

Midlothian Friends Meeting

Meeting for Discernment

January 20, 2019

12 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the ‘sense of the meeting’:

- Meeting approved the “Minute on the Civil and Human Rights of Transgender and Non-Binary People”.
- Treasurer’s Report:
 - 2018 Surplus of \$341.86 will be transferred to the “MH Systems/Appliances Annual Budget” for 2019.
 - The 2019 “B&G Routine Maint Annual Budget” will be increased from \$1400 to \$1900 for 2019 due to increased costs.
 - The 2019 budget was approved after making the two changes above.
- Nominating:
 - Laying down the Spiritual Nurture Committee in 2019 was discussed but additional issues will be raised at the next Month’s Meeting for Discernment.
 - There was discussion about replacing the Care and Community Committee with a “Care and Community Coordinator”, but the issue needs further seasoning and will be brought back to next month’s Meeting for Discernment.
 - With these items noted, the Committee Roster for 2019 was approved.
- Memorial Garden:
 - After taking a walk outside, the Meeting approved the Memorial Garden be located in the large wooded area past the playground/grassy area and on the left of the path to the creek. An ad-hoc committee of Dave Clark, Robyn Johnson, and Dave Clark will suggest more specific boundaries/accessibility to be brought back to the Meeting.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
February 10, 2019**

19 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting for Discernment agreed to adopt the following minute from Baltimore Yearly Meeting:
 - "In the interest of peace, and with a deep concern for the living world, Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends encourages Friends to discuss how to extend their love and compassion to animals, and to consider their welfare when making food choices."

(Meeting for Discernment was held in March and April, 2019, but since no decisions were made, no minutes were recorded)

**Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
May 19, 2019**

17 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made after reaching the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting approved the following minute: "Midlothian Friends Meeting would like to explore ways to be good stewards of the Earth. We invite all Friends to share their leadings on how to cherish the Earth and protect its resources"

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
June 9, 2019

10 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting for Discernment decided to hold over the decision to make changes to the Care and Community Committee, the Spiritual Nurture Committee, and the Nominating Committee.

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
July 14, 2019

13 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Midlothian Friends Meeting approves the process of spirit-led care and spiritual nurture that has evolved at our meeting over the last few years. We are therefore comfortable laying down the Nominating, Care and Community, and Spiritual Nurture committees. To address the periodic needs of Friends that require special attention, we will establish two to three Care Coordinators for our meeting; plus the clerk of meeting will now handle the initiation of periodic events instead of the committees that have been laid down. Ann Duncan will serve as an acting Care Coordinator for our meeting until an ad-hoc Nominating committee can establish permanent Care coordinators.
- Meeting will establish a Procedure Manual to document our Quaker processes related to the life of our Meeting.
- Meeting agreed to send via the QTC ways Friends might provide their donations to MFM, in order to address our current donation deficit.

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
August 19, 2019

14 were present.

The following decisions were made after reaching the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting agreed to establish the Memorial Garden within the boundaries proposed by the ad hoc committee across from the concrete benches. The Memorial Garden will include both wooded space and a cleared circle, with the details to be specified through further discernment.
- Meeting agreed to hold over the proposal to mark the garden's boundaries with a rope and post boundary similar to the boundary of the parking lot.
- Meeting agreed to accept the offers of Ann Duncan and Lisa Allen to serve as the Meeting's Care Coordinators.

**Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
September 8, 2019**

16 Friends were present.

The following decision was made after reaching the 'sense of the meeting':

- We acknowledge that Spirit knows no boundaries, but wish to demarcate the space in which cremains may be placed. Meeting agreed to use stone cairns to mark the four corners of the Memorial Garden as a sustainable, subtle delineation of borders. The cairns will be built around surveyor's pins to aid in rebuilding them if necessary.

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
October 13, 2019

12 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting approved the Environmental Study Group's request to submit a proposal for a faucet water filter, compost bin, and water heater timer to Quaker Earthcare Witness's micro-grant program. If the grant is approved, Meeting approves the expenditure of the necessary Meeting contribution to the project.
- Meeting transferred the membership of Julie Crum to the Friends Meeting of San Antonio.
- Meeting agreed that Dave Clark will serve as the recorder of information about individuals whose cremains are placed in the Memorial Garden. He will return to Meeting for Discernment with suggested procedures.
- Meeting approved the list of remaining questions pertaining to the Memorial Garden as shown in a separate document that indicates our progress on the Memorial Garden project.

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
November 10, 2019

16 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting decided that a written record will be kept of the individuals whose cremated remains are buried in the Memorial Garden or elsewhere on the Meeting grounds. A copy of this record will be maintained on the Meeting web site.
- Families burying individuals in the Memorial Garden will be given a set of recommended biographical data that may be useful for historical research purposes, such as the individual's full name, date of birth, date of death, full name of spouse or partner, and full names of children. Families will be allowed to record some additional information about the deceased as desired.
- Memorial Garden records will be maintained by a meeting historian, the first of whom will be Dave Clark. The historian may take on additional duties as decided by Meeting for Discernment.
- Meeting is providing the Memorial Garden as a space for burial and remembrance of loved ones and pets. Memorial services may take place in the garden, but the Meeting does not provide cremation or formal funeral planning services.
- Meeting established a study group to explore ideas about new programs to share Quaker values with local children. Initial membership will include Vivek Chandra, Ann Duncan, Liz Wall, Deborah Long, Nora Duncan, and Howard Brod. Other Friends are welcome to join the study group. The first meeting will be Tuesday, November 12 at 11am at the meetinghouse.

Midlothian Friends Meeting
Meeting for Discernment
December 8, 2019

22 Friends were present.

The following decisions were made based on the 'sense of the meeting':

- Meeting approved the annual budget proposed by the treasurer (attached).
- Meeting agreed to allow an individual in the community to be the first to place cremated remains within the designated Memorial Garden boundaries.
- Meeting approved a revision to the language in the Memorial Garden guidelines allowing any interested parties, not only those with an association with Meeting, to place cremated remains in the Memorial Garden.
- Meeting approved the creation of SPICES for Life, Inc., according to the proposal submitted by the SPICES for Life Study Group (attached).

About SPICES for Life, Inc. (as of 12/5/2019)

Six Friends from *Midlothian Friends Meeting's* (MFM) **SPICES for Life** Study Group have been exploring the creation of a non-profit corporation that will use innovative fun activities to convey all six Quaker testimonies (values) to children, and parents where practical. The experiential emphasis on values will be at the core of our offerings. We will eventually expand our program offerings to whatever, whenever, and wherever the Spirit leads us. These are the types of SPICES questions we hope any child will be able to answer experientially from our programs:

- **Simplicity:** How can I give my attention to what is important **now** in this very moment?
- **Peace:** How can I be nourished by peace within myself and among others in every moment?
- **Integrity:** How can I live each moment lit with the same steady Light to guide me?
- **Community:** How can I help to create a team by seeing the worth of each person, particularly those who have been devalued or excluded?
- **Equality:** How can I address in the moment teasing, bullying, and favoritism - so there is respect and fairness for all?
- **Stewardship:** How can I live each moment cherishing and supporting the Earth and all the life on it, so everyone can enjoy it?

The study group has determined that over the summer we will offer half-day, week-long camps (Monday through Friday, no more than half-day sessions) for children ages 6 through 14. The number of camps offered during the summer depends on enrollment numbers. Also the names of the camps (below) and details for the camps are subject to change as more information is gathered. Here are three possibilities currently being considered:

- **Camp SPICES** will bring together a community of diverse ages where campers select their activities rather than have them prescribed for them. Children will explore nature and engage each other collaboratively during interactive activities, such as: Art Projects (drawing, watercolors, crafting), Outdoor Games (Extreme Tag, Capture the Flag, Gaga Ball), Group meal preparation, Spice/Vegetable Gardening, and Yoga.
- **Soccer Friends** will teach campers soccer skills, strategies, and play; with the positive values inherent in soccer presented as beneficial life skills: such as collaboration, humility, focus, and mutual respect.
- **SPICES in "Action!"** will use screen-writing, cinema arts, and video production as a means to demonstrate the skills of collaborating with others, being true to who you are, respecting the equal worth of everyone you work with, and centering oneself in order to be successful.

The plan is to hold the camp sessions at the *Midlothian Friends meetinghouse* due to its central location to the greater Richmond area. Other area locations will also be used whenever needed (such as a soccer field).

Articles of Incorporation and bylaws for the non-profit corporation "**SPICES for Life, Inc.**" have been created. The bylaws allow the corporation to pay for needed improvements to the MFM meetinghouse and grounds if these benefit the mission of the corporation. Upon approval by MFM to proceed, these legal documents will be filed with the *Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC)*. The current six members of the study group are willing to serve as volunteer officers on the board of directors. Yet, we encourage other MFM Friends to join the board as officers as well, if so moved. Before beginning operations an application for 501(c)(3) non-profit status will be sent to the IRS. As *The Quaker Thrift Store, Inc.* already does, *SPICES for Life, Inc.* will be covered as a separate corporation under MFM's current *GuideOne* insurance policy. The additional cost for insurance (which will be covered by *SPICES for Life, Inc.*) is not known at this point. As with *The Quaker Thrift Store, Inc.*, *SPICES for Life, Inc.* will operate independently of MFM for both legal and practical reasons. However, since the corporation will be associating itself with MFM, the bylaws state that Board members are nominated by MFM and may also be removed by MFM.

We are hopeful that MFM will grant *SPICES for Life, Inc.* the April proceeds from *The Thrifty Quaker* to help with start-up costs. We have an offer from a non-Quaker to provide us a matching contribution to whatever the grant amount is from *The Thrifty Quaker*. We will also be applying for any other grants that are available, some of which may be used to make improvements to the MFM meetinghouse and/or grounds per MFM's approval - because they will be beneficial to the life of the meeting, as well as the programs offered by *SPICES for Life, Inc.*

All camps will be managed by a paid camp Director: Laura Clark of MFM. She will work closely with the board of directors. Also, expert paid consultant camp counselors will be hired due to their certification for child care and knowledge in working with children for the offerings of the camps. Existing professionals, local universities, and schools are good sources to find qualified counselors over the summer. There will be an orientation session for the Director and the counselors to explain the purpose of the camp, a practical understanding of the six Quaker testimonies that are important to meeting our mission, and the unique free-form structure of the camps' offerings that will be utilized.