

The New York Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held in the Fifteenth Street Meetinghouse at 1 PM, Sunday, April 17, 2011.

Proposal for a \$100K participation in the Friends Seminary Seeger Trusses Project of 2010

The Trustees of NYQM are requesting a reallocation of \$50,000 in 2011 and \$50,000 in 2012 of the approximately \$250,000 annual NYQM capital spending budget for the Seeger Center. As most of you know, the Seeger Center in the Central School Building at 15 Rutherford Place, was renovated by Friends Seminary in 2010 for a cost of \$678,125, which was borne entirely by the school. The school originally proposed a repair design that would have cost about \$250,000 less than the final amount. The Trustees shared concern about the original project design and insisted on a more costly and longer-lasting repair. Trustees, with Linda Brainard standing aside, worshipfully felt a financial participation by NYQM was fair and necessary in the context of our relationship with our school. If the school should become incorporated, then at that time the school may be treated at arm's length as its own legal entity. Currently, NYQM owns the school and property just as it does the Meeting Houses.

The request is for \$100,000 of the total cost of \$678,125, which is by far the largest capital expenditure for NYQM. Typically, NYQM spends about \$250,000 per year on maintaining our buildings. 15th Street Monthly Meeting donates about \$12K per year but occupies 18% of the 15 Rutherford complex space. It is disproportionate to require the school as part of NYQM to pay the entire cost of the Seeger Trusses, especially when Trustees insisted on a substantially more costly design to that proposed by the school.

The question of why the Trustees are bringing this matter to NYQM Meeting for Business is a good question and it gets back to our governance documents. In September of 2010, Trustees recommended that NYQM participate financially in the Seeger truss reinforcement project to the Joint Property Committee, of which the 15th Street Property and Brooklyn Property Committees are members. This committee concurred with the Trustees and recommended a participation of \$100,000 to the Audit & Budget Committee, who referred the matter to the 15th Street Property Committee. Six months later, the 15th Street Property Committee is unable to reach unity on the issue.

There are discussions and committees working on the possible incorporation of Friends Seminary and the transfer of property. Clearly, property is a complicated issue that may have major financial consequences. The good work of Friends on these issues must continue but it should not hold issues of fairness hostage in the meantime. The school is part of the NYQM now and should be respected as such.

The issue of the Seeger Trusses is already fading into the past. The construction completed was an excellent job and we encourage Friends to visit the facility. Trustees bring this \$100,000 proposal to NYQM as a request for fairness and to respect the historic relationship with Friends Seminary.

Mike Schlegel, Clerk of NYQM Trustees