

MfWfB
Bellingham Friends Meeting
August 30, 2015 (Sept Meeting)
Minutes - Approved

Present: Dorrie Jordan (Clerk), Larry Thompson, Aurora Fox, Katherine Globerson, Dusty Andersen, Steve Andersen, Lynne Lohr, Dorothy Defremery, Virginia Herrick, Mary Ann Percy, Kristen McLewin, Susan Richardson, Nan Macy, Lorina Hall, Wendy Goldstein, Don Goldstein, Jeanine Hart-Horner, Karen Steen, Judy Hopkinson (Recording Clerk), Joanne Cowan.

2015.09.1

- **The Meeting minutes its appreciation to Betty McMahon for her generous preparation of meals for meeting for business over the past several years.**
- Kristen McLewin volunteered to assume the job of preparing meals for meeting for business.

2015.09.2 **The Meeting approved forwarding the request of Lopez Island Preparative Meeting to become a monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends to Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting.** The Clerk will carry out the forwarding.

2015.09.3 Ministry and Counsel (report attached)

2015.09.3.1 **The Meeting accepted for seasoning Larry Thompson's application for membership**

2015.09.4 The Meetinghouse Liaison expressed reservations about the Meeting's request to ask for a monthly contract which would not entail a termination fee, and asked the Meeting to reconsider.

The Meeting agreed to ask for 4 months notice in the contract.

2015.09.5 Meetinghouse Exploratory Committee Report. (attached)

Discussion:

- Question about conditional use permit - We will need to pay \$2000 for a conditional use permit application.
- We now have \$61,000 + pledged to the capital campaign
- Will we be managing the property until WPJ moves in in May? A: No - Janet Marino will take this on independently prior to that time for a fee of \$250/ mo.
- A Friend noted that Art is just as important as Peace and Justice, etc. for our community.
- Another Friend agreed, but felt it would be good to move toward non-profits as tenants.
- What are the assumptions that went into the maintenance fund?
- An additional \$100 / month is pledged to a building and ground fund.
- What sort of protection do we have if there is a financial collapse? A: None - we have built in two types of insurance but none for this.
- A Friend addressed self-financing. - suggesting that we might want to consider it.
- Concern was expressed about what might happen to the property next door.
- Larry T. pointed out that Port Townsend Friends Meeting did internal financing at 2.5% (vs 4.75% at WECU)

- A Friend shared that she is a co-owner of a Land Trust building in Fairhaven and that it is an enormous task to handle decision making for an old building via group process.
- Another point made was that it will be a great challenge to fill all the committees it will take to operate this building.
- Another Friend pointed out that money is a false construct and we cannot be driven by fear. If we lose all that money - so what.
- Another Friend expressed concerns about losing the soul of the community, not the money. She felt that responses to concerns have been quick and dismissive and not Quaker process.
- Another Friend said “that Friend spoke my mind”
- A Friend on the committee reminded the meeting that we have not done any inspections yet. And that the inspections could be deal breakers.
- A Friend said that when Friends talk about moving forward it means buying this building. She also said that the assumption that it is a leap of faith to buy this building is as though not wanting to buy this building meant that we do not have faith.
- A former clerk of nominating expressed great concern about causing burnout among the Friends we have now. She asked that we ask ourselves whether we are living up to the Light that we have or are we obligating ourselves to more than we can do?

The Clerk asked for a period of silence.

- A Friend apologized if her comments felt dismissive. She asked how we might prove that we have enough energy to fill committee slots. Perhaps, she said that the natural consequences of leaving committees unstaffed, might be to spur people to take on those jobs.
- The Clerk reminded the Meeting of the time.
- A Friend asked for another Threshing session
- Another Friend noted that the Lopez Oversight committee will be laid down soon, freeing up some energy for other things.
- A Friend on the committee noted that the capital campaign would be in the form of pledges - and would be returned if we do not go forward with the purchase.

2015.09.6 The Meeting agreed to go forward with the capital campaign

2015.09.7 The Meeting approved expenditure of funds necessary for building inspections.

2015.09.8 The meeting reserved Sept 20 as a possible time for further discernment.

2015.09.9 Retreat Planning Committee. Registration deadline is Fri., Sept 4. Food purchases will be based on the number registered by that time.

Ministry & Counsel Report

Bellingham Friends Meeting for Worship for Business, Aug. 30, 2015

1. (Information) Advices and Queries – From *Little Red Book*, #14: Are your Meetings for Worship for Business held in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the guidance of God? Remember that we do not seek a majority decision or even consensus. Do we wait patiently for divine guidance, for the right way to open so that we shall be led into unity?

2. (Information) Discernment around Bell Tower Studios. Since the July Meeting for Worship for Business when BFM approved making a contingent offer on the purchase of the Bell Towers Studio, M&C has scheduled a series of opportunities for discernment around the question of whether we are led to make this location the physical home for our worshiping community: As part of our Aug. 9 report to MfWfB, M&C offered queries for Friends to consider in a worship sharing format; Aug. 16, there was a second-hour program on Quaker discernment; Aug. 23, we held a 1-1/2 hour threshing session after a brief report from the ad hoc Exploratory Committee. Today, we have met for worship at the location, and hope to hear a more detailed report of the information the ad hoc committee has gathered. Our schedule of second hour programs for the next few weeks also has flexibility for further discernment, if needed. We also have the option of schedule a longer threshing session either on a Sunday afternoon (until 2 p.m.), or at another time and place. M&C welcomes new Light as we move forward through this process of seeking together.

3. (Information) Second Hour Schedule

Sept. 6 – Labor Day Weekend. Extended social time or TBD

Sept. 13 - BFM Annual Retreat (with potluck Saturday evening)

Sept. 20 - [open]

Sept. 27 - Quarterly Meeting. Extended social time or TBD

Oct. 4 - Potluck

Oct. 11 - MfWfB

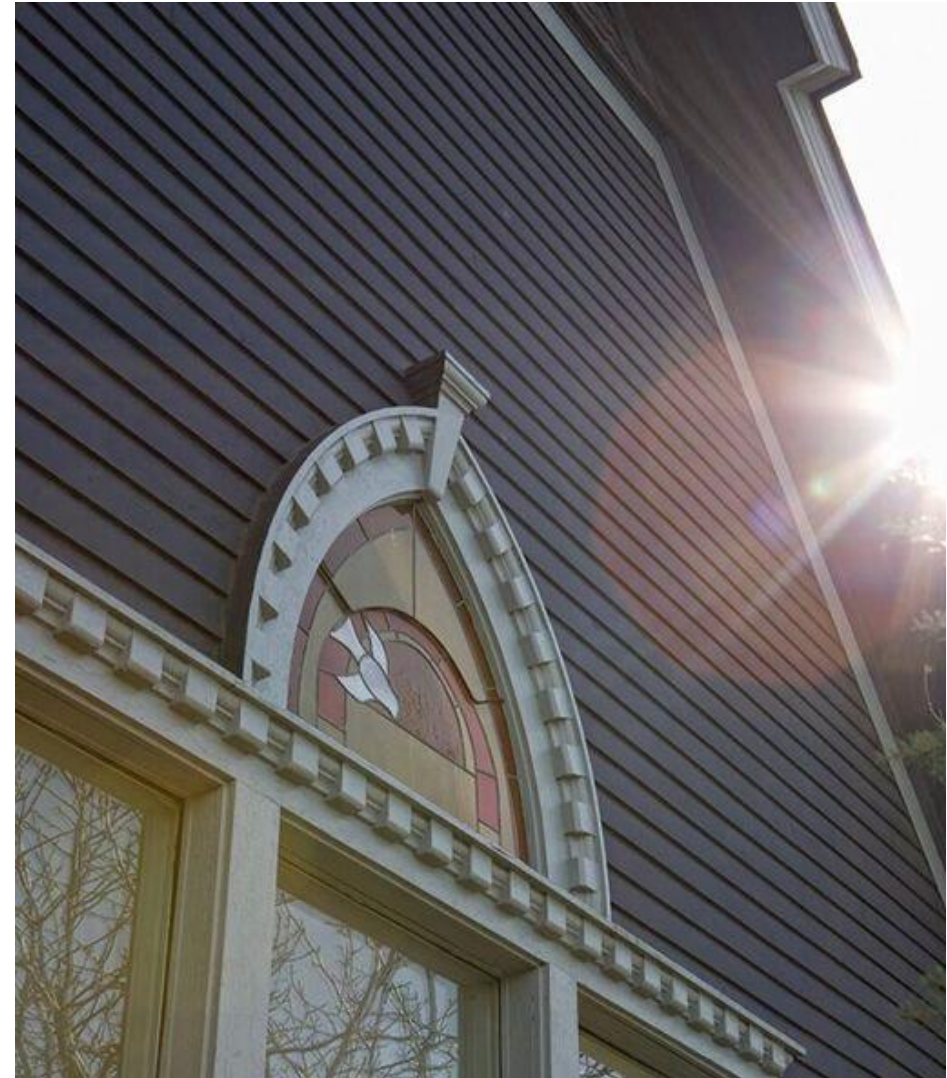
Oct. 18 – “39 Questions for White People” (SEC)

Oct. 25 - “39 Questions for White People” (SEC)

4. (Action) Membership: Larry's clearness committee for membership has met, and made a report to M&C. We joyfully ask Meeting to accept for seasoning the membership of Larry Thompson in Bellingham Friends Meeting.

5. (Information) Next M&C Meeting: September 14?

The Bell Tower: New Meetinghouse?



Purposes of the Exploratory Committee

- 1) Advise Allen Stockbridge, who was appointed to be the Meeting's broker/representative
- 2) Assess whether the proposed building can match the Meeting's functional needs and how it can be managed and operated
- 3) Assess whether the building can be financially feasible for our Meeting

NOT our purpose to decide if the Meeting should purchase the building.

Committee Members

in alphabetical order

- Joanne Cowan
- Dorothy deFremery
- Susan Richardson
- Allen Stockbridge
- Larry Thompson
- Sharon Trent

A Little History

- Meetinghouse issue goes back at least 15 years
- Meetinghouse fund contains \$114,000
- 2012 Retreat
- Meetinghouse scout: “20 properties assessed”
- Contingent purchase offer: \$585,000 to be decided by November 22

Alternatives Considered

- Houses
 - Remodel needs
 - Location
 - Zoning
 - Resale
- Storefront
- Synagogue
- Build Our Own

Meetinghouse Vision

- Meeting for Worship, First Day School, Committee Meetings
- Visible symbol of Quaker life in Bellingham
- Pt. Townsend Example

Concerns about the Bell Tower

- Lack of outdoor space
- Older Building
- Rental space is financially necessary

Findings Regarding Use of Space

- Overall, the space meets our basic functional requirements
- This finding is still subject to inspections
- Space is good, but not perfect
- Biggest functional issue is the outdoor space

Management Plan

- Whatcom Peace and Justice Center to rent space and manage property for a fee paid
- Continue with the remaining the tenants for now
- Seek compatible uses over time
- Contract for janitorial expenses
- Current Exploratory Committee serves as a Building & Grounds function for next two years.

Can We Afford This Building?

The Committee has come to a scenario that it is comfortable proposing to Meeting, as follows:

Purchase price	\$585,000
Closing Costs	\$ 5,000
Total Needed at Closing	\$590,000
Mortgage from WECU	\$320,000
+ Cash at Closing	\$270,000
Total at Closing	\$590,000

Overview of the Loan

Unless one or more Friends is willing to loan money, a bank loan is necessary.

Mortgage

15 Year Amortization

- 4.75% Interest rate
- Monthly loan payment is about \$2,886
- *Committee recommends a 15 year term, as lower risk, recognizing that it does add \$800/month to expenses*

Down Payment

- \$114,000 from existing Meetinghouse Fund
- \$156,000 from a capital campaign

Monthly Income Profile

Rental Monthly Income

• Whatcom Peace and Justice Center	\$ 600
• Existing Artist	\$ 175
• Veterans for Peace	\$ 125
• Two New Tenants	\$ 475
• Dance Floor rentals	\$1,733
• Downstairs Apt (incl. utilities)	<u>\$ 900</u>
	\$4,008
Minus 10% Vacancy Factor	<u>\$ 400</u>
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME PROFILED	\$3,608

Note: Committee has reviewed two years of rental history. Actual monthly income over that time has been closer to \$5204/month.

Monthly Expense Profile

Average Monthly Expenses

Property Insurance	\$200
Real Estate Taxes	\$333
B. & O. Taxes	\$88
Liability Insurance	\$183
Electricity	\$300
Gas	\$200
Cable	\$100
Garbage	\$40
Telephone	\$30
Cleaning Supplies	\$29
Maintenance	\$100
Janitorial Services	\$120
Building Manager	<u>\$250</u>
	<u>\$1,973</u>

Monthly Summary

Income from Rentals, including 10% vacancy factor	\$3,608
Minus: Building Operating Expense	<u>-\$1,973</u>
<u>GROSS INCOME FROM OPERATIONS</u>	<u>\$1,635</u>
Minus: Estimated Mortgage Expense	<u>-\$2,886</u>
<u>NET MONTHLY INCOME AFTER PAYING MORTGAGE</u>	<u>-\$1,251</u>

Another View to Understand the Negative \$1,251:
Our “new rent” has increased from \$600 to \$1,251. Contributions
need to increase \$651 monthly by this amount for us to break even.

Proposed Capital Campaign

• For Down payment	\$156,000
• For Building Maintenance Fund	\$ 25,000
• For Disabled Access Ramp	\$ 14,000
• For Furnishing at Occupancy	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
	<u>Total to be raised \$197,500</u>

Additionally, members would need to **pledge a total of addition monthly contributions of \$650**, assuming 10% vacancy rate.

A Vision for the Future

- Use the building to house compatible non-profits
- Use the building as a center for community events and activities
- The building would be paid off in 15 years, at that point there would be many options for the surplus cash generated.

Timeline

2015

- July 12 Meeting Authorizes Offer
- July 22 Offer Accepted
- **August 30** **Meeting Authorizes Capital Campaign**
- September 30 Close of Capital Campaign
- October 11 (M4W4B) Decide for Seasoning: Purchase? or Not
- November 8 (M4W4B) Unity on Seasoning? / Give Explorations Six months Notice
- November 20 Final date for all pledges to be fulfilled
- November 29 First Worship in New Meetinghouse

2016

- December – April Seller occupies downstairs @ \$2,000 / month
- April I Seller Vacates
- May 1 WPJC Moves in