

Arch Street Meeting House Standing Committee Report to Annual Sessions 2014

- 1. Membership:** Alan Crosman (Clerk), Elizabeth Foley, George Garrettson (Assistant Clerk), Bill Heinemann (Recording Clerk), Les Hopton, Carl Stanton, Sandy Sudofsky.
- 2. Working Groups:** Property and Use – Tom Unkefer, Clerk; Exhibits – Peggy Morshack, Clerk; Interpretation – Marge Dawson, Clerk.
- 3. Summary Organization Chart – Staff support:** Lynne Calamia, Director; Linell McCurry, PYM Associate Secretary for Business and Finance. The Preservation Trust is working closely with the Standing Committee to define its role and activities. Property and Use Working Group helps oversee building maintenance and capital repair and improvement. They are also responsible for recommending rental rates. Exhibits Working Group is responsible for the creation and promotion of special exhibits both in the meetinghouse and their travel and use in other venues. Interpretation Working Group is responsible for welcome of tourists and interpreting the building and Quakers to those who visit.

Summary of Standing Committee Work:

What is Arch Street?

- The home of Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia for their meeting community.
- A gathering and meeting place for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and its committees in developing and strengthening our community and giving space and time for decision making.
- Outreach and interpretation to tourists and visitors about Friends in general and Philadelphia Quakers in particular.
- In support of the above, a rental program to outside organizations for meetings and conferences.

The Arch Street Standing Committee has overseen the work of several active working groups and is working with the Preservation Trust to begin planning jointly for their work and for the future directions for the Meeting House.

Interpretation Working Group

- There has been a 6% increase in visitors to Arch Street between calendar year 2012 and 2013.

- Additional guides are a critical need and volunteers welcome. Several current guides have left the area recently and others are suffering from extended medical issues.
- A series of brown bag lunch talks on various topics began last fall for deepening the guides' knowledge of the building as well as informing the public. Topics have included: Arch Street Building and Grounds, Brickwork, Quilts and Quilting, Quakers in the Chocolate Business, Yellow Fever in Philadelphia, and on May 20th we had a round table discussion about experiences as a conscientious objector.

Property & Use Working Group

- After the discovery that the existing emergency lighting system was failing and parts were not available, the working group oversaw its replacement. A grant from the Eleanor Marshall-Reynolds Fund was received to offset cost. The emergency lighting system will end up costing just over \$18,000, about half of what was originally feared.
- Corrective work is progressing on the 4th Street trees and sidewalk, but eventually all nine trees need to be removed and the sidewalk replaced. Additional work on trimming the Arch Street trees is also underway.
- The annual bench check-up resulted in a few repairs and a fresh look at how we keep benches in repair.
- The building at 304 Arch Street wants to expand, filling in the small empty lot at corner of 3rd and Arch, and the city permit process is being monitored.

Exhibits Working Group

- Merion Friends Meeting exhibited the Quaker Tapestry exhibit.
- Fallsington Friends Meeting exhibited the Quakers and Political Process exhibit.
- After 13 years of hard work on what was intended to be an ad-hoc, temporary committee, the Exhibit Working Group is requesting to be laid down. The Standing Committee approved the proposal effective at the end of the current fiscal year.

Preservation Trust

- Preservation Trust board held its first meeting on June 18. Filing the 501(c)3 application with the IRS as well as one for Pennsylvania charitable registration has been completed, but at present it appears we cannot expect approval before October 2014 at the earliest.
- The Board of the Trust met with the Executive Director of the Christ Church Preservation Trust, Don Smith, to learn more about how they have handled their independence while being a support organization to a church.
- The Board is pursuing grants to do an open, broad examination of the best way to interpret Arch Street, to bring in visitors, and to engage Quakers in maintaining the program.

- A planning consultant/facilitator has been engaged to put together a strategic plan for Arch Street, focusing on governance and building use.
- The Trust is moving forward to funding an Arch Street Meeting House web presence. The ad-hoc Website Committee discussed the need for an independent (but cross-linked to PYM.org) website. The design firm, Malish Pagonis, has been selected to design a site and work is underway.
- The bylaws for the Trust call for them to make an annual report to Interim Meeting in October each year.

Staff and Other Activities

- A new addition to the part time maintenance staff, Stefan Williams, is fitting in well and providing a number of skills and capabilities. Lynne Calamia, our current director, has completed her first year and is settling in well.
- This memorable winter we went through 104 fifty-pound bags of salt.
- There continues to be an active calendar of Quaker and non-Quaker events booked at Arch Street. Among the new non-Quaker groups is City Year, the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, the Tesla Science Foundation, and the Philadelphia Jazz Project.
- The red sandwich boards targeting the public have been replaced with more current information.
- The upstairs committee rooms now have names instead of numbers: you can have meetings in the Owen Biddle Room, William Penn Room, Hannah Penn Room, and the Mulberry Room.
- The 200-pound date stone formerly atop Orange Street Meeting House has made its way to Arch Street. Plans are being made to put it on display.
- A replacement for the historic marker on Arch Street was received in April from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The Standing Committee agreed to absorb the cost of revising the text and bringing it up to date. The new wording:

ARCH STREET MEETING HOUSE

Built in 1804 on a burial ground granted by William Penn in 1701, this meetinghouse has been in continuous use as a place of worship and center of activities of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) of the Philadelphia region.

Alan Crosman
Clerk
acrosman@aol.com