

Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting
Meeting for Worship for Program and for Business
Sunday, July 22, 2018

Held at Ujima Friends Peace Center, 1701 W. Lehigh Ave., Philadelphia, PA

Minutes Approved
at the October 28, 2018 Meeting for Worship for Business

Meeting	
Germantown MM	5
MM of Friends of Philadelphia (Arch St.)	1
Chestnut Hill MM	4
Central Philadelphia MM	6
West Philadelphia MM	
Frankford MM	5
Unity MM	
Green Street MM	4
Ujima Friends Peace Center	5
Visitors and Others	1, Wilmington MM

The notes from the program “Ujima Friends Peace Center: Unapologetically Black, Unapologetically Quaker,” presented by Dr. Ayesha Imani, follow the minutes from Meeting for Business (see Appendix).

Minutes of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Friends opened the meeting with a period of waiting worship, during which messages of gratitude were expressed for the work, welcome, philosophy and inspiration of Ujima Friends Peace Center.

This was followed by introductions of those at the clerks’ table.

PQM-2018-07-01 Report back from Meetings on actions on Minutes of Concern

- **Mass Incarceration (CPMM)**
 - CPMM – Dana Reinhold, clerk of CPMM, described the presentation made at the Quarter’s last meeting and reported that several meeting members have attended bail hearings. In collaboration with Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild (POWER), CPMM is contemplating hosting a bail system educational event in the fall, similar to one held recently at POWER member congregation P’nai Or.

- Germantown MM has endorsed the minute. It was noted that faith communities need to be much more under the weight of supporting people who have suffered through the mass incarceration system.
- Green Street and West Philadelphia MMs – nobody was prepared to report.
- Frankford MM – They endorsed the minute and are interested in further educational opportunities.
- Chestnut Hill MM created an ad-hoc committee in May on dealing with racism to “hold [the meeting’s] feet to the fire”— various issues, including mass incarceration, have been referred to that committee.
- Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia—has not yet taken action but will take the matter up in the fall.

The clerk has now forwarded the minutes to Yearly Meeting leadership (currently comprised of the three alternate clerks plus the clerks of Quaker Life and Administrative Councils). She then had a chance to discuss it with YM officer Amy Taylor-Brooks and with Barry Scott of CPMM. Quaker Life Council has not yet had a chance to reflect on the minute (now the formal next step in the procedure) and to discern what happens next. For example, should a collaborative be formed or another action taken? Even so, Amy indicated that there may be an opportunity to raise the minute with Bryn Hammarstrom of QLC as a point of information he might share with Friends assembled for Annual Sessions as part of an overview of minutes under consideration.

- **Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (GMM)**

Arch Street, Frankford and Chestnut Hill MMs endorsed the minute; CPMM refrained from approving the minute until more specific recommended actions were solicited from Germantown MM. Nobody from Green Street or West Philadelphia was prepared to report.

PQM-2018-07-02 Review of Minutes, April 22, 2018 Meeting for Worship for Business

Friends approved the minutes without change as distributed in advance.

PQM-2018-07-03 Nominating Follow-up

Work is moving forward to set up a recording clerk team for Philadelphia Quarter, along the lines of that used by CPMM. Greg Barnes agreed to serve as one of these recording clerks whenever the Quarter meets at CPMM or Arch Street. Other names are being pursued.

PQM-2018-07-04 Update on AVP Workshop Proposal

Aimee Landau introduced the proposal by describing her feelings of frustration and disappointment a couple of years ago in a called meeting that attempted to make headway on questions of racism. It became clear to her that there was a need for Friends to be

better equipped for deep conversations in the face of conflict, conversations that could move us toward healing. In response to this need, Laurent Hahn, .O, and Carolyn Singleton, all Friends who are trained AVP facilitators, have now submitted a proposal for the Quarter to meet for a training focused on building these skills in our population. The training, though Quarter-sponsored, would take the form of a called meeting of the Quarter to which all are welcome. A potluck will divide the workshop into manageable sections..

Anthony Stover raised the idea of Ujima hosting the session. Ujima Friends will consider the possibility and will get back to the PQM clerk about this. Ujima's collaboration might open the door for AVP to build its experience engaging with North Philadelphia communities.

Aimee has organized an interest session on this proposal for Friday night at PYM Annual Sessions, in the hopes of casting the net wide for folks in and beyond PQM who might wish to participate in the training.

Friends minuted their deep appreciation to the volunteers from Alternatives to Violence Project for making this gift of their time and skills, and also to Aimee Landau for championing the idea and moving it forward.

PQM-2018-07-05 Finance

- Clerk Hollister Knowlton reported that co-treasurer Hoot Williams has applied the Quarter's financial data, now entered in QuickBooks, to the current Excel-based end of FY2017-18 report. By this time next year, all reports will be generated directly from QuickBooks. It was observed that a \$2,000+ shortfall in individual gifts is partly attributable to the transition between coordinators leading to a delayed mailing of the fundraising letter. At the same time, we have underspent our FY2017-08 budget due to a variety of factors, so PQM has ended the fiscal year with a small net surplus.
- Rising Clerk, Anthony Stover noted the three Monthly Meetings that have not yet sent in their contributions and suggests that Reps from those meetings remind their treasurers. Mentoring Clerk, Andrew Anderson, noted that sending an invoice would not be "unQuakerly"

PQM-2018-07-06 Reports from Meeting Reps about Life of the Spirit in their Meetings:

Chestnut Hill has minuted its recognition of the ministry of Eileen Flanagan.

Friends closed the meeting with a period of waiting worship.

Appendix

Notes from Program, “Ujima Friends Peace Center: Unapologetically Black, Unapologetically Quaker,” presented by Dr. Ayesha Imani

Ujima has now been running for over a year. It is comprised of a multigenerational group of youth, community members, and activists.

A primary aim is to work to reduce violence (physical or inflicted by poverty or trauma) and to provide safe haven for both the community and Friends of African descent.

Worship, which takes place at 2 PM on Sundays, is intended to be the root of all Ujima Friends do. Often, says Ayesha, “getting still is the most revolutionary thing you can do: listen for the voice of God and then follow it.”

The Center has a conscious commitment to avoiding colonial approaches in as it integrates itself in the community where it’s located. One step they took was to survey the neighborhood for what its residents felt they wanted and needed. Ujima members joined the neighborhood’s young people in demanding some of those things at City Hall. Ujima has also been shaping the services it offers in response to the results of the survey. One major desire expressed was for more after-school programming, and providing that is a goal down the road. Again in a spirit of respect for the community, Ujima arranged an event honoring organizing work that has been happening over time in the neighborhood.

Ujima’s services currently take the form of several community education strategies:

- **Freedom School** (modeled after those run by civil rights activists of the mid-20th century). Ujima Friends carried out old-school door-to-door recruiting of children in the neighborhood to assemble this summer’s cohort of participants. The program is free, but it’s required that parents show up for a weekly meeting. Each year, there’s a social action theme; this year’s--“Everyone Deserves Second Chances”--is inspired by CPMM member Becky BIRTHA’s *Far Apart, Close in Heart*, about children with incarcerated family members.
- Friends have developed a curriculum known as **Mpatapo**, which fuses African and Quaker principle (Quaker SPICES, the principles of Kwanzaa, and intersection between them; students are to strive to build peace, keep peace, and make peace.) Mai Spann-Wilson and Ayesha’s daughter Nia have instructed young men in the Mpatapo model—those young male leaders then spread the training in the community. Ujima is also working with younger children.
- There have been a variety of **Saturday classes/workshops**, including a series of renters’ rights classes presented with input from attorneys who are members of Ujima. The series has served 120 participants to date. It was noted, “Eviction is to women what mass incarceration is to men.”

- Ujima participants have undergone **training** with Cabrini College, which has been very gracious and open to collaboration. They do hope eventually that way will open for Ujima to collaborate with Quaker institutions in this area.

Projected for the future is the idea of a Peace Force developed through Conflict Transformation Training. This might ultimately bring together returning citizens, the police, and others, with an eventual result of disarmament on all sides and a truly community-based police force.

In response to food insecurity in the community, Ujima Friends have been holding a “Grocery-Give-Away”—over 1,100 families were assisted within eight months. The motive for this is unconditional love, and in that vein no ID is required for receiving food (though the latter is required in some government-provided food pantries). There’s a festive “house party” atmosphere—the best music around!

Ujima hosted an Intergenerational Learning, Living, Loving project entitled “With These Hands, With These Hearts”, funded by Friends Council on Aging in collaboration with Allegheny-NewCourtland Senior Center and Sankofa Freedom Academy’s Junior Servant Leaders. There was a rich interchange of creative skills, ranging from social media to poetry, crocheting, sewing, and newsletter publishing. Each day concluded with a period of reflection as a group.

Ujima Friends have also been engaged in self-nurture; there is an ongoing Friday Night (or sometimes Sunday evening) “Happy Hour” during which women from Ujima have been meeting to reflect on Marcelle Martin’s *Our Life Is Love*.

Ujima has received support from various meetings and funds within as well as outside the Quarter. Many individuals contribute as well, and Ujima welcomes gifts by mail or via the website at www.ujimafriends.org. The Center’s members include Friends from some ten different monthly meetings, along with individuals who don’t have a monthly meeting affiliation.

Asked what kind of involvement would be welcome, and what would be intrusive, on the part of Friends of European descent, it was noted that several have been in regular attendance at worship at Ujima. Though such attendance is welcome, as is economic support, it is vital that Friends of African descent continue to show up and be present at the core of the work, and that they be central to how Quaker work in the neighborhood is perceived. It’s asked that European Americans refrain from approaching the work of Ujima with a missionary complex or a spirit of “fixing” things or taking control/ownership. Also to be avoided is the practice of large groups of white Friends descending on Ujima by bus as a sort of tourist excursion.

Several noted that it can be a powerful experience, a coming home, for African American Friends to come to worship at Ujima and be able to look around and find themselves

surrounded by faces like their own. For very many, this has come after years spent in meetings where European Americans were the large majority. In the years prior to Ujima's founding, many African American Friends have drawn similar nourishment from participation in the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent; Ujima, though, has taken the experience further, from just being a space of reassurance and interpersonal support into a space that centers action, giving back, and reaching beyond.

It was pointed out that White Friends need Ujima to exist just as much as African American Friends do; and that Peace Centers like this are needed throughout Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's territory—perhaps, among poor white people suffering from the opioid epidemic in Kensington; among those experiencing violence, poverty and trauma in Willingboro and Chester....

Ayesha noted, "If Quakers don't dream these peace dreams, who's going to do it?" This work, "taking our brothers' and sisters' problems and making them our own," is a journey of faith. Ultimately, this kind of work may represent a path toward clarity and salvation for Friends in the Philadelphia area.