

Helen Tasker
Clerk
Frederick Monthly Meeting
723 North Market Street
Frederick Maryland 21701

March 18, 2012

Dear Helen,

At the March 10 Meeting for Business of Shepherdstown Preparative Meeting, Friends united in a desire to become an independent Monthly Meeting,

As you know, Shepherdstown Friends have been gathering in the spirit of silent worship since 2002. We then became first an allowed meeting under the care of Frederick Monthly Meeting, then most recently a Preparative Meeting. During that time we have grown from just a handful of regular worshippers to a group that regularly welcomes more than twenty adults and three children in our First Day School.

As prelude to our decision this past First Day, we held a threshing session in January and a specially-called meeting in February. In our deliberations Shepherdstown Friends paid particular attention to the need for our meeting to be ready to move forward together on this next step and Friends agreed that we are ready. We anticipate that becoming a Monthly Meeting would bring simplicity to our business matters

At these three meetings we considered the following questions:

- *Is a sense of community present among members and attenders of the Preparative Meeting? Is spiritual nurturing experienced within it?*

Friends affirmed that this is true for us. Friends share silent worship and deeply felt messages at our Meetings for worship, and also share a warm sense of community with each other.

- *Are meetings for worship and business held regularly and attended appropriately?*

Friends affirmed that this is true for us. Most Friends stay for Meeting for business and a small group regularly also attends a Wednesday night worship in Harpers Ferry.

- *Is there a core group with the commitment to give permanence to the Meeting?*

After discussion, Friends affirmed that this is true for us. Friends note that for a small meeting the burden of being a monthly meeting, although not greater in total than for a larger meeting, implies more work for the fewer number of Friends in a smaller meeting. Friends also note that becoming a Monthly Meeting may be an opportunity for growth and would give new energy to the meeting community.

- *Is contact maintained with organizations in the wider community of the Religious Society of Friends?*

Friends note many connections to the wider Quaker community. These include participation in Baltimore Yearly Meeting committee work, attendance at Yearly Meeting and other Quaker groups. However, we note that, like many other meetings, we have not had much participation in Quarterly Meeting.

- *Is witness for traditional social testimonies of Friends fostered?*

Friends affirmed that this is true for us. This activity includes an active Peace and Social Justice Committee and many individual activities.

- *Does the Preparative Meeting maintain a library of Friends materials? Does it encourage its members and attenders to grow in the knowledge of the Society?*

Friends affirmed that this is true for us. We have a small but growing library of Quaker-related literature and Friends borrow from it.

- *Has the Preparative Meeting established relationships with other religious groups in its community?*

Friends affirmed that this is true for us. We participate in the Shepherdstown Ministerial Association and particularly collect food items for the local food pantry.

We ask that you bring this matter to your next Meeting for Business. Our recently nominated co-clerk, Mark Mulligan will be able to attend the Meeting, as well our outgoing clerk Neal Peterson. Unfortunately, I will be on business travel and thus unable to be there.

Sincerely,

Carol Robbins

Co-clerk, Shepherdstown Preparative Meeting