**Interim Meeting**

**Sixth Month 10, 2023**

**Tandem Friends School, Charlottesville, Virginia, and by Zoom**

**I2023-16.** *Opening*. Friends gathered into silent worship at 12:30 pm, meeting at Tandem Friends School in Charlottesville, Virginia, and by Zoom. Clerk Bette Rainbow Hoover welcomed all of us. General Secretary Sarah Gillooly reminded us of how to use the hybrid meeting technology that is facilitating our meeting today.

Alice Anderson, outgoing clerk of Charlottesville Friends Meeting, welcomed us to Charlottesville. She suggested that we drive through downtown, and see where the statues of Robert E. Lee and others have been removed. Charlottesville is changing, and beginning to heal from the violence that took place here almost six years ago. She noted that our presence here today contributes to that healing. She explained that Charlottesville Meeting has been holding separate in-person and Zoom meetings since the advent of Covid, and is not set up to host hybrid meetings. She expressed her gratitude to Tandem Friends School for hosting this meeting today.

We heard the land acknowledgement honoring the original occupants of the land where BYM has its offices and camps. We heard the anti-racism queries from our declaration that BYM is an anti-racist faith committee. These will guide us in our work today.

Clerk Bette Hoover thanked Rita Willett & Greg Robb from the M & PC Committee for holding our sessions in the Light.

**I2023-17**. *General Secretary’s Report*. General Secretary Sarah Gillooly presented their report. They spoke of sitting in worship in the Iona Community in Scotland, during a recent reunion of seminary students. They spoke of how quiet and peaceful the rocks were, but also how increasingly hard and uncomfortable. They introduced the members of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting staff. Rachel Carter, the new Interim STRIDE Coordinator spoke of how deeply they feel connected to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting STRIDE program, and how glad they are to be here today with the BYM community.

Sarah reported that the audit for 2022 is ongoing, and will be completed prior to annual session. They spoke of the new simplified format for presenting financial reports, that should make them easier to understand. They encouraged us to refer candidates for the Development Manager position, especially younger people.

They reported that Dyresha Harris and Rachel Carter have hosted the first meeting of a “staff of color affinity group.” During the camping season, BYM has a staff of 150, including many people of color. They welcomed the chance to be together.

Sarah encouraged us to come to annual session, even if only for one day or a part of a day. Annual session is where we knit ourselves into a community, and into the worldwide community of Friends. There will be an interest group at annual session this year to begin visualizing the future of BYM, in preparation for a strategic planning process.

Sarah reported that all staff are now enrolled to receive the health and other benefits they are due. They reported that the Yearly Meeting is working on expanding our data base of members, attenders and supporters, and helping local meetings fill in and organize their contact lists. They reported that enrollment in the camping program now stands at just over 89%, solidly above the projected goal, and that one third of all campers are paying the full cost, which is in line with our goal.

Sarah spoke of how the Iona Community has a practice of beginning every request with a statement of welcome. May we all remember to ground ourselves in a welcoming spirit.

**I2023-18**. *Treasurer’s Report*. James “Jim” Riley (Hopewell Centre) presented the Treasurer’s Report. Because it is still early in the year, a detailed report does not seem necessary. The income and expense number to date show that everything is in good order. Camp registration is going well. A detailed report will be presented at annual session. Jim spoke of our annual audit. We have been working with the same firm in Philadelphia for quite some time, and have a very good working relationship. The audit requires a great deal of detail work and a lot of time, but it is going well.

**I2023-19**. *Presiding Clerk’s Report*. Stephanie “Steph” Bean, Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, presented their report. The Road Map Working Group is still working on its report on how we will carry forward our commitment to anti-racism. We need a way to respond to incidents of racial wounding, not just in private, but institutionally, as a whole community. Steph spoke of how many of us are stretched very thin, trying to do all the things that need to be done. We may need to cut back a little in order to be good stewards of our time and energy. They encouraged committee clerks to send in their annual reports. They mentioned their upcoming trip to Kenya to attend the Friends United Meeting Triennial, and urged us all to hold those traveling among Friends this summer in the Light, that their travels may be fruitful and blessed.

**I2023-20**. *Youth Program’s Annual Report*. Alexis “Sunshine” Klein, Youth Programs Manager, presented the Youth Programs report in the form of a video. Attendance at the Young Friends “cons” has been about the same as last year, and the Junior Young Friends “cons” attracted twice as many participants as last year. It has been a wonderful year. The program is growing and thriving. The Junior Young Friends have been pursuing their theme of animals and nature. The Young Friends agreed to change the name of adult helpers in the program from Friendly Adult Presences to Friendly Adult Mentors (FAMs). Serving as a FAM at a weekend con may require sleeping on a hard surface, but it can be a wonderfully rejuvenating experience. More volunteers are needed. There will be more FAM training sessions in September and October for those who might be interested in helping out.

**I2023-21**. *Development Committee Report*. Barbara Wille, Interim Development Director, presented the Development Committee report. She spoke of her deep attachment to the Quaker community, and the joy she has found in working for BYM. She expressed particular appreciation to our many auto donors who provide ongoing steady support for the work of the Yearly Meeting. She highlighted efforts to reach out to new donors, and to clean-up our data base by weeding out outdated addresses. The report is attached.

**I2023-22**. *Moving Opequon Quaker Camp to Rolling Ridge*. Clerk Bette Hoover introduced consideration of the proposal to move Opequon Quaker Camp to the Rolling Ridge property in West Virginia. This will involve a series of reports from the committees involved in preparing the groundwork for a decision.

Elizabeth “Betsy” Roush (Sandy Spring) read the report prepared by the Camping Program and Camp Property Management Committee for March Interim Meeting. This explains the background for today’s discernment. She reported that the three committees that were asked to provide their input have completed their work. She noted that the decision before us today is whether to approve signing a lease with the Rolling Ridge Conservancy, preparatory to moving Opequon Quaker Camp from its current location to Rolling Ridge. She thanked all of those who have worked so hard to assemble all the information we need to make that decision today. She spoke of what a wonderful opportunity this is for BYM.

Sarah Gillooly read the minute of support approved by the Development Committee (attached).

Terence McCormally (Herndon), Assistant Treasurer, presented the minute of support approved by the Stewardship and Finance Committee (attached).

Rich Liversidge (Sandy Spring), Clerk of Trustees, presented the minute of support approved by Trustees. He noted that Trustees are asking Interim Meeting for authority to execute a forty-year lease with the Rolling Ridge Conservancy, once all the details have been finalized. Trustees expect this to be done by the end of June. We will need to be sure that the Appalachian Trail conservancy, which has an easement, and the Rolling Ridge Conservancy are comfortable with BYM’s plans to develop the site. The full report is attached.

In response to a question, Rich noted that the lease will be reviewed periodically to ensure that is it still a good fit for us, and that we would have the opportunity to withdraw if needed. Carl Benson (Annapolis) spoke of the potential for connections between Friends Wilderness Center, which is also located at Rolling Ridge, and Opequon Quaker Camp.

We listened to another reading of the anti-racism queries, and settled into worship to consider the decision before us. Out of the silence, Friends shared their belief that Rolling Ridge will be a safe space for our wonderfully diverse Opequon camping community, and that this decision is right for us and full of potential. With expressions of joy, and a sense of way opening, Friends APPROVED authorizing the BYM Trustees to sign a forty-year lease with the Rolling Ridge Conservancy, to secure a new home for Opequon Quaker Camp.

**I2023-23**. *2024 Draft Budget*. Terence McCormally (Herndon), Assistant Treasurer, reviewed the draft 2024 budget. No action is required at this time. The budget will be brought to annual session for two readings, with opportunities for Friends to ask questions. He noted that substantial funds have been allocated for anti-racist projects planned by the Reparations Action Working Group, the Working Group on Racism, and the Indian Affairs Committee. This reflects Yearly Meeting priorities.

**I2023-24**. *Faith and Practice Committee Report*. Davis Balderston, co-clerk of the Faith and Practice Committee, reported for the Committee. The Faith and Practice Committee has drafted two new sections—“The Quaker Experience” and “Meeting for Worship”--to replace the first three sections under “The Life of the Spirit” in the current (1988) book of Faith and Practice. The Committee circulated a first draft last fall, and received 31 responses proposing a wide variety of changes from local meetings, committees and communities. These were carefully considered, and the new draft, which is attached, balances and incorporates as many of the proposed changes as possible. This is considered a first reading. Friends are encouraged to contact the Committee directly with any further suggestions for minor changes. A final draft will come to annual session for the second reading in August.

**I2023-25**. *Nominating Committee Report*. Bette Hoover read the Nominating Committee report (attached). Friends APPROVEDnaming Lauren Brownlee (Bethesda) to serve on the Sandy Spring Friends School Board.

**I2023-26**. *Advancement and Outreach Committee Request for a New Working Group*. Laura Goren presented the report of the Advancement and Outreach Committee. The Committee is asking permission to establish a BYM Working Group on Welcoming Trans and Nonbinary Friends. They note that a similar working group, the Working Group on the Civil and Human Rights of Transgender and Non-Binary People, which was under the care of the Peace and Social Action Committee, has been inactive and has now been laid down. Laura Goren has agreed to clerk the new working group. The minute from the Advancement and Outreach Committee reads as follows:

The proposed BYM Working Group on Welcoming Trans and Nonbinary Friends offers opportunities for people within Baltimore Yearly Meeting to connect for four purposes: (1) spiritual community, (2) sharing and producing resources on making our Meetings more welcoming for trans and nonbinary people, (3) educating our monthly meetings on issues of gender and advocacy, and (4) sharing with the broader community that Friends Meetings in BYM may be a welcoming home for them.

Friends noted that this initiative is very much needed at this time, and thanked Laura Goren and the Advancement and Outreach Committee for their leadership. The establishment of a Working Group on Welcoming Trans and Nonbinary Friends under the care of Advancement and Outreach was APPROVED.

**I2023-27**. *Search Committee Report*. Margaret “Meg” Boyd Meyer presented the report of the Search Committee. The Committee recommends that Chip Tucker (Charlottesville) and Alan da Silva (Sandy Spring) be named to Supervisory Committee. Friends APPROVED these nominations.

Meg asked for help in finding Friends from Virginia willing to serve on Nominating Committee. She announced that the clerks of Yearly Meeting and Interim Meeting have asked for an assistant clerk to be appointed, and that Search Committee has now developed a job description, and is looking for a Friend to serve in this role.

Clerk Bette Hoover noted that Gloria Victor Dorr is currently the only member of the Naming Committee charged with finding new members for the Search Committee. She needs a partner to help her with this task. Please contact Bette Hoover if you might be willing to serve.

**I2023-28**. *Closing*. The meeting closed with a period of waiting worship at about 3:50 pm.