

2017 Christmas Gathering Minutes

Thursday Business Meeting Agenda 12/28/17

Clerk, Recording Clerk: Eliana Colzani

- *Worship*
- *Review MfWwAtB behavior*
- *Friends approved the agenda*
- **Feedback for the one-day format** – presenter: Hannah
 - Report: In November the Young Friends Program had a one-day event that ran concurrent to the Yearly Meeting's Continuing Sessions (which is when everyone in the YM gets together for one day of business and intergenerational community). It ran from 9AM through 3:30PM (which was when Continuing Sessions ended). In past years we have had a regular weekend-long gathering that runs the same weekend as Continuing Sessions. To give some background, we shortened it for a few reasons: going to join Continuing Sessions always took most of the time and energy of the whole weekend – it's never been a gathering where we could accomplish much community-building or business for Young Friends; One piece of information gleaned from the survey that staff did three years ago was that folks who have never come to a Young Friends event are more likely to come to a shorter event. This one-day format was an opportunity to see if more new people would show up; One impact of the decision to shorten the two Continuing Sessions gatherings for this year was that we were able to add back in Peace Fair to the official offerings of the Young Friends community.
At the end of the one-day gathering the Young Friends didn't do a regular evaluation, so I wanted to offer space for that to happen now, but with attention to the general format of a one-day gathering, as opposed to thinking about the specific activities of that event. Some specific questions:
 - Was it worth coming out for that short a time? Would you prefer an overnight?
 - We did worship sharing first thing. How was that?
 - A friend noted that they enjoyed this format because it allowed the group to bond before the activity
 - In general, our format was a bit looser this time. Young Friends decided how to spend the afternoon. How was that?
 - We didn't spend any time with the adults at Continuing Sessions. How was that?
 - Anything else?
 - A friend noted it was nice to only have one day because it was less of a time commitment
 - A friend shared that they enjoyed the independence of the structure but would have enjoyed spending some time with the greater meeting
 - Friends enjoyed the activity exploring Philadelphia
 - Another friend noted that although they too enjoyed the activity it was difficult to spend the majority of the gathering with a select few rather than the whole of YF
 - A Friend noted that they knew Friends who would be more likely to try a gathering if it were not a weekend
 - A friend felt that there was a rushed atmosphere because of the use of public transportation and walking and that buffer time could be beneficial.
 - Many in the group felt that one day gatherings are beneficial but also noted that the types of gatherings offer different things

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- It was mentioned that the short gatherings are less accessible to far away YFs and could lose some of those members. It was suggested that there could be a short day within a longer gathering or a one night gathering to hit middle ground. It was added that a lot of young Friends culture and tradition are held within the overnight format
- It was noted that it would have been beneficial to have evaluation at the time of the gathering
- **Report on the Youth Programs Sprint III** – presenter: Eliana
 - Report: Youth Sprint III, following Youth Sprints I and II, is tasked with taking in previously collected data and reports and forming it into a mission statement, vision statement, and governance structure for PYM Youth programs. The decisions made will guide the future work and structure of Youth Programs. Both Robert, who serves as our adult Clerk, and myself are currently working on the committee with about 4 other individuals. We've been able to meet in person twice in the past couple months rather than phone conferences and have been able to make a lot of progress.
 - Question
 - A friend appreciated Eliana and Robert's work on behalf of Young Friends.
- *Young Friends approved new minutes*
- **Announcement from NJC on welcoming N-L-L guests** – presenter: Kaise
 - Announcement: NJC gave an introduction of for the Native guest that will be joining us by sharing information to keep in mind when meeting someone new, especially that of another culture.
- **Threshing Session on the Drugs & Alcohol + Tobacco/Smoking Guidelines** – presenter: Eliana
 - Present item: This year the community has started the process of taking on two guidelines a year to re-evaluate their relevance to the community and update them as needed (we intend this to continue indefinitely in the coming years). At the Camp Onas Gathering, Young Friends decided to re-evaluate the Smoking/Tobacco and the No Drugs or Alcohol guidelines together. From the minutes of that Business Meeting, "The tobacco guideline was brought up for consideration due to the observation that fewer teens smoke. Another friend informed the group that the state of New Jersey has made it illegal to smoke under the age of 21, so it could be valuable to evaluate it to make sure the guideline abides by local law. Various friends noted that they feel it should be under No Drugs/Alcohol guideline. It was also noted that it is not always illegal to smoke as a minor... The group approved the tobacco guideline and no drugs/alcohol to be evaluated together next."
Currently these two guidelines read: "**No drugs / alcohol** – if it's an illegal substance outside Young Friends, it's illegal in Young Friends! (This includes marijuana and prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you). **Smoking policy** - Tobacco use is a solitary event. Those who are addicted to nicotine may, during unscheduled time, go outside and use tobacco by themselves, then return to the rest of our community. There is no bumming, borrowing, renting, buying, or selling of tobacco products at a Young Friends Gathering. We do not want Young Friends or adults to smoke or use tobacco products, and we will support them to quit when they are ready, and help them to not use these products at Gatherings. The Young Friends community accepts the responsibility for enforcing this policy."
 - Clerk opened the floor for any who wish to speak to this potential guideline change
 - It was pointed out that the "if it's illegal outside of YF, it's illegal in YF" and Common-sense guideline cover the issue of local law.
 - Another friend noted that many guidelines could be considered common sense and it is not harmful to keep repetitive guidelines

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- It was suggested to add the line “in states where it is legal” after “smoking is a solitary event” because it is illegal to smoke if under the age of 21 in NJ
 - A friend suggested that vaping should be included in the guideline
 - A Friend voiced the opinion that no smoking should be allowed in YFs. It was reasoned that with not allowing it in illegal states, it would be more continuous to not allow it at any gathering. It was also added that if such a change were made, the med kit should be supplied with products to help a nicotine addiction.
 - A contribution was given to the group, informing that native people often use tobacco products as relationship building tools and NJC may want to be part of the consideration to see how this guideline would align with our community goals and outreach
 - A friend shared that they felt people who regularly smoked would not want to attend if cigarettes were prohibited and it would be discouraging to have such a guideline
 - friends suggested that smoking could be continued to support an individual with nicotine addiction but products such as nicotine patches would be provided to help
 - It was suggested that individuals could reach out to facilitators to find a designated space to smoke if needed. This way Yf’s would still “be found.” A FAP later added that this is the current procedure for those who smoke
 - The group was informed that the med kit does currently have resources for those addicted to nicotine
 - It was suggested that the new guideline would include information about local law in the states that PYM gatherings occur in
 - Clerk noted the division between those who feel smoking should be allowed and not allowed and suggested a committee to further write and evaluate the guideline. The following names will join this committee:
 - Rachel D.
 - Arely J.
 - Sarah E.
 - Mary D.
 - Jack D.
 - Kaise C.
- *Friends approved new minutes*
 - **Who serves on what committees this time (for committee time later in the gathering)?**
 - Committee for re-evaluation of addiction guidelines
 - Rachel D.
 - Arely J.
 - Sarah E.
 - Mary D.
 - Jack D.
 - Kaise C.

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- Discernment
 - Madi C.
 - Eliana C.
- Graduation
 - Silvia S.
 - Genevieve B.
- Nurture Committee
 - Simon G.
 - Julia C.
 - Abigail T.
 - Estelle H.
 - Benjamin W.
 - Sophy J.S.
- *Friends approved new minutes*
- **Leading Toward Right Relationship at Annual Sessions** - presenter: Hannah
 - Report: Last year at the Christmas gathering Sandy Boone Murphy and her husband led a workshop / experience for us called “Toward Right Relationship” which shares information about the colonization of this land. There are four people who read parts and two or three people who have other (non-speaking) roles. Sandy and her husband are also part of the First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative, which is supporting faithful and responsible relationship building between Quakers and east coast indigenous peoples. Sandy has proposed that the First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative and Young Friends work together to offer the Toward Right Relationship workshop for adults to take at Annual Sessions this summer. This would probably involve Young Friends reading the parts and perhaps also assisting in some of the non-speaking roles. Young Friends could also be participants in the workshop. So the question is, do Young Friends want to co-lead the Toward Right Relationship workshop with Sandy/ the First Contact Reconciliation Collaborative at Annual Sessions? I hope we can decide this today, but if we end up not feeling ready for that we can return to it at another Business Meeting.
 - The Clerk opened the floor for clarifying questions
 - It was clarified that annual sessions usually occurs at the end of July and the workshop would be open to all of PYM members interested
 - Clerk opened the floor for anyone who wishes to speak to: do YFs want to co-lead TRR at Annual Sessions?
 - Friends showed approval for leading the workshop
- *Friends approved new minutes*
- **Closing worship**

Friday Business Meeting Agenda 12/29/17

- *Worship*

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- *Friends approved the agenda (5-10 minutes)*
- **Introduce Melinda Wenner Bradley** – presenter: Melinda Wenner-Bradley (5-10 minutes)
 - Melinda is the new Youth Engagement Coordinator for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. That means that she coordinates the programs for children and families, middle school Friends, and Young Friends, and collaborates with the program Facilitators to support communities for young people in the Yearly Meeting. The other part of the Youth Engagement Coordinator's work is to support the programs for youth that happen in the local meetings in PYM. Melinda hopes to encourage more connection between the yearly meeting youth programs and how local meetings approach Young Friends being part of their community, so that there is a bridge between what is experienced at weekend retreats and week to week in meetings.

Melinda shared that for her, "coordinate" means both taking care of the logistics of gatherings (registration, communication) and *having care* for programs from ages 0-18. She described the image of a vessel that holds the three programs, and that part of her work is to be listening and in relationship with all the different members of the three program communities -- children, middle schoolers, Young Friends, parents, FAPs, etc -- and looking for ways to best support the spiritual lives and experience of community for all involved. This includes connecting Friends with one another and resources, lifting up people's gifts, and being intentional about supporting the transitions for younger Friends as they move from children's programs to MSF to Young Friends, and on to being Young Adult Friends. In relation to Young Friends, that means that Melinda collaborate with your Facilitators, Hannah and Kody, by being their support person "in the office" at PYM, and she will be present occasionally at your gatherings. Young Friends should be in touch with Melinda for support around attending gatherings (is there something in the planning, registration process, finding transportation that could work better for you?) and if you are interested in bringing new resources for supporting Young Friends to your local meeting, particularly for adults interested in working with young people. Melinda has two teenage children of her own, and taught middle and high school for many years at Westtown School and Friends Academy in NY.
 - Questions
 - A friend asked who would have the responsibility of digital coordination and registration. It was answered that some work will be collaborative, but most administrative work will be done by the coordinator to give facilitators more time to focus on program
- *Friends approved the minutes thus far*
- **POSSIBLY: D&A&T/S com'tee propose a guideline for approval?** – presenter: Mary D. (5-20)
 - Report: The committee brought forward a proposed amendment to the guideline that would add “we ask that the friends who smoke keep in mind state smoking regulations and laws” to the smoking policy after the first sentence. The committee choose to add said sentence rather than specific state laws to keep guidelines short and decided to not ban smoking to keep an inclusive environment
 - Clarifying questions
 - Clerk asked friends on their thoughts of the language
 - “follow”
 - “know and abide by” so it is the responsibility of the individual smoker to know law
 - A member of the original committee
 - It was suggested to add a hyperlink onto the digital guidelines to resources about state laws so that Friends could make sure they are not in violation of laws and YF guidelines. It was suggested to make a google doc or other page where information about all four states PYM reaches is included in. Friends

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determined: D&A&T/S would do this work along with coordinators and facilitators as a continuation of previous work

- **Friends approved of “we ask that the friends who smoke know and abide by state smoking regulations and laws” after “...tobacco products at a Youth Friends Gathering” with a hyperlink to further information about state smoking regulations and laws.**
- **Announcement – Hannah and Kody are going to be co-Facilitators starting in 2018** - Hannah
 - Report: I’ve accepted a full-time job that starts in the beginning of January. I’m really excited about it! In order to help keep things running as smoothly as possible in the Young Friends community while having a full time job on my plate, Kody is going to be co-Facilitating with me, instead of being the Program Assistant. Our plan is to switch off every other gathering who is doing most of the program planning. That way, we’ll both have more time leading up to each event to get the plans in place. So, hooray and congratulations to Kody!
 - It was clarified that Hannah and Kody will still both be at each gathering even though one will be leading.
- **Report from Kody on his annual review** – presenter: Kody
 - Report:
 - What’s going well? Most things. He feels there is a good “groove” established along with norms in the community. Good collaboration between Hannah and Kody and healthy conversations that grow on strengths
 - What have I learned? To drive! That one day gatherings can happen. That Young Friends care about Kody and Hannah and can organize big things without leaders noticing.
 - Opportunities for growth: promotion to co-facilitator. New room to grow and change how program may grow. Cross fertilization of Christian Peacemaker Teams and other PYM groups. Making sure that adults act appropriately with young people.
 - Assure a healthy relationship with yearly meeting through staffing changes
 - All adults were asked to leave the room for YFs to give feedback
 - YFs felt happy that Kody was grateful for the gift of an afghan.
 - Friends felt appreciative of Kody’s ability to bring in methods and resources from outside work from Christian peace maker groups without imposing his beliefs.
 - General gratitude and appreciation for our facilitators and their ability to welcome and comfort people
- *Friends approved the new minutes before adults returned.*
- **Report from Hannah on her annual review:** presenter: Hannah
 - Report: I had a good annual review. The official format of PYM annual reviews is way more structured and (in my experience) less inviting of reflection and processing from the year than the format that Kody and I use together. Additionally, since I’m not in the office much anymore this annual review was just completed by my supervisor rather than together via an in-person meeting, which is also less reflective, so overall the review (and this summary) are minimal. My good communication and collaboration skills were noted along with general skills in program and logistics planning, and advocacy on behalf of Young Friends’ needs and inclusion in the wider yearly meeting. One weakness that was noted was occasional difficulty cultivating trust and good relationships with parents. Goals from last year were: Maximize Consensual Engagement; Integrate work on our corporate witness on Undoing Racism; Continue recording data and use previous findings to inform decisions; Mind

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capacity; Help forward and specify the new form of community engagement and governance. Most of my goals from the previous year were achieved except for increasing attendance at Young Friends gatherings.

The only goal for this upcoming year is to ensure a smooth staffing transition and a stable Young Friends program in 2018.

- All adults were asked to leave the room for YFs to give feedback
 - A friend noted that they would like to learn more about plans for future parent-facilitator connections.
 - A friend would like to see more specific goals for the future to help both YFs and Hannah evaluate work.
 - Continued appreciation for Hannah was shown. Friends felt she deserves *even more* credit for all the work she has done especially helping with the transition during staff changes when her own role was in question. Friends were impressed by her ability to be unbiased in last year.
- *Friends approved the new minutes before adults return*
- **Announcement from Discernment Committee** – presenter: Eliana (as a representative of both Discernment Committee and Clerking position)
 - Announcement: At this time of year, the community is beginning to consider who the youth clerks will be for next year. As part of this process, Discernment Committee is looking for nominations for clerk. The nomination box is always out and supplied with paper. It's not necessary to add your own name to the nomination, just that of the nominee and position they are being nominated for. From Discernment committee, and my experience as a clerk, we've put together a list of qualities to look for in a clerk.
 - Confident
 - Not-quarrelsome
 - Not holding on to a point of view
 - Not bias
 - Regularly attends gatherings
 - Talks to all groups in community
 - A good listener
 - Patient
 - Ability to discern sense of the Meeting
 - Organized
 - Co-operative
 - Communicative
- *Friends approved the new minutes*
- *Closing worship*