

Bellingham Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Minutes for 12/13/20

Attending: Joanne Cowan, Mimi Freshley, Don Goldstein, Wendy Goldstein, Lorina Hall, Mary Hansen, John Hatten, Virginia Herrick (recording), Steve Hutchens, Dorrie Jordan, Heather Katahdin, Rolland Lee, Mary Ann Percy (clerking), Allen Stockbridge, Susan Richardson, Allan Richardson, Larry Thompson.

1. Opening worship

2. Clerk's statement - Clerk read aloud the story "Wisdom," from *My Grandfather's Blessings*, by Rachel Naomi Remen. In the story, the little girl is learning about the history of Hanukkah at school—and learns a deeper lesson from her grandfather, a rabbi. He explains that when God said, "Let there be Light," it had a meaning beyond the creation story. God made each of us, Grandfather explains, so that we can carry the Light. "Let there be Light" is a call for each person to carry the Light within us and to bring forth the Light in others in dark times.

3. Review of agenda

ACTION: approved

4. Review of last month's minutes from MFWFB 11/8/20

ACTION: Approved with minor wording and format changes

5. Member concerns

A. Virginia H: Request for commitment to "Denounce White Supremacy" from WHRTF; Are we able/ready to sign?

ACTION: Approved

B. Heather K. Shared information about the unsheltered people who are camping on the City Hall/Library lawn. The chief need is for shelter. Please write the mayor, county executive, and city and county councils. They are working on creating a camp with 25 pallet shelters in the parking lot adjacent to the baseball field behind Civic Stadium. However, there are many more than 25 tents on the lawns between City Hall and the Library. There is a need for tents, warm blankets and sleeping bags, warm clothing and especially socks. Donations can be accepted

on the sidewalk near the dropbox for City bills. You can just leave donations at the curb and hail someone in the pavilion shelter. Please drop off during daylight hours. There is also a need for laundry, if anyone feels safe to do that work. Another important need is for human contact. Most people are masked at the camp, but not all.

6. Items for worship and action

A. **RJWG Truth and Reconciliation resolution:** Are we ready to commit and sign?

Daniel Kirkpatrick reporting:

Truth and Reconciliation Resolution of the Bellingham Friends Meeting

Adopted Dec. 13, 2020

WHEREAS ~ we hold Quaker Testimonies affirming and promoting equality, community and integrity that have not been fully manifested regarding First and Native American Nations; and

WHEREAS

~ these Testimonies have been and continue to be unfulfilled regarding Indigenous communities that have been forced to relinquish their lands and waters; and further, whose Indigenous cultural identities and continuity have been denied and denigrated; and

WHEREAS

~ our Meeting has approved an acknowledgement statement regarding our occupation of Indigenous lands, but has much work yet to do regarding our responsibility to address the injustices perpetrated upon Indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS

~ the Bellingham Friends Meeting values the goals of acknowledging and providing support to the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe and other Indigenous communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, but is aware that there is more work to be done;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we, the members of the Bellingham Friends Meeting hereby commit to the journey of healing and reconciliation with Washington State's Indigenous Tribes and Nations by:

- Acknowledging the Nations/Tribes and their traditional tribal territories, ceded and unceded;

- Recognizing and supporting tribal sovereignty and self-determination;
- Learning and acknowledging the historical and current impacts and consequences of actions taken by the US and Washington State governments, and of our own Quaker predecessors and contemporaries, which continue to impact Indigenous peoples;
- Promoting environmental protection and restoration to support Indigenous land rights, resources, and food sovereignty, and acknowledging Indigenous leadership in these areas and our shared responsibility in acting upon them;
- Working to create more opportunities for our congregation and the wider community to hear and learn from historical and current stories and voices of our Indigenous neighbors;
- Deepening our commitment to speaking out when needed, and standing beside the Tribes/Nations if asked, to prevent harm and to promote an equitable future;
- Working to provide for a safe and welcoming space within our Meeting;
- Honoring the Indigenous sense of place within these ancestral homelands, including working to create a safe and welcoming space for all to thrive in the greater community;
- Committing to the creation and promotion of racial equity, intercultural competency, diversity and inclusion within our congregation, and in our partnerships and alliances with other groups and organizations;
- Working to support the establishment of a Truth & Reconciliation Commission for the State of Washington to address the history of injustices and injuries relative to Indigenous sovereignty.

Resolution passed by the Bellingham Friends Meeting of Bellingham, Washington (on the traditional lands of the Lummi and Nooksack people) on Dec. 13, 2020

Discussion:

Discussed a few wording changes, which are included above. Daniel thanked Friends for committing to this work. SEC and the Racial Justice Working Group will begin to come up with steps to implement the resolution.

The resolution also will be sent to Shirley Williams, currently the leader of the local effort to work with others statewide to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

B. Meetinghouse Committee--reconsideration of Recommendation for Action presented last month re: making an offer of \$145,000 for the property at 2207 Verona Street

Discussion:

~Several Friends expressed appreciation for the work of the Meetinghouse Committee, but felt that this is a bad time to take on this commitment, when attendance is down and our future so uncertain. Many Friends also felt the location was undesirable in terms of accessibility (being easy to find) and visibility, two important qualities we have sought in a Meetinghouse. There was also concern that the amount of energy and the cost that this particular location would require are beyond our means.

~A few other issues arose in the course of discussion:

- a. Will we meet at the Majestic once we can meet in person again? Answer from Meetinghouse Committee: We have an unsigned agreement to lease the Majestic, which Friends have given approval to get signed, but held off because of the pandemic. The Majestic may be sold before we can proceed, because the owners may not be able to afford to continue without any significant income from it as an event center. If the Majestic were unavailable, we would hope to return to worshipping at the Creekside building.
- b. Should Meetinghouse Committee continue to look for land to purchase at this time?
Friends were of different minds about this, and expressed interest in a second hour program for further discussion in the New Year.
- c. Do we have unity about what we are looking for? Do we want more of a spiritual retreat, or a community center? Is it possible to find both in one location? Multiple statements; fodder for second hour discussion?
- d. Should Meetinghouse Committee continue to search for alternative rental locations? Answer from Meetinghouse Scout Allen S.: Not a good time to seek alternative rentals as long as the Majestic is still viable, because we have an understanding with them.
- e. How soon could we begin meeting in person again? One Friend is ready now. Another suggested planning to meet together out of doors when the weather permits.

ACTION: Friends agreed to lay down consideration of the Verona Street property .

Meetinghouse Committee will meet and discuss how to proceed during the pandemic. (Both Verona Street and the Majestic are alternatives that were found prior to the pandemic.) The Committee will also consider hosting a second hour program in the New Year to have an opportunity for the Meeting as a whole to regroup and discuss.

C. Worship & Ministry

Mimi reporting:

Worship & Ministry Report

Meeting for Worship for Business December 13, 2020

Query for December:

How does our Meeting community reflect the Spirit and Truth at the center of our lives?

(From *NPYM Faith and Practice*)

Second Hour schedule:

December 20 – Carol singing – led and accompanied by Mary Ann

December 27 – Worship sharing on the query – led by Janine

January 3 – TBA

January 10: Meeting for Worship for Business

Upcoming second hour: **On February 21 we will have a second hour presentation led by Karen Tibbals**, current co-clerk of Rahway Plainfield Monthly Meeting in New Jersey. The presentation is entitled **“Persuade don’t Preach”** and discusses seeing that of God in everyone, including those we do not agree with. **This second hour will start at 1:00 PM PST.** We are announcing this ahead of time to make Friends aware of the later start time.

W&M would like nominate the following Friends to Nominating Committee: John Hatten and Jean Brechan, and ask that the nominations be accepted for seasoning.

Next meeting: December 28 at 9:00 am.

Discussion: None

Action: The nominations of John Hatten and Jean Brechan to nominating committee are accepted for seasoning.

D. Nominating Committee

Don Goldstein reporting

Nominating Committee Report to MfWfB

Dec. 13, 2020

1. **ACTION:** Nominating Committee asks Friends to accept for seasoning the nomination of Steve Hutchens to Social and Environmental Concerns Committee.
2. **SLATE for Spring.** As the new year approaches, it is time to consider how we feel led to serve the Meeting. The following roles—with the name of the Friends, if any, currently holding the position in parentheses—are coming to the end of their agreed-up term. Nominating Committee would like to hear from Friends if they feel moved to serve in any of these roles, or, if they are already in that role, if they feel led to continue:

Clerk of Meeting (Mary Ann Percy)

Treasurer (Joanne Cowan)

Assistant Treasurer (vacant)

Archivist (vacant)

Librarian/s (Susan Richardson and Joan Ofteness)

Meetinghouse scout (Allen Stockbridge)

Meetinghouse Liaison (John Hatten)

Outreach and Welcoming Coordinator (Don Goldstein)

FGC Rep (vacant)

Western Friend subscription coordinator (Joanne Cowan)

Key holders (Larry Thompson, Laura Howrey, Janine Bruton)

E-news editor (Don Goldstein)

Quarterly Donations Email editor (Rob Dillard)

Worship and Ministry (Susan Richardson; Dorrie Jordan, co-clerk; and Mimi Freshley, co-clerk)

Pastoral Care (Mary Hansen, clerk; Mary Ann Percy (ex officio); Rachel Van Boven)

Children's Program (Jessica Bee, clerk; Lily Bee; Kristen McLewin)

Finance (Joanne Cowan, ex officio; Laura Howrey)

Meetinghouse (John Hatten, ex officio)

Social and Environmental Concerns (Dorothy deFremery, clerk; Laurie Glenn)

Safe Quaker Community (vacancy)

Nominating Committee, which is the responsibility of the Naming Committee (members of W&M and Pastoral Care) to nominate: Virginia Herrick, clerk.

3. **FGC Sponsored Attender:** Each year, BFM sponsors an attender to the annual Friends General Conference Gathering, up to \$1,500, which is intended to largely cover tuition, food and lodgings, and transportation costs to this wonderful, enriching event, which draws Friends, mainly from unprogrammed meetings, from all over the United States. The Sponsored Attender makes a commitment to register, make reservations, attend a morning workshop throughout the Gathering, and to report back to Meeting about their experiences, preferably with a written report in the e-news and also with an oral second-hour program. In 2020, it was initially canceled, then held virtually, because of the pandemic. The 2021 Gathering will also be virtual, which will greatly reduce the expense of attending. If you are interested in this opportunity, please let us know

ASAP! This position is filled at March MfWfB so the Friend has a chance to get the early registration discount in April, so the nomination needs to come to MfWfB in February.

4. **Our next meeting** is tentatively scheduled for 4 p.m. Jan. 7, pending hearing from our most recent nominee about her availability.

ACTION: Steve Hutchens' nomination to Social and Environmental Concerns Committee is accepted for seasoning.

Discussion: The committee is asked to reconsider the role of FGC sponsored attender, given that FGC will be virtual and pay-as-led again this year.

7. Closing worship ended between 1:30 and 1:45 p.m., as Friends left the Zoom meeting one by one.