

New York Quarterly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends
18th of Seventh Month 2015, 1:00 p.m.

Meeting at Friends Cemetery, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York

Present: Andy von Salis (B), Clerk; Ted Ehrhardt (B), Assistant Clerk.

Attendance: Brooklyn 7, Fifteenth Street 14, Flushing 1, Manhattan 1, Morningside 6, Staten Island 1, Meetings elsewhere 1, Friends Seminary 5; total 36.

2015.07.01 After morning worship and lunch in our verdant surroundings, Friends center in silent worship at about 1:00 p.m. The Assistant Clerk reads the following quotation from “New Light: Quaker Voices,” Jennifer Kavanaugh, ed.:

Meetings for worship are open to every person who is open to the spirit.

No one is perfect; we are all incomplete, unfinished humans. Instead, we come to worship to grow in wholeness. The only qualification is that we treat all the others equally, safely, as if they too were made in the image of God.

The passage is held in worshipful waiting.

2015.07.02 Friends are welcomed and the agenda is accepted.

2015.07.03 Ted Ehrhardt, as clerk of Brooklyn Monthly Meeting, reads his periodic report to us. Its request for our action is held to a later segment of our agenda. Beverly Archibald of Manhattan Monthly Meeting reads the quarterly report of its acting clerk, Gloria Thompson. Richard Schmidt of Morningside Monthly Meeting reads the quarterly report of its clerk, Lee Rada. Mary Owen, clerk of Staten Island Executive Meeting, reads her report. No report is received from Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting or Flushing Monthly Meeting.

The reports are accepted.

2015.07.04 The Assistant Clerk reads a report from John Loza of the Housing Committee (our appointees to the Board of Friends House in Rosehill). The report is accepted.

2015.07.05 A brief report from Trustees, regarding the proposed separate incorporation and proposed redevelopment of Friends Seminary, is read by Diane Keefe. The report is accepted.

2015.07.06 The periodic report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Relationship Between the Quarterly Meeting, Fifteenth Street Meeting and Friends Seminary is distributed and read by Tom Rothschild, its clerk. The report is heard, questions are responded to, and the report is accepted.

2015.07.07 Matthew Annenberg, co-clerk of the Friends Seminary Committee, reads its report with the assistance of Liz DiGregorio, who wrote a substantial element within it.

Friends respond to the Seminary's four requested actions, voicing various views as to what is right.

Amid extensive discussion, the Assistant Clerk reads the following excerpts from “Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting” by Barry Morley, Pendle Hill pamphlet

#307:

Consensus is achieved through a process of reasoning in which reasonable people search for a satisfactory decision. But in seeking the sense of the meeting we open ourselves to being guided to perfect resolution in the light, to a place where we sit in unity in the collective inward Presence. Through consensus we decide; through sense of the meeting we turn it over, allowing it to be decided [p.5] ...

When we seek the sense of the meeting, the decision is a by-product. It happens along the way. The purpose of seeking the sense of the meeting is to gather ourselves in unity in the presence of the light...

We sometimes overlook that meetings for business are also meetings for worship...and require the same kind of nurture and discipline as meetings for worship... We must be willing to lay aside personal needs and grievances; we must be willing to reach beyond what you or I want. When I am able to set my ideas aside, and you are able to set your ideas aside, doors are opened which allow solutions to enter in a shaft of light...

[pp.13-15]

As we continue to address an issue, as we lay aside any need to win, as we turn increasingly inward in order to transcend differences, long focus brings us to the Source of resolution and clarity. From the Light we sense an influx of enveloping harmony. Peace tinged with triumph settles among us and silence overtakes us. Silence is an inward and outward sign that the process has been completed. ... [p.19]

We hear testimony on the floor of the meeting to experiences of “epiphany” and “opening” in reconciling our concerns for expeditious resolution and deliberate questioning, for public versus confidential negotiation, and for financial fairness to our Quarter's assets and to our educational mission. Our Trustees and Audit & Budget Committee are heard from, and their timelines of separate incorporation and of Redevelopment contracts are clarified.

The Clerk is directed to call a meeting of our Quarterly Meeting in September, and our Trustees and School Committee are directed to work toward as closely complete an agreement as possible by that date. Today, we are not ready to specifically approve any of the Seminary's four requests, but we value deeply all the research and work that are reported to us today. Linda Hill Brainard stands aside from the mandatory directive to call a meeting in September.

2015.07.08 We resettle into worship after a short break, and hear the Assistant Clerk read the following passage from “The Eternal Promise” by Thomas Kelly; and then approve the preceding Minute:

Worship does not consist in achieving a mental state of concentrated isolation from one's fellows. But in the depth of common worship it is as if we found our separate lives were all one life, within whom we live and move and have our being.

2015.07.09 Corona Macheimer, as its clerk, distributes and reads the annual report of our Great Lakes (Africa) Education Committee and answers Friends' questions. The report is accepted.

2015.07.10 Steven Monroe Smith, clerk of our Cemetery Committee, distributes and reads its annual report. The report is accepted.

2015.07.11 Naomi Paz Greenberg, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, reports its nominees for service to us, as follows:

Brooklyn Friends School Trustees	Gustav Peebles (B)	first term	to 2018
Educational Fund Committee	Glenn Josey (F)	partial term	to 2017
Friends Seminary Committee	Libby Johnson (F)	first term	to 2018
Ministry & Counsel Committee	Steven Monroe Smith (15)	partial term	to 2017

The nominations are approved.

2015.07.12 Glenn Josey and Mauricio Alexander, on behalf of the Young Adult Friends groups of Fifteenth Street Meeting and Brooklyn Meeting, ask approval of their use of the Cemetery. The proposal is to invite the teenagers of New York Quarterly Meeting to a day of fun and slumber party on August 29 to 30. The written request is supplemented by a reading of the safety and security plan prepared by Glenn and Mauricio. Discussion ensues, covering safety, respectfulness and supervision issues. After misgivings are heard and acknowledged, we recognize the value of the proposal if carried out with care. The request is approved, provided that the night-time activities be limited to the two large meadows, and we ask Young Adult Friends to continue to be receptive and responsive to the concerns raised.

2015.07.13 An invitation from the New York Yearly Meeting Sessions Committee to have us host the Spring Sessions of NYYM in 2018 is read by the Assistant Clerk. Friends are inclined to accept if possible. Andy von Salis, Margaret Lew and Sisi Kamal are appointed as an *ad hoc* committee to explore the possible sites, and our Clerk is directed to inform the Sessions Committee of that decision.

2015.07.14 A request from Deborah Wood, clerk of the New York Yearly Meeting's Nurture Coordinating Committee, is read, asking that we speak to the Minute 2015.02.17 of Brooklyn Meeting. That Minute addresses NYYM's support of Friends United Meeting in light of FUM's discriminatory hiring policy. The Assistant Clerk reads Brooklyn Meeting's request to us in its report today that we "endorse" Brooklyn's urging of NYYM to state our displeasure with FUM's hiring policy.

Friends agree. The Clerk is directed to write to NYYM, stating that we have considered Brooklyn Meeting's Minute 2015.07.07 and endorse it.

2015.07.15 Glenn Josey reports that Fifteenth Street Meeting has minuted its support of the letter of Ian Hansen, its clerk, to Toronto Monthly Meeting, offering to support its Town Hall on the topic of collusion of the officers of the American Psychological Association with the U.S. Government's detainee interrogations. The Quarterly Meeting expresses its support for the Town Hall, and we direct the Clerk to inform New York Yearly Meeting that we request NYYM to do likewise.

2015.07.16 Friends consider the advantage of setting a July 2016 meeting date now, given the long-term scheduling of Park activities that could impede our access to the Cemetery. We decide to meet on Saturday, July 16, 2016, and agree that the Prospect Park Alliance and any other relevant entities may be advised accordingly.

2015.07.17 After returning to silence for a time, the meeting adjourns at about 6:15 p.m.

Andrew Mead von Salis,
Clerk

9/26/2015

Attachments:

- agenda
- Regular reports from the following:
 - Brooklyn Monthly Meeting
 - Manhattan Monthly Meeting
 - Morningside Monthly Meeting
 - Staten Island Executive Meeting
- Report from John Loza of the Housing Committee
- Report of Trustees regarding pending Friends Seminary proposals
- Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Relationship between the Quarterly Meeting, Fifteenth Street Meeting and Friends Seminary
- Report of the Friends Seminary Committee, including requests
- Annual report of the Great Lakes (Africa) Education Committee
- Annual report of the Cemetery Committee
- Report of the Nominating Committee
- Request from Young Adult Friends of Fifteenth Street and Brooklyn
- Request from the Sessions Committee of NYYM
- Request from the Nurture Coordinating Committee of NYYM
- attendance sheets