

Minutes for College Park Quarterly Meeting

Winter 2021

Opening Plenary

Opening Remarks and Roll Call

Clerk Barbara Babin, Redwood Forest, welcomed us and expressed how happy she was to be with us and see our loving faces in such crazy and divisive times. Barbara spoke of how much technology has made possible during this time and also the challenges for some Friends.

There has been a concern raised that our acknowledgements of the original people and the lands where we hold our Meetings may be a form, not bringing us into a vital connection with indigenous peoples or holding a real meaning for us. We will discuss this issue at a future meeting. In the meantime, Barbara invited us to share a moment of worship to reflect on our own relationship to the land, to the natural spaces that teach us, and also to those who have gone before us on this land and to all who will come after us.

Our theme today is Reweaving the Ties that Bind. Barbara talked about reaching, with the M&O Committee, based on their readings of the Fall quarter's evaluations, the metaphor for today's meeting as a way to think about our yearning to renew our relationships and create new ones. We'll be talking about repairing all kinds of divides today. She encouraged us to drop down deeply into that which is eternal, as we seek God's will for us. Knowing that so many of us are feeling emotionally fraught, she encouraged us to be tender with one another.

She asked us to be thinking about the question, what does love require?

Our new Assistant Clerk, Jan Turner of Humboldt Meeting, led us in the roll call by meeting, asking us to hum together. She also announced that she plans to send the announcements out with the evaluations.

We welcomed visitors:

Anne Stone, Belgium

Sharon Gates, Orange Grove

Children's Program

Barbara Christwitz, Redwood Forest, Clerk of the Children's Program described the program for this afternoon, which will include a brief video describing the voyage of the anti-nuclear ship, the Golden Rule, by Quakers in 1958 to stop test of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands.

Peace Action Camp

Alma Moon, Strawberry Creek, co-clerk of the Teen Program, talked about a proposal for a summer Peace Action Camp,

Teens have felt moved to re-start Peace Action Camp which has not been run for the last few years. Teens have some goals, an ask of the adults, and next steps. They want to learn from older friends and participate in activism. Based on rising tensions about race and politics, they want to do something to welcome people with other opinions, "Finding that of God/That of Like Goodness in Everyone." This would be a one week camp with in-person and virtual availability, accessible to non-Quakers. They asked adults for support in actualizing this idea. They want to talk to venues that might support them, for example, Quaker Center or Quaker Oaks Farm.

One adult Friend talked about being inspired about this project and having this idea perhaps lead into a group that could meet with monthly meetings after the camp. Another asked how Friends might get updates on progress of the project. There will be a breakout room tonight for further discussion.

The idea of two Peace Action camps one in the south and one in the north that meet daily via Zoom was also a suggestion. Nate Secrest, Santa Cruz, Clerk of the Teen Program, encouraged us to think about this creatively and not let anxiety limit us at this point.

Teen Program

Nate Secrest invited us to an event this evening modeled on an activity led by George Lakey at a Quaker Center workshop about bridging the gap between generations. He invited participants in Quarterly to attend this evening's activity, led by the teens. The dialogue, called "Centering Teen Voices," will be from 7:30 to 9.

Alma Moon presented the plans for the teens for the day. There will be an orientation and worship sharing, with more open sharing in the afternoon and then participation in the evening program.

Ministry and Oversight Report

Ray Rischpater, Palo Alto Meeting, Clerk of M&O Committee presented the M&O report (attached in archived minutes).

Ray's report covered the general responsibilities of the committee, from helping to plan the quarterly meetings to supporting monthly meetings during times of difficulty. The committee plans to meet with monthly meeting clerks and representatives after this quarterly to discuss ways to move forward as we continue to meet virtually, sharing what we have learned. He read the names of the committee members.

The second section of the report concerned the committee's decision to rename itself. After much discernment, the committee has reached unity that they would like to propose that their name be Ministry and Good Order.

Barbara asked whether we could reach unity about this name change. A Friend asked for time for discernment until later today.

Another Friend was in unity with the request for a change but wondered about coordinating with Pacific Yearly Meeting's Ministry Committee. There has been no real coordination with them, but M&O would be willing to discuss this with PacYM.

Barbara put this action item over to this afternoon's plenary.

Naming Committee

Dorothy Henderson, Grass Valley, Clerk of the Naming Committee, made the report. The committee brings us the names of Owain Elliott-Sowaal, San Francisco, and Jay Owen-Smith, Monterey Peninsula, for the Nominating Committee, both for three year terms to end in February 2024. These names will be held over until this afternoon's plenary.

Interest Groups

Jan Turner introduced the afternoon's interest groups:

Let your Lives Speak, Jim Anderson – speaking on reaching across divides

Body, Mind and Spirit: Restoring the Connection, Barbara Birch – ~~intuitive~~the positive ways we experience mindful exercise and intuitive eating

The View from the Bridge – Brian Lloyd – response to divisions inside our society on a daily basis, how to make the changes that we believe should change

Tips for Meeting Archivists, Eric Sabelman – how to maintain and remember history

Worship-Sharing

Ray Rischpater described the options for worship sharing: journaling, art and traditional worship sharing.

Minutes

Heather Levien, Berkeley, read the minutes, which we approved with minor corrections.

Panel

We had a panel conversation on leadings moderated by Thistle West, Redwood Forest Meeting. The panelists were:

Lari Keeler, Chaplain, Home Health and Hospice

Melissa Lovett-Adair, Quaker Oaks Farm

Sally Hindman, Youth Spirit Art Works Tiny House Empowerment Project

(notes in a separate attachment)

Plenary II

We began our session with worship, after our clerk thanked our interest group presenters for their work. She encouraged us to fill out the evaluations we will be receiving by e-mail along with any announcements, which should be sent to Jan Turner.

Considerations from Plenary I

We returned to items held over from the morning plenary.

Dorothy Henderson, clerk of the Naming Committee, brought back the names of Owain Elliott-Sowaal and Jay-Owen Smith to us for three year terms on the Nominating Committee through February 2024. Clerk Barbara asked us whether we could approve the names. We approved these names.

Ray Rischpater brought back the proposal to change the name of the Ministry and Oversight; unity was not reached, so this matter will be held over until spring quarter, and monthly meetings are asked to consider this and how we can respond to issues of racism in our Meetings.

One Friend spoke of their surprise that a person of color made a comment in the chat in opposition to the name change when they had thought that the name change was supported by people of color. The person who originally posted in chat was invited to clarify, and the Clerk will send them an email inviting them to respond further, should they choose to do so. One Friend expressed anger and hurt over the way that the initial Friend's surprise was expressed, and our Clerk reminded us to think carefully about how our words and tone might impact others when we talk about these issues.

FASE Board

Mico Sorrel (Strawberry Creek and Redwood Forest), the co-Clerk of the Board of the Friends Association of Services for the Elderly (FASE) presented a report on developments over the last year (attached in the archived minutes). Mico talked about the resiliency of Friends House and its residents when faced both with a return of fires to the vicinity, as well as COVID-19, which has kept residents from enjoying the sort of community that is usually one of the great assets of Friends House. Residents have been very creative in the ways that they have created community at a distance. Until very recently, few of the residents or staff had become ill with the virus, but in the last few weeks, there have been some cases. Those people are now well on their way to recovery. Friends House residents are in the queue for some of the first vaccines in Sonoma County.

Mico offered us examples of how the fiscal and programmatic management of a small care facility has become more and more challenging. Since the beginning of COVID-19, for example, finding and keeping residents has been more difficult, and ten apartments are vacant. For the last three years, Friends House has been assisted by the managerial support of Covia, a senior care provider with other facilities in Northern California. In November, the board filed the paperwork for Friends House to merge with Covia, to become one of their facilities, still called Friends House. Mico reported that Covia shares many of the core values of the Friends House community, and, moreover, the larger company has the financial stability to provide for Friends House in the long term. This merger request was filed with the California Department of State Continuing Care Division, and FASE hopes that it will be approved at the end of March 2021. Though they would hope that the Quarter would still provide support and care, there would no longer be a FASE board and there would not be the same sort of reports to the quarter. Donor restricted funds will continue to be used for their restricted purposes, and the current board hopes that Friends will continue to support Friends House financially.

FASE asks that board minutes and other historical documents, including those regarding the establishment of Friends House, be held in the future by College Park Quarterly Meeting and that disputes between Covia and Quaker residents of Friends House that cannot be resolved by other means can be brought to CPQM's Ministry and Oversight (M&O) for mediation. M&O knows of this request.

Our Clerk called on Ray Rischpater, Clerk of M&O, who said that it's not yet clear what M&O's role should be, and that perhaps a separate committee could be appointed to hear these concerns. There is some urgency about making this decision, and we have heard some concern about liability. M&O did want to bring this question to the full body of quarterly.

Barbara asked whether Quarterly wants to delegate to M&O the investigation into this request, and have M&O, with perhaps the Assistant Clerk, who has a legal background, resolve this issue.

- One FASE board member in attendance notes that the odds are that the Friends House transition committee would resolve any issues, so Quarterly would not wind up with many instances of issues to be resolved.
- One Friend worried that this wasn't brought to the quarter before it was written into the merger, because if we say no, there would be no way to deal with disputes. Mico notes that the language of the merger agreement has not been approved, and they have until February 24 to finalize it.
- Another Friend asked to have the language in the merger agreement read. Mico said she could send it later. Barbara said it shouldn't be needed for the question at hand about whether M&O is the appropriate group to handle the FASE request.
- A Friend expressed concern about giving M&O and the Assistant Clerk responsibility to explore this decision and make it, since this is a much more substantial decision than we normally task them with.

The Clerk suggested that she sees three options: we could 1) have the committee make the decision, 2) pull out of the agreement, or 3) have a called meeting to decide after M&O researches the issue. Seeing nods of approval at the third suggestion, the Clerk said that we will have a called meeting to discern whether to approve the decision after M&O explores it. We'll hear about the information they gather and have time to discern together.

- A member of M&O asked whether this is really a request or whether there is binding language in the merger agreement.
- Another FASE board member told us that the agreement gives us choice about whether to become involved in particular cases.

The Clerk thanked Mico Sorrel for the report.

Archivist's Report and Registrar's Report

We received a report from our Registrar and Archivist Committee member, Eric Sabelman, Palo Alto. The Archives are currently in the basement of the San Francisco meeting house because it's climate controlled and have been there since 2010. Not all minutes related to quarter are there, and we almost lost the records of Sierra Friends Center and Woolman School in the fires this past fall. We'd like to move more records to San Francisco, though there have been water leaks. There's a question of accessibility, and doing an inventory of what we might be missing. There's more interest from PYM

and some monthly meetings. Tom King donated the records that he collected for his book on his death.

Registration: We had a total of 91 participants, including one hardy visitor from Belgium, who stayed with us until the middle of the night her time. Redwood Forest and Strawberry Creek had the most participants with 14, and Chico had the largest percentage of their members attend. We had a good representation of meetings. Attendance was very comparable to the Fall quarter, and Eric Sabelman will ask on the evaluation if there were technical issues that prevented attendance by some of those who registered but did not attend.

Children's Program

We had a report from Barbara Christwitz. No children appeared today, but a number of adults attended the video on the Golden Rule.

Minutes

Heather Levien, Recording Clerk, reviewed the minutes for Plenary 2, and we approved them with corrections.

The 245th session of College Park Quarterly Meeting will be held on Zoom, May 14-16, 2021. See you then!

Faithfully submitted,

Barbara Babin, Presiding Clerk
Heather Levien, Recording Clerk