

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Third Month 10, 2019
(DRAFT)

Present: Patti Hughes, Clerk (standing in for our absent Clerk), Pat Campbell, Recording Clerk. Nancy Lynn Sharpless, Barbara Esther, Edie Patrick, Rusty Maynard, Bob Lackey, Mike Eddy, Beth Eddy, Pat Johnson, Gita Larson, Bobby Carter, Steve Livingston.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which Clerk, Patti Hughes, read:

The Summer Day
In honor of Mary Oliver's passing from House of Light

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean –
the one who flung herself out of the grass,
who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down –
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

The Meeting accepted the agenda.

Minute #1: Friends approved the 2nd month 2019 minutes (with two changes that will be made to the minutes of 2nd Month Meeting for Business.

Announcements

The construction on the back deck and stairs has been completed and has passed city inspection. A protective tape was placed at the top of the stairs at the Fire Marshall's request. A HUGE thanks to our House and Grounds Committee for their assistance with this project.

The memorial for Jim Hipkins will be held on Monday, March 18th at 3:00 pm in the chapel at Brooks-Howell Home at 266 Merrimon Avenue. A short reception will take place immediately following the service.

Planning Committee for Welcoming Party for Annika Peacock

We want to welcome our new member, Annika Peacock. Nick has offered his home for the party and we are looking for some people to help plan a get-together. No date has been set yet for this welcoming get together.

Request from SAYMA Rep Meeting Ad Hoc Planning Committee-Steve Livingston

The planning committee is requesting \$150 for food preparation associated with the SAYMA Representative Meeting on 3-16-19. Although the planning committee indicated that the whole amount may not need to be spent, after some discussion this amount was approved.

Chat-and-Chew at SAYMA Yearly Meeting-Patti Hughes

We have received a survey from the SAYMA office asking if we are willing to host a Chat-and-Chew at the SAYMA annual gathering at Warren Wilson on June

13th-16th. This survey and request were sent to all of the monthly meetings in SAYMA. Are we willing to do it again this year? If no other Meeting was willing to host this event, AFM was willing to host this Thursday evening event again.

Steve added that the survey was actually offering this opportunity to any SAYMA meetings who might like to take a turn hosting Chat-and-Chew.

State of the Meeting Report--Patti Hughes

This is the second presentation of the draft State of the Meeting Report. The final report is due to the SAYMA office at the end of third month, so all corrections and additions must be made and approved at this meeting.

State of the Meeting Report 2018

As the year 2018 came to a close, our meeting was in a place of guarded hopefulness. The past few years have been troubled as we have dealt with difficult issues and have wrestled with what it means to be a community. We have struggled to communicate thoughtfully, and we have lost some of our resiliency. Our dream of being a welcoming, inclusive, and spirit-led meeting is still alive though, and inspires us to dig deep and work hard. We have a long way to go on our journey as a meeting.

It is clear that we need to resume racial justice training so we can develop skills to recognize and confront racism in ourselves and in our community. We need to deepen our understanding of institutional systemic racism and white supremacy and share this reality with our older children in meeting so they are well informed as they become teens and young adults. The ongoing challenge to those of us who are white is to be aware of our white privilege. We will not be able to respond in love and compassion to the needs of friends of color until we focus on our own understanding of how we cause hurt.

In an attempt to work on this issue, our Racial Justice Committee presented several forums using the book, Becoming An Anti-Racist Church by

Joseph Barndt. We looked at how our own practices are rooted in racism and how we can try to overcome this in our meeting. More discussion is needed as we get into the last part of the book. Our challenge is to increase participation in these discussions so we can develop a shared understanding of what racial justice means today.

When discussing racial justice issues, we feel the tension between the testimony of integrity and the testimony of community. We want to speak our truth with courage and conviction while remaining respectful and open to the truth of others. A case in point is over the use of the term "white supremacy" to describe our role in maintaining racism. Members feel strongly about the use of this term and at times we forget that these are beloved friends with whom we disagree. We have realized that we need to use tenderness with those among us who struggle or do not struggle with our racism. We need to encourage each other to be open to the new ideas today's racial justice work requires. To do this we will need to build trust in each other, so we can share and confront our personal truths. At this time, we do not all have that trust, but we are working to rebuild it.

In this time of increasing nationalism in our country, some immigrants experience increasing prejudice but none more than those who are here without documents. Asheville Friends Meeting partnered with CIMA (Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Acción), the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville (the hosting Congregation) and other faith communities to offer sanctuary to some who are at risk of summary deportation. We have minuted our support as well as offered financial support and endless hours of volunteer companionship.

Another area of concern expressed by many in Meeting is our need for right relationship with Indigenous peoples. A member of Meeting went to the Pendle Hill workshop on this issue and is helping Peace and Earth develop education for our meeting and the wider community about the role of Quakers in the boarding school movement and our presence on Cherokee land.

Our Peace and Earth and Racial Justice Committees continue to shepherd our outreach to Quaker and other organizations. Once again, we were able to dedicate a third of our budget to the important work being done in the broader community. Throughout the year, we collected food for MANNA food bank, toiletries for A HOPE Hospitality House for the homeless, and snacks and hygiene products for a Little Free Food Pantry. We also supported some walkers in the local CROP Walk to end hunger in our community.

Our community becomes stronger when we can help each other in times of need. Several families in Meeting have been in transition this past year and we did what we could to support them as they faced the joys and challenges that surround transition. Improved communication within Meeting, thanks in part to our Communications Committee, helped us be more responsive as need arises. Still, we could be more supportive of each other.

The number of children in Meeting continues to grow. Our meeting has a vibrant First Day School with weekly attendance of between 10-20 children. We currently don't have a youth group, but plan to begin one again next year. While we don't have any teens active with Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF), we enjoyed hosting their retreats. Our Junior Business Meetings were productive and gave voice to the needs and desires of our meeting's children. In June we welcomed the birth of Essence Villatoro-Weir-Grant. She is a third-generation Asheville Friend and a precious addition to our meeting family.

In 2018, our First Day School (FDS) invited Meeting members and attenders to share their heartfelt connections with favorite Bible stories, we examined ways children and teens can speak up when something seems wrong and needs changing, and we began a new exploration of the testimonies. Programming has been challenging with a large spread in ages within our FDS and uncertain attendance each week. We have recognized the need to provide some deeper-level instruction with our older children.

Our multigenerational events co-led by the Religious Education and the Spiritual Enrichment Committees continue to bring adults and children together. In the beginning of the year, we had the largest Secret Pal exchange since the beginning of this popular program. In the spring, our Youth Celebration gave everyone a chance to learn more about our children and celebrate their role in our meeting. In the winter we began a new Simple Christmas tradition where all ages came together to decorate cookies, make bird treats, and enjoy a wide range of crafts.

Our hearts were saddened in 2018 by the passing of our dear Friend, Alan Robinson, a former clerk of the Meeting. He was a man of many talents and lived a rich life that many of us new nothing about. He gave a lot of himself to the meeting and we miss him.

Toward the end of the year we came together as a community with a meeting-wide retreat led by Debra Shaw. We explored what it means to be a compassionate Quaker. Participants shared deeply and envisioned ways to be in relationship with others within our meeting community and in the broader community.

Our year ended with our eyes focused on the future. Our Business Meeting approved the formation of a Long-Range Planning and Visioning Committee that will gather the many voices of meeting into a cohesive plan for the future. We will begin by envisioning what we want for our meeting. From there, we can put in place the things we need. We have a lot of work ahead of us as we become the meeting we want to be. We need more involvement on Meeting committees so the work is spread out among more people. We need to strengthen our spiritual muscles for sitting with unsafe feelings and being uncomfortable, and we need to be patient with each other as we move into the new year.

Minute # 2 After Friends were given the time to reread the draft, the Meeting for Business approved the draft with no changes. This document will be sent to SAYMA.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee--Mike Eddy

Nominating Committee would like to put forth the following Friends to serve on the Long Range Planning Committee:

Jim Cavener-representing Nominating and Care and Nurture

Beth Eddy - Racial Justice

Pat Johnson - Peace and Earth

Patty Burgess - Hospitality and Religious Education

Julia Dorn-Finance

This slate of committee members was approved.

Mike went on to say that they are still looking for someone from Spiritual Enrichment, House and Grounds, Ministry and Counsel, Communications, and the Junior Business Meeting. Pat Campbell has volunteered to represent the Library Committee and will be considered by the Nominating Committee.

House and Grounds-Nancy Lynn Sharpless

House and Grounds has been looking into replacing the windows in the meeting. In working through the idea to make our Meeting house more earth friendly, a proposal related to the windows has been brought forward. It is possible to not replace all windows. Each room needs two exits for safety. Instead of replacing some windows we have the option to "seal" existing windows, making them the same R value as the current uninsulated walls. This means that all windows would not look alike inside and out. Old ones would be single pane with storms we currently have. These windows would need a ladder for cleaning.

This information was presented to the Meeting so that it could be considered for a future decision about this.

Questions were raised about issues of heat and cooling since any sealed windows could not be opened. The patterns of air circulation and exchange were brought up. As to why the windows were considered prior to the insulation of the walls, humidity and lead exposure from the innermost layer of paint when windows were opened were mentioned. Other safety issues, such as the difficulty in opening windows for emergency exits, were also mentioned.

Ministry and Counsel Committee--Patti Hughes

- Information for Visitors

Patti Hughes read the following to the Meeting:

Ministry and Counsel has been working on a handout for newcomers. M&C made changes following the 1st and 2nd month 2019 Business Meetings and it is now submitted for approval.

Asheville Friends Meeting

Welcome

We're glad you are here.

How We Worship

As Quakers we seek that of God in everyone and minister to each other. Our worship is a silent gathering to connect individually and collectively with the Spirit; the quiet waiting allows messages of the Spirit to rise up in individuals who may then stand and speak their truth. This brief vocal ministry is deep and meaningful. Having shared a message, the speaker sits and silence resumes as their words are gathered in. While a new message may spring from a previously spoken message, we refrain from any direct response but rather offer each message up to all. We reserve the final moments of worship to share our joys and concerns. Worship closes with the offering of a handshake. Visitors will be invited to introduce themselves after the close of meeting.

After announcements we invite you to ask for further information.

After further discussion on word usage and impact, and font diversity, the document is referred back to Ministry and Council, with concerned Friends being asked to submit alternative wordage to the Committee.

Communications Committee-Steve Livingston

The Communications Committee is seeking approval for guidelines the committee created for our Facebook page.

The Asheville Friends Meeting (Quaker) Facebook Group is meant to facilitate caring communications amongst Asheville Friends Meeting members and attenders, as well as others interested in Asheville Meeting or in Quakerism. Any member of this Facebook group can post a reply to anything posted here. We ask that you use careful discernment and keep these guidelines in mind:

- Be judicious in your posting. Consider whether you've mentioned this or similar topics in the recent past.
- Share your own thoughts or questions. Links can supplement your message but shouldn't be the only point of your post.

- Be respectful and kind in your comments, even when you disagree.

Individual Facebook posts do not represent the corporate view of Asheville Friends Meeting unless adopted as a minute of the Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. In addition, the Meeting has many participants who are not members of Facebook, and thus this FB discussion group only partially reflects the life of the Meeting. For a fuller experience of Meeting, we encourage seekers to visit the Meeting and read the full range of Meeting descriptions and documents on our website.

If you wish to promote a Meeting or community event, please contact the Administrators by messaging this page.

After reading the above to the Meeting for Business, Steve indicated that any opening post will need to be submitted to the Committee. Steve asked for approval of these guidelines. Many serious questions followed regarding the use of Facebook by AFM that will need to be discussed. There was also recognition that the presence of some guidelines should not wait until these questions were resolved.

Minute #3: Thus, in spite of these serious concerns, the Meeting for Business approved the presented guidelines with the understanding that further discussion of these concerns by the whole Meeting will occur.

The Clerk read the following out of silence;

Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

The Meeting remained in a further moment of silence, to meet again as way opens in Fourth Month, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pat Campbell, Recording Clerk
Patti Hughes, Clerk

