

Bellingham Friends
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Approved Minutes - March 13, 2016

Present: Lorina Hall, Wendy Courtemanche, Virginia Herrick, Karen Steen, John Hatten, Nan Macy, Jim Gordon, Larry Thompson, Joanne Cowan, Mary Ann Percy, Lynne Lohr, Sharon Trent, Kristen McLewin, Dorrie Jordan (Clerk), Judy Hopkinson (recording clerk), Rob Dillard, Mark Hersh, Susan Richardson, David Hopkinson, Dusty Andersen

2016.03.01 Minutes were approved as amended

2016.03.02 SEC report - Presented by Wendy Courtemanche (attached)

2016.03.02.1 Virginia Herrick asked Friends to send her any questions that we have about Islam so that she can get back to Nadeem Israr (owner of copy source) who has agreed to speak to us about Islam if we are interested.

2016.03.02.2 Virginia also presented a poster that says "all are welcome here" and asked whether we wanted to post it on our tables. Discussion included

- Asking Explorations to post it
- Asking businesses to post it
- Spearheading a drive to put it in the Herald with supporting signatures
- Sending the poster to Outreach and Welcoming and asking them to discern the best way to handle it.
- **Friends agreed to send this to Outreach and Welcoming.**

2016.03.03 Ministry and Counsel Report - Presented by Virginia Herrick - (attached)

2016.03.03.1 VH read letter from Aurora Fox requesting membership

2016.03.03.2 VH relayed a question from Jerry and Iris asking if Friends had any input about the format for the April 3 meeting for discernment regarding the meeting house

- A Friend suggested worship sharing
- Another Friend asked why we are having this meeting and expressed the feeling that it was not necessary
- A Friend from M&C responded that this was an attempt for Friends to discern what is needed to move forward.
- Virginia expressed M&C's desire to care for Friends and to allow Friends to come to a sense of resolution and
- Another Friend suggested that it might be helpful if there were queries or phrases that would help people to ramp down their emotional state in order to move forward.
- Virginia H offered to share some queries that M&C has thought of
 - What would it take to feel heard?
 - What do we need to do now?
- Mary Ann P suggested posting the queries in the E-News
- The Clerk asked Virginia to send the queries to the recording clerk
- Another Friend from M&C asked all of us to send M&C ideas for additional queries and/or additional thoughts that might be helpful.

2016.03.03.3 - M&C will be reviewing the proposal for decision making and will bring a revised document to MfWfB for seasoning.

Discussion

- Friends clarified that individual feedback was sought regarding interest in a second hour discussing the pros and cons of the proposed initiative for a state minimum wage initiative
- Questions were raised about our Easter activity - Sharon Trent will determine whether there will be children present who would like to have an Easter Egg hunt and this information will be considered in planning for our second hour that day.

2016.03.04 State of Society Report - Virginia H read the draft (Attached)

- Nan Macy suggested adding to the SEC section that we sponsored the art piece "39 Questions for White People"
- John Hatten suggested changing the average attendance from fractions to something like "increased by 1"

2016.03.05 Nominating Committee Report (Attached)

Discussion:

- There are a number of important vacancies including Co-Clerk
- A Friend asked where she could access committee job descriptions
- Virginia said that Mimi has the latest versions - most likely in electronic form
- Lorina H will ask Mimi to share the job descriptions with John H so that he can post them to the website.
- It was suggested that if people had concerns about having a realtor as an official meeting house scout , that they bring this concern to nominating committee (This was a theoretical concern.)
- It was noted that it would be helpful to alter the final line of the report to read "Meeting Co-clerk"
- Another edit suggested is that the third line from the bottom simply read "John Hatten (Meeting Clerk)"
- Friends expressed appreciation of the idea of having an "assistant treasurer"

2016.03.05.1 The nominating report was accepted for seasoning

2016.03.05.2 Meeting approved Wendy Goldstein as the recipient of the FGC gathering sponsorship for 2016

Ministry & Counsel Report, March 13, 2016
Bellingham Friends Meeting

1. *(Information)* **Advices and Queries**, from Britain Yearly Meeting (Little Red Book #17): “Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people’s opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements of allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.”
2. *(Action)* **Membership request**. Aurora Fox's letter to be read aloud. M&C is setting up a clearness committee for Aurora.
3. *(Discussion)* **Meetinghouse discernment**. Iris Graville and Jerry Evergreen, with DeeDee to minute, will be joining us again to facilitate a Meeting for Worship for Sharing regarding our experiences with laboring together to discern the rightness of the Bell Tower Studios as a Meetinghouse. If Friends have thoughts about how best to use this time, we would be glad to communicate those to Iris G. and Jerry E.
4. *(Information)* **BFM Process Proposal**. This document, which outlines how this Meeting uses its committees to aid our corporate discernment, and how Friends can access committees with concerns, has been “seasoning” since last spring! M&C was charged with editing and bringing back to Meeting, but got diverted by other business that at the time seemed more urgent. Since the NPYM Faith and Practice does not address these issues, we will be researching other sources to see how our draft document can be improved, and will bring a new draft to MfWfB in April for discussion.
5. *(Information)* **Second hours**.
 - a. March 20 – FCNL biannual priority-setting. Crucial aspect of Friendly lobbying!
 - b. March 27 – Easter, and celebration for Mary Ann's membership transfer
 - c. April 3 – Meeting for Worship for Sharing re: Meetinghouse Discernment
 - d. April 10 – MfWfB
 - e. April 17 – Welcoming Activity with OWG and extended social time
 - f. April 24 – Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting – extended social time in Bellingham
 - g. May 1 – ?? MfWfB
 - h. May 8 – Potluck (Mother's Day)
 - I. May 15 – ?? Spirit-filled choices about food (Lynn Lohr)
 - j. May 22 – ?? Jobs with Justice (Betsy Pernotto)
 - k. May 29 – ?? Next Step re: Meetinghouse Discernment?
 - l. June 5 – OWG Welcoming Activity
6. *(Action)* **State of Society Report** for Quarterly Meeting. Second Draft available for consideration and adoption today.
7. *(Information)* **Next Meeting**. 7 p.m. April 5. Please let Virginia and Rob know if you have a concern for M&C's consideration or would like to attend our Meeting.

**SEC Report to MfWfB – March 13, 2016
March 1, 2016**

Information items:

- 1) **Concern of the Month – Familias Unidas por la Justicia**
- 2)

“Love in a Time of Fear: Muslims, Christians, and All Faiths as Good Neighbors”

Friends have come to SEC with concerns about increasing anti – Muslim sentiment in the U.S. We are happy to announce this event which is being organized by Interfaith Coalition and will probably take place on April 11 at Bellingham High School. Details are still being finalized. SEC has been in contact with the organizers to offer our support and are waiting to hear how we can be involved. We will report back to Meeting as soon as we have more information.

In late November two people sat down to tea. One was a Muslim and the other a Christian. In addition to sadness about the terrorist attacks in Paris, Lebanon and Mali they shared their feelings about the response of political leaders in the US in response to these horrific events.

They decided to see if others wanted to join them in encouraging all people to remember that love of neighbor is the core teaching of Islam and Christianity and all great faith traditions. Love is not having positive feelings but rather the act of seeking the well-being of your neighbor.

Many more want to gather to affirm that even in this time of fear God is calling us to recognize our neighbors and to work for their well-being.

We are people of faith respecting our differences and celebrating our commonalities and our common humanity. In this time of anxiety and tension we encourage:

1. All people to seek out neighborly relationships with Muslims.
2. All people, corporations and governmental agencies to respect the human and civil rights of all people, including Muslims.
3. All people in this time of anxiety to resist the urge to stereotype and scapegoat minorities, including Muslims.
4. All people to resist a media narrative that blames Islam as the source of terrorism and ignores the economic and political conditions in Middle East that have led to terrorism of and extremism of a small minority.

We will have a variety of interesting speakers covering each of these 5 topics.

Nominating Committee Report**March 13, 2016****Non-Committee Positions:**

Clerk	John Hatten	2017
Co-Clerk	vacant	
Recording Clerk	Judy Hopkinson	2018
Treasurer	Joanne Cowan	2017
Asst. Treasurer	vacant	
Interfaith Coalition	Sharon Trent	2018
Librarian	vacant	
Archivist	Kristen McLewin	2017
Meetinghouse Liaison	Judy Hopkinson	2017
Meetinghouse Scout	Sharon Trent	2017
	Allen Stockbridge	2017
NPYM Coord. Comm.	Allen Stockbridge	2018
PNQM Continuing Comm.	Don Goldstein	2018 July
FCNL Rep.	Karen Steen	2018
QEW	Mary Ann Percy	2018
FGC Rep.	Don Goldstein	2018
Western Friend	Lorina Hall	2017
AFSC Nominating Com	Allen Stockbridge	2017*
AFSC Corp. Member at Large	Allen Stockbridge	2019*
AFSC rep. B'ham	Lorina Hall	2018
E-news editor	Judy Hopkinson	2017
Webmaster	John Hatten	2018
Phone Messages	Don Goldstein	2017
Directory Editor	Don Goldstein	2018
Mail Collector	Joanne Cowan	2017

* Nationally appointed position

Committees:**Ministry and Counsel**

Mary Ann Percy, Co-clerk	2018
Susan Richardson, Co-clerk	2018
John Hatten, Clerk of Meeting	2017
Pending	2018

Outreach and Welcoming

Don Goldstein, clerk	2017
Dusty Andersen	2017
Wendy Goldstein	2017
Kathy Long	2017

Finance

Allan Richardson, clerk	2017
Joanne Cowan, Treasurer	2017
Larry Thompson	2018
Jessica Bee	2017

Nominating

Lorina Hall, clerk	2016 Dec.
Kristen McLewin	2017 Dec.
Susan Richardson	2018

Hospitality: Kitchen

Mark Hersh, clerk	2018
Rob Dillard	2018
Laura Howrey	2017
Dave Hopkison	2018
Sharon Trent	2017

Key:

Don Goldstein	2017
Wendy Goldstein	2017
Lorina Hall	2017
Karen Steen	2018

Social and Environmental Concerns

Wendy Courtemanche, clerk	2017
Judy Hopkinson	2017
Joan Ofteness	2018
Nan Macy	2018

Children's Committee

Virginia Herrick, clerk	2018
Aurora Fox	2018

Bellingham Friends Meeting State of Society Report 2015

(Second Draft, 3/13/2016)

Amidst growth, deepening community, and spiritual seeking, Bellingham Friends experienced profound blessings and challenges in 2015. We explored our Quaker roots, tested our commitment to and understanding of Quaker process, added new members and attenders, and explored the complexities of purchasing a Meetinghouse. While the gift of finding a possible physical home for our worshipping community brought valuable lessons, it also tried our ability to fully live our commitment to simplicity, unity and community. The year's end found us still on the road to better understanding of the need to consistently and faithfully “mind the Light.”

In the first part of 2015, we concluded a team-taught series of workshops begun the year before, based on the *Quakerism: Experience It!* curriculum created by Elaine Crauderueff and adapted by Steve Smith. Several Bellingham Friends took turns as facilitators, many enriched the sessions by researching famous Friends and giving brief presentations, and the programs inspired rich discussion.

The Social and Environmental Concerns Committee encouraged and supported Friends in following leadings to work for peace and justice, which included: supporting the local Racial Justice Coalition; participating in Alternatives to Violence Project trainings; lobbying with the Bellingham Advocacy Team of FCNL; and marching with our banner in the annual Pride Parade.

In July, we were blessed and challenged by the possibility of purchasing a former church, now known as the Bell Tower Studios building. Our Meeting agreed to make an offer on the building with a four-month contingency contract that stipulated reaching unity on the purchase, as well as determining financial feasibility. Our ad hoc exploratory committee, with outstanding dedication and skill, researched many complex questions around practical considerations. This work included initiating an ambitious capital campaign for the Meetinghouse, to which many pledged generously. Friends also continued regular giving which supports our general fund.

The Meeting as a whole labored together regarding the Bell Tower Studios building, with concerns including whether we were Spirit-led to undertake Meetinghouse ownership, whether this was the right time and the right building, and if so, were we ready for the necessary landlord and other responsibilities. Throughout this sometimes tumultuous process, Friends reiterated confidence in our community to grow from the experience, and in our love and commitment to one another. However, the scope of the endeavor combined with the four-month time constraint (which ended in November) proved very trying, and some misunderstandings, hurt feelings, and frustration resulted. Nonetheless, by year's end, Ministry and Counsel had begun creating opportunities for us to continue corporate learning and healing through worship, with the help of trusted facilitators from other Meetings in the Quarter. Despite the difficulty of the process, many Friends remain hopeful that we will emerge stronger and more ready to address whatever opportunities unfold in the future.

Friends also came together in many wonderful ways this year. Our Outreach and Welcoming Group sponsored after-worship programs that fostered connection and participation, including poetry sharing and get-acquainted games. There has been increased fellowship at weekly and midweek worship. The Meeting has been enriched by two new members and a transfer of membership. Attendance is up to an average of 27.5 from 26.4 in 2014. Our largest Meeting brought 46 Friends to worship in June. This increased participation sometimes stressed our Hospitality Committee, and we are seeking ways to share that work more equitably. Our first overnight retreat in several years explored lessons for adults in deepening our spirituality, and included a lively children's program.

Also this year, Friends agreed to invest in our regular Children's Program by hiring a dedicated childcare provider. This creative, loving individual supports our families with children and is a

| welcome **part of** our community. We hope as we build the program, more children and teens will come.
Bellingham Friends also celebrated the fruition of six wonderful years since the Lopez Island
Worship Group become a preparatory meeting under our care. We are delighted that our beloved Lopez
| Friends are now seeking Quarterly Meeting approval to become a monthly Meeting!