minutes.

Announcements: Dates in early or late April (subject to the family's input) were suggested for a memorial service for Alan Robinson. Katherine Kowal and Barbara Esther volunteer to join Jim Cavener, Gail Hipkins and David Spicer, Alan's husband, planning the memorial.

Katherine Kowal reminded us that we have not had a meeting retreat for some time and asked for volunteers to plan such an event. Katherine Kowal, Beth Eddy, Nick Mimken and Rylin Hansen volunteered to form that planning committee.

State of the Meeting Report - Patti Hughes

Patti read the report as edited from last month. In one paragraph, *white* will be replaced with *predominately white community*. Some allusion to the tone of what happens in our meetings could be added to meeting minutes to provide information to what transpired. The pronoun “we” did not speak to every Friend in every part of the report. Particularly, the parental support of children of color is not shared by all. Missing are the words “relief” or “hopefulness”. The question of whether a parent is patronized when they share problems of white supremacy in the culture of the meeting and in society arose. The formation of the RJC has brought that relief and hopefulness to some. The value of the annual state of the meeting report may be the chance for the meeting to reflect upon the past year. The parents of young children have been buoyed by each other, whereas the parents of Young Friends have not had like support since we have no active teen group at present. The RJC is working toward discernment on the matter. They begin each meeting by checking in with each other as to our growing edge as we learn about, reflect on, and act upon, racism in ourselves and our communities. We are encouraged to practice asking that question and become more accountable for what we Friends do. What we ask others to do needs to be reflected in what each of us endeavors to do. What someone who experiences racism has been through can never be fully understood by someone who has not lived through such an experience. The good should not be eclipsed by the perfect. Our process has brought progress in forming a report that is a better answer to the question “How fares the Spirit among you?” The words “the homeless” were replaced by “people challenged by homelessness”. One Friend suggested that we approve the report and continue the process begun in this report in subsequent meetings for business. We want to honor the date by which this is due to SAYMA’s Ministry and Nurture Committee. However, we recognize that we still have much to do. In the next to the last paragraph it was suggested that we add “one evidence of this is that we use a white voice even though we have Friends of color amongst us”.

Many Friends worked on preparation for the clerk’s writing this report. We thank those Friends for an honest and thorough statement. Friends Patti Hughes, Gita Larson and Barbara Esther were entrusted with looking closely at the wording in question.

The approved version is attached below.

AFM State of the Meeting Report 2017

Spirit disturbed us this last year-shook us out of our complacency and pressed us to examine some of our dearly held assumptions. Questions arose: Is spirit always a calm and peaceful presence? How is spirit present as we work through conflict and disruption? Can we live in the tension of conflict and be loving, respectful and productive? Much work is needed around our process for working in and through controversy within our meeting. It was with regret that we had people leave the meeting as a result of this conflict.

Spirit was with us as we celebrated our 50th Anniversary. Coming together under a lovely tent on our front lawn with new and old Friends/friends was a joy. The work it took to bring this to fruition brought us together in many ways as we spruced up the house and yard, gathered photos and put together a slideshow, planned the day, learned about our history and made contact with

so many folks from our community past and present. Even with all of this joy we had to recognize the absence of some folks who did not feel comfortable to attend.

Our children and their families brought us much pleasure and hope for our future. The comfort of the children to participate in our First Day program allowed opportunities for their parents to be in worship as well as for other adults to share their gifts with the younger generation. While together the children shared their hopes and dreams, joys and concerns, singing, stories and activities all in a worshipful and respectful atmosphere. Parents found support amongst each other, sharing their wishes and discussing challenges.

Our numerous intergenerational activities throughout the year brought us together in a more social, light hearted spirit as we shared meals together, celebrated our children, were challenged by Quaker Jeopardy, enjoyed a simple Christmas craft day and Christmas song/play, were surprised by our secret pals, collected food for MANNA and personal care items for people challenged by homelessness.

Spirit weighed heavy with us as we mourned the passing of Friend, Joy Gossett. Joy was a faithful friend who contributed much to our first day program day program and led and inspired our pre-meeting singing. We shall miss her clear soprano voice in our midst.

Our spirits were lifted as we welcomed our two newest Friends, Glory Ward and Shepherd Farrell upon their births.

We have so much wonderful work being done by our committees within the meeting and through outreach. As we have more deeply discerned the loss of folks who have left Asheville Friends we have had to recognize also the loss of their contributions to our community. It was important for us to engage newer folks in the life of the meeting by helping them identify their gifts and inviting them to join committees. Finding time to fit in committee meetings as well as our 2nd hour activities caused some tension but conversation around this was beginning. We have substantially increased our outreach budget to a third of our operating budget (\$9000) to both Quaker and non-Quaker non-profit organizations.

Questionable behavior in Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business was part of our work in 2017. Angry outbursts, back and forth exchanges and verbal abuse disrupted both worship and business. Having no guidelines in place left us without the tools we needed to address these incidents. Ministry and Counsel accepted this as their challenge and diligently worked on this process. This takes patient and thoughtful work which is ongoing. One step we took during Worship with Attention to Business was to remind each other with verbal and posted written cues to remain true to Quaker process and to treat each other with respect.

Our Racial Justice committee continued to bring us awareness of how white supremacy has impacted People of Color in our Quaker community as well as the world at large. We were

discomforted by realizations around how significant our responsibility for racism /white supremacy is as a predominantly white community. One evidence of this is that we tend to speak in a white Voice even though we have friends of color in our meeting. This new awareness left us struggling with fear of change, the threat of loss, anger, and resentment; creating tension between individuals as well as the meeting as a whole. Keeping to Quaker process was a struggle. We wanted resolution to the conflict but were challenged by the persistence it takes to sit with conflict and go through the necessary process in a meaningful way. We recognized that we are accountable to co-create a space in which we could do the work. We were offered opportunities for some training and 2nd hour programs around racial equity, offered book titles to continue educating ourselves and some folks were inspired to seek ways to join in this work in our Asheville community.

We played together, worshipped together, sat uncomfortably in conflict together, supported each other through joys and concerns, protested together, worked on our quaker process, were good stewards of our house and grounds, learned about our history, celebrated with a reunion, reached out to our Asheville community, supported an investigation into North Carolina's role in facilitating torture and discussed how we could support sanctuary .

Approved during Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 3/11/18

Minute 4: Friends approved the State of the Meeting Report with several changes.

Committee Reports:

House and Grounds Committee - Jim Barham

H & G would like the AFM Meeting to consider the following information related to the library space, the current problems and then, its future use.

H & G has been asked to resolve concerns related to this space in the meetinghouse.

The library is also used as a nursery and committee meeting area. Considerable amounts of dirt and mold are in this room. The nursery rug has been cleaned and stored for future use.

Regarding the mold, the room and books will need to be detoxified with mold treatments as well as cleaned. Ongoing mold prevention will need to be done (in a closable space for the fan to do its work). The Library Committee and the H & G Committee will be working together on this.

Things to think about:

- Is the current use of the room the right purpose(s)? Library, nursery and committee meeting room.

- Are there other locations in the meetinghouse that would better serve one or more of these uses?
- There are many costs to keeping the room in its current usage and to eliminate the mold on an ongoing basis.
- No matter where the library lands, doors would need to be installed along with a ceiling fan and timer switch.

Possibilities:

- Move library up to guest room after the mold treatment. Do ongoing mold prevention in this space.
- Move library into current office space (move office to another space).
- Create traffic pattern in the room that keeps outside footwear off nursery rug, wherever the nursery is located.
- Other ideas?

Decisions to Be Made:

1. Location of treated library books with mold prevention air circulation.
2. Location of nursery with clean rug.
3. Best use of current library space after complete cleaning and mold removal.

We were asked to answer a few questions regarding the use of the library. The above should be pondered before next month's meeting for business when we will have a discussion about the decisions before us. Friends thank the House and Grounds Committee for the extensive and beautiful work done by the committee and other Friends on the kitchen, north entranceway and bathroom floor.

Peace and Earth Committee - Pat Johnson

Pat thanked us for considering the opportunity to become part of the CIMA work along with other faith groups. There was concern expressed in the past discussions regarding possible legal implications if we involve the meeting in the program. Would a professional license be in jeopardy as a result of providing sanctuary. It is unlikely that this would occur based on what has transpired. There is risk in anything we do, but it does not seem that this should hinder our involvement. The focus of the work would be following the lead of CIMA. When other groups plan activities without the involvement of CIMA, this group will not participate. We have recommendations from the Peace and Earth

Sanctuary Minute

Asheville Friends Meeting agrees to partner with CIMA (Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción), the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville (the hosting

Congregation) and other faith communities in providing sanctuary to immigrants in danger of immediate deportation. Our members and attenders commit to follow their leadings in responding to immigrant leaders, speaking out against discrimination and resisting harmful and unjust policies that lead to racial profiling and discrimination. We will continue building relationships with immigrant partners as they organize for their own liberation.

According to our leadings & as need arises, we will provide the items and services as shown in the following checklist:

Here's what has been promised so far:

The following goods and services already been volunteered by individuals or the Peace and Earth Committee

1. Peace & Earth committee gave \$200 toward Sanctuary expenses from the General Outreach Fund.
2. Four members have agreed to volunteer in shifts to stay with the person in Sanctuary.
3. One person has volunteered for food and grocery shopping.
4. Three have volunteered to provide towels and bedding.
5. Two volunteers for transportation needs.
6. Two volunteers for assorted furniture needs.
7. One volunteer for pot, pans, and assorted cookware.
8. P & E recommends that the Meeting offer space for UU church meetings at times when their space is displaced by the person in sanctuary.

The question of whether or not we can provide housing for a Friend in our community came up. One Friend asked us to remember that we have a person in our meeting who is facing homelessness and wanted to be housed in the meetinghouse. However, the minute can proceed with the Friends standing aside.

Minute 5: Friends approved the above minute.

Nominating Committee - Mike Eddy

Two names were brought forward: Beth Eddy for Racial Justice Committee and Jen Rhode Ward for the Communications Committee. The committee is working on filling spaces. The request was made of all of us to consider where we would like to work as some Friends may be at a point where they want to lay down work they currently do and join a different committee or work in a position of responsibility. Please contact the Nominating Committee with your thoughts once you have given it careful consideration. Mike Eddy, Nickietie Jayne, Jim Cavener, Patti Burgess and Bobby Carter are the committee.

Minute 6: Friends approved that Beth Eddy serve on Racial Justice Committee and Jen Rhode Ward serve on the Communications Committee.

Racial Justice Committee - Steve Livingston

A minute was read from Berea Friends Meeting for our consideration as follows:

Berea Friends Meeting applauds the establishment of the Uplifting Racial Justice Committee (SAYMA-URJ) and thanks those Friends whose leadership contributed to its creation.

Berea Friends Meeting notes that SAYMA-URJ "encourages Friends of European descent to support SAYMA-URJ by forming a separate committee or working group."

Berea Friends Meeting calls for the establishment of a complementary and cooperative SAYMA standing committee, provisionally named the Dismantling White Supremacy Committee (DWS), with the following mission:

1. DWS supports SAYMA-URJ in making SAYMA a welcoming and safe place for Friends of color, and raising awareness about white supremacy within SAYMA and the Religious Society of Friends.
2. DWS will listen to SAYMA-URJ and individual Friends of color in order to understand the impact racism has on their lives.
3. DWS will share information and provide assistance to monthly meetings in identifying how individuals and institutions maintain power structures which block people of color from full participation in and enjoyment of all aspects of life and society.
4. DWS seeks to assist individual Friends and monthly meetings in dismantling these power structures.
5. DWS seeks the elimination of both the attitudes and manifestations of white supremacy, and all forms of racism, within ourselves, our monthly meetings, SAYMA, the Religious Society of Friends, and society at large.

Steve recommends the word "safe" be removed from the minute in point 1 because this was a change made in SAYMA-URJ during the work done in September's Representative Meeting, 2017. There is a tone that implies that white people are the ones who know better how to accomplish the stated goals. The support group is comprised of white Friends at this time. It is not stated that only white Friends will serve on the DWS committee.

Other

It was brought to our attention that the house has repeatedly been found open with no one having permission to use the building. Were all the groups contacted reminding them to be sure that all doors are locked when they leave?

We closed with a moment of silence to meet again as way opens on Fourth Month 8, 2018.