

Jacksonville Friends Meeting
 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business - Minutes
 Elaine Martin, clerk
 February 5, 2012

Twelve members and attenders present. Meetings for worship and for business were held in the employee lounge of Evergreen Cemetery, 4535 N. Main Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206.

1. Worship

2. Queries

- Do our lives reflect Quaker testimonies?
- Is our Quaker witness characterized by humility and willingness to learn from others?
- Do we recognize that the Spirit works in the world through us?
- Does our witness lead us to the condition in which we “walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone?”

Southeastern Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice – Witness

3. Minutes of January 8, 2012 approved.

4. Treasurers Report

- \$1,200 has been paid to SEYM as the Meeting’s 2011 apportionment. Meeting received \$80 in contributions during January, giving us a balance of \$780.
- The Treasurer is uncertain when the latest six month of our secondary liability insurance ended, but she thinks it was in December 2011.

5. Meeting Location – discernment concerning Evergreen as our new location

- The Clerk began discussion by enumerating concerns and benefits previously voiced:
 - no liability insurance since December
 - marginal cleanliness of the new space
 - need for new chairs and/or cushions for chairs
 - bad acoustics (especially for hearing-impaired people)
 - good space, available all day
 - kitchenette and tables for meals
 - no cost for use of facilities.
- Friends spoke in turn to voice their thoughts and feelings. The following summarizes key themes:
 - Acoustics: Hard surfaces and echoes make hearing very difficult for those with hearing loss, with or without hearing aids. If Friends speak one at a time and allow time for listening, comprehension is possible, but if several speak at once the sounds become jumbled.
 - Even so, those who voice this concern all welcomed the idea of the move to this space and simply asked for Meeting to make accommodations for them.
 - A Friend proposed that Meeting acquire rollout carpets for acoustical damping.
 - Another Friend noted that the acoustical challenge may help to teach us the discipline of attending to sound and silence, and to the needs of fellow Friends.

- Several Friends suggested that setting up the chairs toward an end of the space instead of in the middle might reduce echoes.
- Ambient noise: Friends noted the several train whistles during meeting for worship, as well as the occasional sound of the refrigerator motor, yet generally voiced comfort with the ambient noise.
 - A Friend noted that the space is very quiet otherwise.
 - Another Friends said the noises were pleasant and led her to focus on quieting down.
- Cleanness of space: Some Friends expressed concern about the dirtiness of the floor and of some of the table and wall surfaces, while others said they were not troubled.
 - Friends proposed that Meeting offer to do a thorough cleaning of the whole interior as a voluntary service. After one deep cleaning, keeping the space clean enough should be fairly simple.
 - A Friend noted that we can do cleaning, but that we cannot do maintenance activities, due to the cemetery's liability concerns.
 - A Friend voiced concern that, as guests in someone else's daily space, we respect feelings of the cemetery staff and make it clear to them that we do not expect them to change their routines to keep the space cleaner for us.
- Chairs: Several Friends proposed, and all agreed, that Meeting should acquire a sufficient number of chair cushions, which could either be stored between meetings or transported to and from meetings.
- First Day School space: Friends noted that there is no separate indoor space for First Day School activities.
 - A Friend with children said that she does not like to bring her children and then ask them to sit to the side in silence. However, she acknowledged that this concern "puts the cart before the horse," when Meeting's priority now is to find comfortable space for growth.
 - Another Friend offered that she would be glad to take the children outside on good days, so that the mother could attend worship.
- Travel challenges
 - One Friend noted that this location roughly doubles her travel time to and from meeting over that Bolles School location, making First Day mornings more of a personal struggle. However, she likes the potential of the new space and is willing to find ways to accommodate herself to the change.
 - Friends expressed concern about another member who lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, a good bit farther away, who has not attended at this new location.
 - This morning a train stopped across the access road, making several Friends late to meeting for worship. Friends proposed that we could publish a map of the cemetery noting alternate access routes on our website.
- Positive comments: In the face of these challenges each Friend has something positive to say about worshiping in this new space.
 - "Good silence during meeting," "like the feel of the space," "enjoy worshiping here," "more comfortable here," "very clean for a break room," "space is what we make of it," "[it has] potential to make it feel more permanent," "the price is right."
 - Friends noted that this is a more to a good, inexpensive temporary location, allowing Meeting to begin building a fund toward something more permanent.

Minuted (2012.2): We are in unity that we will move the location for Jacksonville Monthly Meeting from Bolles School to the employee lounge of Evergreen Cemetery.

- Remaining issues:
 - The Clerk has a draft of a letter which will advise Bolles School of our move and express thanks for their years of hospitality.
 - Shannon will contact the management of the cemetery to advise them officially of our decision.
 - She will also speak with staff about our cleaning project.
 - She will arrange the new liability insurance policy (for which the Treasurer gave her a check).
 - If Friends wish, the cemetery might welcome volunteer help transcribing their card file record of tombstone inscriptions into a digital database.

6. Membership – discernment concerning continued membership of Hans Fletcher

- Meeting has attempted to contact recorded member Hans Fletcher several times in the past 2-3 years, with no response. The latest mailing to him in December, 2011, sent to the most current address SEYM has for him, was returned as unforwardable.
- An email was sent the latest address we have for Hans on January 3, 2012. It was not returned as undeliverable, yet we have received no response. The email asked:
 - “Please, advise whether or not you want to continue membership in Jacksonville Meeting and want to contribute toward that work, or whether you want to lay your membership down with Jacksonville Meeting or transfer your membership to another meeting.”

Minuted (2012.3): Having unsuccessfully sought communication with Hans Fletcher for several years, Jacksonville Month Meeting agrees to lay down his membership.

7. Winter Interim Business Meeting (WIBM) – The Clerk attended and shared the following update:

- Finance Committee
 - Thanks to JAX Meeting’s questioning the affordability of the SEYM budget line for Donations to Organizations, other meetings are sharing their similar concerns.
 - When Fall Interim Business Meeting increased the line for travel, it cut the donations line by 21% to counterbalance that increase.
 - SEYM meetings are continuing the discussion of the donations line.
- Earthcare Committee’s proposed minute on Nuclear Energy – “...seeking unity in opposition to further development of nuclear energy or building of nuclear power plants.”
 - JAX Meeting Friends are encouraged to read this minute and to consider collective or individual responses to it.
- Friends Committee on National Legislation priorities – FCNL asks monthly meetings to designate their first five choice among its possible legislative priorities for the current Congress.
 - On March 4, 2012, following meeting for worship, JAX Meeting will discuss these priorities over a “bring-your-own lunch.”

8. First Day School

- For adults: Barbara Vanderhoff described various models for adult First Day School classes, as well as for new attender classes. The goal would to enhance community, sharing, and learning more about Quakerism and each other. Meeting will explore these ideas further.
- For children:
 - Shannon proposed a once a month Intergenerational First Day School, half an hour of intergenerational activity, followed by half an hour of silent worship.
 - She spoke of the challenge of bringing her own children to meeting yet not having an active way to include them on worship and other activities. They learn about Quaker faith and practice at home yet miss inclusion in meeting.
 - Another Friend shared that Tallahassee Monthly Meeting uses the intergenerational idea, and that a Young Friends of North America member told her how being included in meeting for worship from age 12 helped him to learn Quaker process.
 - Friends agreed that this proposal should be an agenda item at next meeting for business and asked Shannon to write up a brief description of her ideas.

9. Episcopal School Interfaith Dialogue – Wednesday, February 8, 2012, Elaine, Barbara and Shannon will participate. In addition to describing the diversity within Quakerism, Elaine will hand out queries, so that the high school students can experience a little of Quaker process.

Meeting closed with silence.

Mike Shell, Recording Clerk
2/8/2012