

Gainesville Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business
13, Tenth Month, 2013

ATTENDING: Dick Beardsley, Gene Beardsley, David Crawford, Tim Fogarty, Jean Larson, Sandy Lyon, Bill Mitchell, Betty Odum, Connie Ray, Tim Ray, Laura Winefordner, Annie McPherson, Clerk, Gary Arthur, Recorder

The meeting opened with worship.

The ninth month 2013 minutes were read and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT by Bill Mitchell:

General Fund Balance: \$14,527

Contingency Fund Balance: \$20,002

NOMINATING COMMITTEE by Gene Beardsley:

The Committee reminds everyone that we start a new Officers and Committee members roster with the start of the new calendar year. That roster will hopefully be brought to the November business meeting. Friends are asked to think about how they would like to serve the meeting in the coming year, 2014.

GFM2013.10.19: Meeting approves adding Michael Canney to Peace and Social Concerns and Earthcare Witness Committees and Ted Jones and Bonnie Zimmer to Newsletter and Website Committee.

REPORT FROM "QUAKER HOUSE" THRESHING FORUM by David Crawford:

A forum to discuss a leading shared by Sandy Lyon regarding establishing a "Quaker House" here in Gainesville was held on 29 September 2013. Seventeen attended with David Crawford clerking the session. Sandy's leading arose from a concern for low-income families who have social services in place but lack affordable housing. Another aspect of the leading would be providing short-term accommodations to those in need of transitional housing. The concept might also include having a Quaker in residence.

Various thoughts and concerns regarding the idea were shared at that meeting, and the sense was to form a Quaker House ad hoc committee to explore outreach through a physical presence other than or in addition to our current meetinghouse property. Dick Beardsley, Jean Chalmers, David Crawford, Sandy Lyon and Tim Ray volunteered to serve on that committee. The complete report is included in the addenda.

GFM2013.10.20: Meeting approves formation of a "Quaker House Ad Hoc Committee" to explore outreach through a physical presence other than or in addition to the meetinghouse property. Serving on the committee will be Dick Beardsley, Jean Chalmers, Sandy Lyon, Tim Ray and David Crawford, who agreed to convene their first meeting.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE concern brought by Sandy Lyon. Sandy asked that her granddaughter be allowed to use the piano in the social room as a place to receive piano instruction.

GFM2013.10.21: Meeting approves the use of the meetinghouse by Sandy Lyon for piano instruction.

MEETING HANDBOOK AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT by Annie McPherson:
A draft copy of the Gainesville Friends Meeting Handbook was shared. It represents an outline of how we as a Meeting conduct our business and the responsibilities carried out by various committees and officers of the Meeting. It is written in an effort to help inform perspective committee members and officers of the work to be done. Helpful comments and points of clarification of committees' roles were shared during the discussion. Work on the document continues and Friends are asked to contact Annie with questions or comments. When it's ready, a final draft will be brought for approval. It was suggested that upon approval, the handbook be included on the Meeting website.

SEYM INTERUM BUSINESS MEETING REPORT by Laura Winefordner:
Several Gainesville Friends were present last weekend for a very well attended gathering of SEYM Friends for their Fall Interim Business Meeting at Palm Beach Friends Meeting in Lake Worth.

Highlighting that session was a report by SEYM Middle and High School youth, who told of their experience at FGC, held this past July in Greeley, CO. Our Yearly Meeting Youth mentored other North American Young Friends about their work with the Florida Fair Food Campaign. SEYM Youth organized and led a demonstration there in Greeley focused on a local Wendy's Restaurant where about 140 people marched to protest that company's failure to sign on with other major fast-food chains in offering a fair wage to tomato pickers. Ann Sundberg, clerk of SEYM Youth Committee shared that the Committee's goal for next year is to have each SEYM youth work as a mentor among other Quaker Youth in Yearly Meetings, Quaker Schools and other Quaker youth organizations. Our youths' report about their experience there at FGC this past summer was listened to with deep appreciation and admiration by all. Our member, Sandy Lyon, who was present for the report, is a member of the SEYM Youth Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Volunteers are needed for leading discussions with the Quaker Reading Group. Please bring ideas to Connie Ray. Volunteers are also needed for the booth at the Pride Festival on 10/26/13.
2. Connie Ray reported that in reviewing our Meeting's archives, she became aware that Laura Winefordner has been a member for over 50 years. Betty Odum has been a member here for 50 years, as well.
3. Jean Larson read our ad from the latest issue of The Gainesville Iguana. Thanks to Shawna Doran and Gary Arthur for submitting it.
4. Tim Fogarty shared that Solidarity Sojourns will lead an all women's construction crew to build houses in Nicaragua next March. The women are members of the Women's Build Committee of Habitat for Humanity of Alachua County.
5. SEYM Half Yearly Meeting takes place again this year at Wekiva Springs State Park on Thanksgiving Weekend, November 28 - December 1.

ADDENDA:

QUAKER HOUSE FORUM- 29 September 2013

Attendees: Michael Canney, Karen Arrington, Dick Beardsley, Gene Beardsley, Sybil Brennan, David Chalmers, Jean Chalmers, David Crawford, Shawna Doran, Ted Jones, Jean Larson, Sandy Lyon, Bill Mitchell, Betty Odum, Tim Ray, Laura Winefordner, Bonnie Zimmer

Following a moment of silent worship, David Crawford introduced the "Quaker House" forum. The forum was scheduled to consider a leading about establishing a Quaker House in Gainesville that Sandy Lyon brought to meeting for worship with attention to business on 8 September 2013.

A number of examples of how Friends use real estate as part of their outreach efforts were cited in order to provide some context. Examples included: the Quaker House Residential Community of Ann Arbor, MI Monthly Meeting; Quaker House in Fayetteville, NC; William Penn House in Washington, DC; Quaker Housing, Inc. a non-profit apartment complex for low income seniors in Madison, WI; and Santa Fe (NM) Monthly Meeting's guest apartment. Laura Winefordner added that at one time Orlando Monthly Meeting owed an apartment building.

Next, Sandy Lyon spoke of the leading that arose from a concern for low-income families that have social services in place, but lack affordable housing. She shared her personal experience with two properties that she and her husband bought out of foreclosure and that are now rented to low-income families. Another facet of this leading is to provide short-term accommodations to those in need of transitional housing. Sandy's concept includes having a Quaker in residence to oversee the property.

Jean Chalmers provided examples of some of the properties that GMM might be able to purchase through a charitable bargain sale. (A charitable bargain sale occurs when real property is sold to a charity for less than market value.) Properties mentioned by Jean Chalmers included the Loga Springs Academy property and the Tower Road Apartments. The following points are noted from the sharing of ideas and concerns that followed: Providing affordable housing would benefit outreach, but outreach to whom? The homeless, veterans, young families, seniors, those in need of temporary housing and/or those in need of permanent housing?

Many felt that having another physical location closer to downtown or the UF campus will benefit outreach through proximity to the populations that GMM might serve.

Should we partner with the Mennonites or another group?

A property located downtown or near the UF campus might serve purposes in addition to or instead of providing affordable housing such as: a Quaker reading room, a Quaker center with meeting spaces for programs such as Quakerism 101, or even Sunday MFW and fellowship.

Should we “start small” by focusing on just housing or just a Quaker center? Could we rent a property? Could our purposes be served by working with an existing agency or non-profit organization?

Friends were reminded that there was consideration of acquiring a house nearby the new meetinghouse where a resident groundskeeper/building manager might be given housing in return for caring for the meetinghouse, and where visitors or those in need of temporary housing might stay.

It was noted that a property such as the Loga Springs Academy or another large property might present the opportunity for GMM to relocate the meetinghouse to that property. Friends agreed that the relatively recent relocation of the meetinghouse, the repayment of the mortgage, and other factors might make consideration of relocation especially challenging. However, the advantages of re-locating to an area offering greater engagement with the local community might make consideration of this paradigm shift worthwhile.

It should also be noted that at one Friend expressed a concern shared by others that the meeting seems to have barely enough “energy” to maintain our current property and programs. Additionally, others expressed concerns over the financial capacity of the meeting particularly remembering how “stretched” the meeting was when it relocated. With agreement that these are shared concerns and that no irrevocable steps would be taken by further exploration of the Quaker House concept, the sense of the meeting was that formation of a Quaker House ad hoc committee to explore outreach through a physical presence other than or in addition to the meetinghouse property will be proposed at meeting for worship with attention to business on 13 October. Dick Beardsley, Jean Chalmers, David Crawford, Sandy Lyon, and Tim Ray volunteered to serve on the Quaker House Ad Hoc Committee, and additional volunteers will be welcome.

The forum concluded with a period of silent worship.