



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

12.12.2020 Quaker Life Council Minutes

Eleventh Month 21, 2020 (using Zoom format)
Decisions and other follow-up actions **are shown in bold.**

Key points from the Joint Session of the PYM Quaker Life, Administration, and Nominating Councils Clerked by Frank and Jean Marie P. Barch

Welcome and Introductions followed brief silent worship.

- John Walz brought up PYM as an anti-slavery group after 1776. He recommends the Anti-Racism Collaborative's website.
- Announcement from Jim Waddington regarding plans for a SWOT analysis session. He explained this process and suggests Jan. 30 (10 am to 1 pm) as a little-used fifth Saturday when this could involve all 3 Councils. He suggests brainstorming ideas ahead.
- Christie then re-capped her report from continuing sessions Dec. 8. How can we enhance our roles as neurons? She then asked two queries that engendered some discussion:
 - How does PYM and its interconnectivity inform my Council?
 - How can my Council facilitate Friends' understanding that building (trusting) relationships is the business of the YM?

Closing silent worship



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QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL, by Zoom

Follow-up actions and decisions **are shown in bold.**

PARTICIPANTS – Sue Dietz, Melanie Douty-Snipes, Zachary Dutton (Associate Secretary), Susan Kight, Steve Elkinton (acting clerk), Bryn Hammarstrom, Robert Greene, and Jean-Marie Prestwidge-Barch (PYM Co-Presiding Clerk and Worship & Ministry Committee Clerk).

ABSENT – Kate Bregman, Margaret “Marge” Dawson, Tom Hughes, Guinevere Janes, and Anthony Stover.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL – We met jointly with the Administrative Council, focusing on a “persona exercise” which elucidates some priorities in the formation of a new brochure for PYM.

NEW MEMBER, ROBERT GREENE – We welcomed Robert Greene of Princeton Meeting as a new member of the Quaker Life Council.

REPORT FROM MINISTRY & CARE ON TRUTH & TRANSFORMATION PROCESS – Jean-Marie Prestwidge Barch read the first paragraph of a report that will be shared with the council in the coming days. We seek as Friends to be in right relationship with one another and to maintain and build beloved community. Our connections to each other are imperative and also fragile. A goal of this process is to create a space wherein connections can be supported and repaired. The committee is very clear that their focus is not to resolve issues nor to engage in reparations, but to create a process wherein transformation and healing can begin. The committee is also clear that there is going to be a lot of need for supportive training, which will begin during the Thread Gathering being hosted by the Ministry & Care Committee on Saturday February 27, 2021.

DEBRIEF OF CONTINUING SESSIONS – Friends shared their feedback, one of which was concern that so few monthly meetings responded to the request from the Co-Presiding Clerks to season the three concerns facing the yearly meeting: Membership, Addressing Racism and Climate Change. Friends are encouraged to share further feedback to Steve or Anthony.

HOW WE NOMINATE AND APPROVE MEMBERS OF QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL COMMITTEES – Steve read the overview of our current process for nominating people, which, in essence, is that our Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life, Zachary Dutton, consults with each committee to support their well-functioning and to solicit input on potential new members. Zachary has been shuttling these names, as nominations, to the council for approval.

While the Nominating Council nominates people to serve on councils, each council is responsible for nominating and appointing the membership of its own committees. People we find to serve on council committees do not need to serve on the councils themselves. We also expect that each committee will have at least one member of the council serving on them.



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We need to have a process that can broaden our reach beyond committees and staff in terms of how we find people to serve on committees under the care of the Quaker Life Council. We noticed that the processes have been similarly catch-as-catch-can, as it were, for nominating people to committees under other councils. We noticed some confusion about different work happening parallel to each other around governance re-evaluation, nominating council committees, and issues related to membership, each with overlapping foci. We turned our attention to the Friends Counseling Service Advisory Panel, which needs to be repopulated. We also considered whether nominating needs could be advertised, as it were, in PYM's newsletter. Perhaps there needs to be an issue in an upcoming newsletter or a story on the PYM Website with a focus on getting to know your councils and council committees, encouraging people to get involved.

Committees under our care need also to report to us more regularly about the work that they do and the issues they have been focusing on recently.

These issues and ideas need to be raised to the Administrative Council for how to address the concern more systematically across our governance structure. We will forward this portion of our minutes to the Administrative Council for review.

DESIGNATING SEATS ON THE QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL FOR YOUNG FRIENDS AND YOUNG ADULT FRIENDS – Steve spoke about previous work on this that had taken place several years ago with no follow up.

We approved forwarding to the Nominating Council the recommendation and imperative that at least two seats of the Quaker Life Council be reserved for Friends who are in High School and/or who are young adults, between the ages of 14 and 35. We value the gifts, skills and leadership of those who bring lived experience from younger generations to the work of stewarding the spiritual and religious life and wellness of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting through service on the Quaker Life Council.

CHECK IN ON HOW WE ARE FARING POST-ELECTION IN PANDEMIC TIMES – Friends spoke of political and social involvements, recovery from major medical interventions, blessings for the end of 2020, spiritual life in our meetings and families via video conference, and connections across geographies. The coming dark of winter presents spiritual and emotional challenges. We have faith we will make it through and look forward to the spring.

These QLC minutes were read and approved on Dec. 12, 2020.