



October 2018

# Minutes & Reports

## Friends Meeting at Cambridge

### Meeting for Business in Worship

September 9, 2018

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Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) gathered in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, September 9, at 1:15 pm. The Meeting was convened by Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk, after a period of silent worship, with 38 people present. The Clerk opened the Meeting by reading quotations from *I Dream a World*, by Langston Hughes (*The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, p. 311).

*I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind—  
Of such I dream, my world!*

**Announcements**

2018-060

We held in the Light the family of member **Patricia Anne (Trish) Hogan**, who passed away on July 5, 2018.

We held in the Light **Nancy Bloom** whose son recently had a serious accident.

We held in the Light **Anna and Ben Ehler**, anticipating the birth of their child.

**Resident Friend** Lorena Boswell announced that Nancy Hewitt and Annalise Cain have been hired as our two new Center Residents. Also, the Ad Hoc Bulletin Board Planning Committee has been making changes in the displays on the walls of the Friends Center. They plan to put a collage of photos in the front entryway. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Lorena.

Greg Woods, Youth Ministries and Education Coordinator announced a **new curriculum** for First Day School. The curriculum is project-based and involves service, activism, Quaker history, the Bible, spiritual and physical journeys. Greg welcomes questions; the curriculum will be a project in progress.

Ian Harrington announced that the annual **International Day of Peace Celebration** will take place from 2:00 to 4:00 pm on September 23. It will take place on Boston Common (near the Park Street MBTA station) unless bad weather forces it to be held in the Church on the Hill, on Beacon Hill. There will be prayers, music, dance, song, face-painting and other children's activities, and speeches about peace.

Betsy Roper announced the **FEMS Poetry Slam** on October 20 and 21. Preliminary Trials on Saturday from 9:00 until 10:00 am and on Sunday from 2:00 until 6:00 pm will be at FMC, co-sponsored by Friends for Racial Justice Committee, followed by Finals on Sunday evening at First Parish UU Church. Zenaida Peterson, former Quaker Voluntary Service Fellow, is the founder of the organization. Betsy emphasized the need for volunteers for two-hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday (contact Betsy at [forj@fmcquaker.org](mailto:forj@fmcquaker.org)), and for hosting teams overnight (contact femslam.com).

Jane Jackson, Treasurer, announced a **generous bequest from the estate of Joan Griscom**. In the previous fiscal year, there was a **generous gift from the family of Joan Borowitz** in her memory.

The Clerk announced a worshipful discussion on how we should handle the portion of Meeting's contributions to New England Yearly Meeting that goes to **Friends United Meeting** (given their personnel policy regarding same-sex marriage) on Sunday, September 30, from 1:15 to 3:15 pm.

**Material Aid and Advocacy Program, Inc. Update**

2018-061

Sara Sue Pennell, for MAAP, announced that the IRS had granted 501(c)(3) status to MAAP, Inc., retroactive to October 2017. She brought the following minute of thanks from the Board:

*The Board of the Material Aid and Advocacy Program minutes its thanks for the Fiscal Sponsorship of Friends Meeting at Cambridge since October of 2017 when we became an independent organization. This made possible serious fundraising, so that MAAP could become a viable program.*

*We are also thankful for the generous support of many individual members of FMC both financially and creatively.*

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*We appreciate the concern and care the Meeting has had for MAAP.*

*Now that MAAP has received its own tax-exempt status as of August 13, 2018, although we no longer need the Fiscal Sponsorship, we hope to continue our close and caring relationship with FMC.*

Sara Sue added that there is space on the MAAP Board; talk with John Bach of the Steering Committee if interested.

The Fall MAAP Tag Sale is on November 16 and 17.

The Clerk recommended that the MAAP Oversight Committee be laid down. Friends approved, with expressions of gratitude to the members of the Oversight Committee, who are Deborah Colgan, Chris Connaire, David White, and Erin Bumgarner. She noted that contributions should be sent directly to MAAP from now on. Friends approved laying down the committee.

### ***Trustees Update***

***2018-062***

David White, Co-Clerk of Trustees Committee, announced that the gutter structure is being replaced on our two buildings. In addition, two projects have been done by volunteers: the new carpeting in room 4 in the First Day School area, and work on the ramp at the back of the Meetinghouse. There are many opportunities for volunteering to work on our buildings and grounds: talk to David White, John Bach, or David Dunphy.

John Bach, in the interest of full disclosure and transparency, spoke to us about problems with people in the Harvard Square area who are homeless; a number of individuals had been storing things behind the Meetinghouse. After sensitive work with the individuals, this problem went away. Alarmingly, a capped hypodermic needle was found, but no longstanding problem has ensued. In addition, for about three weeks a man living in his vehicle on Longfellow Park has been coming to the Friends Center and having conflicts with our staff and others. This morning, September 9, after extensive consultations, John told the individual that, until he approaches the Meeting with plausible plans for reconciliation, he is not welcome here, especially in consideration of our staff and their safety.

### ***Finance Education and Priorities Ad-Hoc Committee Update***

***2018-063***

Ian Harrington reminded us of the three Threshing Sessions that took place in the spring about the future of the Meeting. One recommendation coming out of those sessions was to conduct discussions about financial issues facing the Meeting. As a result, an *ad hoc* planning committee was formed that includes Jan Nisenbaum (Clerk), Joseph Tierney, Lili Schwan-Rosenwald, Ian Harrington, Susan Davies, Rick Talkov, Ariel Maddocks, and Alasdair Post-Quinn with Jane Jackson (Treasurer) and Lorena Boswell (Resident Friend) as consultants. The first results of their planning is a workshop on FMC finances on Sunday, October 7, in the afternoon, followed by two discernment sessions on future priorities, one on Sunday, October 28, in the afternoon, and the other either on Saturday, November 3, or on Sunday, November 4, depending on the resolution of conflicts with other events. *[Subsequent to the Business Meeting in Worship, the November 3 date was chosen.]*

It was asked if there was some way for Friends who need to miss one or more of these events to catch up on what was discussed. The Clerk promised that there would be good notes taken and shared with the community; keep your eyes peeled.

***Nominating Committee Second Reading*****2018-064**

Lili Schwan-Rosenwald, Co-Clerk of Nominating Committee, shared the current list of appointments for Fiscal Year 2019.

Lili also proposed for a second reading and approval Jan Nisenbaum for Trustees Committee and Tom Sander for Fundraising Committee. Friends approved these nominations.

Lili announced three resignations: Peter Zug and Jean Rossner from Fellowship and Outreach Committee, and Jennifer Lawrence from Nominating Committee. From the floor, Friends announced that Marina Rothman had resigned from Ministry and Counsel and Harriet Noyes from Trustees Committee.

Lili told us that there are still several key openings: Assistant Clerk of the Meeting, Nominating Committee (which is now clerked by Lili Schwan-Rosenwald and Jim Hannon) and Fellowship and Outreach Committee.

Holly Lapp, Recorder, reminded us that the Directory contains names of contacts for concern groups. Although Nominating has no responsibility for this, Holly welcomes information from these groups.

***Pope Fund and Fund for Conscience Annual Reports*****2018-065**

David White presented the annual reports of the Pope Fund and of the Fund for Conscience. These annual reports will appear in the October issue of *Minutes and Reports*. Both Funds are under the care of the Trustees Committee, and the current Trustees of the Funds are David White, John Bach, and Harriet Noyes.

The Pope Fund was established in 1801 and provides income that can be used to help Quakers in need or for any other charitable purposes of Friends Meeting at Cambridge. At the end of December 2017, the balance available for grants was \$28,528. During 2016, eight grants were given, totaling \$13,706; in 2017, two grants were given, totaling \$1,600. In the same two years, the fund earned \$6,507 in income.

The Fund for the Support of Conscience was created by FMC in July 1968 to be used for the relief of Friends and others who are in trouble with the law by reason of witnessing to Friends' testimonies. No grants were made from the Fund in 2016 or 2017. The balance of the fund at the end of December 2017 was \$4,256.

David emphasized that all deliberations concerning the two funds are confidential.

***Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group Final Report*****2018-066**

Jennifer Hogue, Clerk of the Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group (BCCG), summarized the Final Report, which emphasizes what the Beneficial Cycle Program was trying to accomplish, what seems to have succeeded, and what remains to be paid attention to.

Friends may read the entire report in the October issue of *Minutes and Reports*; it will also be available elsewhere.

Jennifer proposed three specific recommendations: (1) incorporate the Beneficial Cycle budget into the Meeting's operating budget after fiscal 2019; (2) include in the budget line items of a few thousand dollars each for flexible spending for projects and for the Resident Friend to do outreach and inreach; and (3) lay down the Beneficial Cycle experiment and the BCCG.

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In discussion, Friends commented that we need to balance our budget, and we need to try hard to raise more funds.

It was pointed out that we should not abandon the criteria that the BCCG used to evaluate BC Grant proposals: namely, how does a grant tend to strengthen the community, our relationship with each other and with Spirit, and our efforts for outreach and doing good in the world? It was noted that the grants came through the work of committees and that awareness of these criteria is high in relevant committees. In the interest of keeping up our awareness, perhaps we should have a short discussion at the beginning of each Business Meeting about how our vitality is doing.

A Friend emphasized that gathering concrete data and formulating concrete goals is important as we try to strengthen the Meeting further; we need to know where we are before we can tell what we have accomplished, and where we are in trouble. This is not the only way to make decisions, but it is an important component.

A Friend suggested that we should systematically develop our infrastructure and skills among our volunteers so we can do more for ourselves.

All committees of the Meeting need to continue to consider how their activities affect the vitality of the Meeting. But is this an adequate plan to keep our vitality growing? Do we need some kind of successor group to the BCCG? If so, it may be that the Priorities discussions to occur this fall will lead to a successor group. In addition, it was the thought of the BCCG that the Resident Friend could help to focus grant applications and vitality work of committees and groups of the Meeting.

The clerk suggested that there seems to be resistance to the three specific recommendations without a successor group to the BCCG. She asked: Is the guidance provided by the Resident Friend, the Clerks of the Meeting, and Ministry and Counsel enough? She concluded that the Meeting does not seem to be ready to decide whether or not to approve the recommendations; Friends are asked to please read the report, and to discuss and think about the recommendations.

### ***Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group Recommendation for 2019 Budget***

***2018-067***

Jennifer Hogue, Clerk of the BCCG, presented the Group's budget recommendation for the present fiscal year, which was left ambiguous in the June deliberations on the operating budget. She pointed out that over the last five years Meeting approved \$131,063 more for Beneficial Cycle Program expenses than was actually spent or is already committed to be spent in fiscal 2019. She described three options: (1) to spend the minimum amount for 2019 Beneficial Cycle expenses (continuing staff expenses and grants that Meeting is committed to); (2) to continue Beneficial Cycle spending for this fiscal year at the average level we have done over the last five years; and (3) to provide modest funding for a transition year going from having a separate Beneficial Cycle budget to having a single operating budget. The BCCG recommends the last of these, which amounts to \$56,000 for continuing staff at the present level, and \$7,458 for inreach, outreach, Beneficial Cycle Grants and committee projects. The recommended budget will result in a change in the Beneficial Cycle item in the 2019 budget from \$107,000 for non-staff Beneficial Cycle expenditures to about \$7,500, or a change from a total deficit of \$258,000 to a deficit of \$158,000. Friends approved this budget recommendation.

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The Meeting for Business in Worship adjourned at 3:33 pm, with Friends purposing next to gather in a Meeting for Business in Worship on Sunday, October 14, at 1:15 pm in the Meetinghouse.

Deborah Colgan, Co-Presiding Clerk

David L. Myers, Recording Clerk

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## *Pope Fund Annual Report for 2016 and 2017*

The Pope Fund was established by a gift of one thousand dollars in 1801 by Ebenezer Pope to provide for needy Friends in the Boston area. Later decrees from the Probate Court authorized the use of the entire net income of the Fund to help Friends in need or for other charitable purposes of the Meeting. The Fund is managed as an external trust and we receive just the annual income.

The Trustees of the Pope Fund are responsible for screening loan or grant applications. All discussions and transactions are kept confidential. Anyone may alert the Fund Trustees to another person's need or financial distress, or may urge that person to make direct application. In addition to financial assistance, the Fund Trustees try to work with the recipients and applicants to seek out resources and strategies to ease their needs.

In 2016 eight grants totaling \$13,706 were made from the Fund.

In 2017 two grants totaling \$1,600 were made.

During these two years the Fund received income of \$6,507.

The available Fund balance at the end of December 2017 was \$28,528.

The Fund is under the care of the Trustees Committee and the current Trustees of the Pope Fund are: David White, Clerk; John Bach; and Harriet Noyes.

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## *Fund for Support of Conscience Annual Report for 2016 and 2017*

The Fund for the Support of Conscience was created in July 1968 to be used for the relief of Friends and others who are in trouble with the law by reason of witnessing to Friends' testimonies. The Trustees of this Fund are the same as for the Pope Fund.

No grants were made in 2016 and 2017. The balance of the Fund at the end of December 2017 was \$4,256.

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## *FINAL Report on the Beneficial Cycle Project September 2018*

### **I. Purpose of Beneficial Cycle Experiment and BCCG Assessment Process**

The Beneficial Cycle Program of Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC) was designed to increase the vitality of the Meeting. Begun in June 2013, it has consisted of increased activity, staffing, and funding to support three spheres of Meeting activity: depth of relationships with Spirit and each other; extended systematic outreach and integration of members into the community; and work to benefit community and the world. These aspects of Meeting activity were seen to feed each other and create long-lasting vitality. It was hoped that a healthy and vital Meeting life would attract more financial resources through both a greater number of participants and greater enthusiasm and commitment among longer-term members of the community. (Disappointingly, this hope for increased donations has not yet been realized.) The Beneficial Cycle was considered an experiment in the sense that it supported many different kinds of activities and staffing configurations in order to learn what actually would support an increase in vitality. The guidelines of the program were broad, with the general purpose of trying a broad array of new ideas.

In January 2018 the Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group provided to the Meeting detailed documentation of the development and activities of the Beneficial Cycle Program (*History of the Beneficial Cycle Program of Friends Meeting at Cambridge, January 18, 2018—see Minutes and Reports, February 2018*). The purpose of the current report is to take stock of the Beneficial Cycle's overall effectiveness and what we have learned from the experiment. The information we used for this report comes from several sources. Qualitative data that were systematically collected at three half-day Threshing Sessions ("Discernment on Vitality and Finances") held in April, 2018; these data were transcribed and each section was analyzed by several members of the committee. In addition, we interviewed former staff members who were significantly involved in the development of the Beneficial Cycle. Over the duration of the Beneficial Cycle we were particularly attentive to comments people at Meeting made to us about their sense of life at the Meeting and the success (or not) of particular Beneficial Cycle activities. We also had our own, personal, observations over the five-year period.

Unfortunately, we cannot base our analysis on significant amounts of quantitative data. A survey on participation and attitudes toward the Meeting was administered at the beginning of the period; despite an intention to repeat the exercise after several years had passed, the expected benefits of doing so seemed minimal, especially weighed against other uses of our time and energy. It was not possible to analyze pre-and post-data on such things as Meeting for Worship participation, First Day School attendance, committee involvement, attendance at such activities as Simple Lunch or social witness activities because the Meeting has not systematically recorded such attendance data. We highly recommend that the Meeting develop protocols and procedures for such data collection so that the effectiveness of a variety of Meeting activities can be assessed in the future. Quantitative data on membership, attendance at Meeting for Business in Worship, and financial contributions are available, but, except for increased attendance and vitality at Meeting for Business in Worship, do not show appreciable change.

While we believe that it is appropriate to take stock of the effects of the Beneficial Cycle experiment now, and attempt to do so in this report, we also wonder about the time frame for

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this assessment. Many of the things the Meeting has tried to do over the past five years, like supporting more newcomers to become integrated into the Meeting, or being more assertive in fundraising, may simply take longer to do. We heard many comments from the Threshing Sessions to the effect that the Meeting feels very good right now—a vital, tightly knit, and organized community—and may now be well-positioned to take on some of these tasks. We suggest that our time horizon not be too short when we think of the effects of the Beneficial Cycle experiment.

## **II. Sense of Vitality**

As a committee and as individuals, at the five-year mark, we feel a sense of increased vitality and have heard this same sense from others. Our experience is that we've become a much more tightly connected community; for example, people linger at Simple Lunch, sitting around afterward to talk. We had an incredibly positive response to the health crises of several Friends this summer. Attendance at Meeting for Business in Worship is up.

We've also heard a strong sense that, as a result of the Beneficial Cycle experiment, we're less chaotic and more organized and purposeful as an organization. People at the Threshing Sessions named many activities and aspects of Meeting life when asked where they found vitality in the Meeting. Their responses included worship, spiritual sharing, exploring our testimonies and witnessing to them, and sense of community. The idea that participating in the work of the Meeting was not just providing needed labor but was also a locus of vitality was mentioned several times. They also commented that "Meeting is now in a period that is less contentious, not like several years ago—more of an effort to listen tenderly to each other." "Meeting for Worship feels grounded and gathered more often." "Simple Lunch and Afterthoughts are connecting us more deeply." We did not hear any comments about a sense of stagnation or a decrease in vitality.

Our Resident Friend received this unsolicited email this summer from Beth Collea, member of Wellesley Meeting and the New England Yearly Meeting Religious Education and Outreach Coordinator, who has been thinking and writing about what makes Quaker Meetings vital: "It was wonderful to worship and visit with Friends Meeting at Cambridge yesterday. I think the general vitality of the meeting and the "rootedness" I experienced in the Forum, Meeting for Worship, and Afterthoughts were the best I have ever seen at FMC. I don't have a comprehensive experience, but that is what I sensed. I know a lot of prayer, Grace and hard work went into that growth and maturing over many years. At the least, it means that you have a strong jumping off place for the next work to be done—like the Curriculum Redesign. . . ." This is a very encouraging perspective.

## **III. A Focus on Staffing**

Over the past five years, the Meeting has put most of the focus and expenditure of our Beneficial Cycle experiment into increasing our staffing with the goal of improving communication, continuity, and stability in order that the many parts of our community work together better and draw more people in. Traditionally, Quaker Meetings are run by volunteers with paid staff being the exception rather than the norm. At FMC, as in many other churches and nonprofit organizations, we've seen an increase in staffing hours and expenses in recent years. During our Threshing Sessions, we heard explanations for this shift, including less availability of free time in our current economic culture (financial insecurity, materialism, burgeoning communications) and increased demands on educational and religious organizations for personal and family support. There is a yearning for a golden era when

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“church was the center of our lives,” when serving the Meeting was a commitment made by many.

The Design Committee and the Core Working Group envisioned increased staffing during the Beneficial Cycle experiment as primarily low-budget, short-duration internship-type positions. However, our Meeting found it was difficult to attract skilled candidates to part-time positions. With applicants requesting the competitive salaries and benefits the Meeting has consistently felt Spiritual integrity requires, FMC was led to create full-time positions instead.

As part of the Beneficial Cycle experiment, the Resident Friend (RF, formerly Friend in Residence) position was increased from an 80% position to full-time. According to our current RF job description, “With appropriate consultation, the Resident Friend will primarily attend to the administrative needs of the Meeting including staff supervision, fiscal oversight, programmatic activities, communication, spiritual education, pastoral care and outreach.” Besides providing consistency of supervision for our staff, the expanded hours of the Resident Friend position have freed up time for members of Meeting to do other important work and has helped to knit together the efforts of different groups within our community to ensure more effective outcomes.

The vision behind a full-time youth position with a focus on ministry was the revitalization of our family and youth programming. The salary and benefits for a position like this increases our operating budget significantly. At the same time, many Friends believe that attracting families with young children is one of the most important forms of outreach and a critical way to maintain a vital community going forward. (It has been observed that our First Day School is the most racially and ethnically diverse part of our Meeting community.) Some Friends wonder how we will evaluate the success of this investment, and how long it will take to achieve significant results.

Having paid staff is seen by many as important to continuity, reliability, wide overview of the activities of the Meeting, communication between groups, and skills volunteers do not always provide. Staff can free up people to do spiritual development and care for one another. Volunteers can be hard to come by and need to be trained, supervised, coordinated, and supported.

On the other hand, hiring devoted, skilled people is a major expense; in addition, it has been argued that having paid people to do the job of running the Meeting may make members of the community less likely to volunteer their time. Some feel that our Testimony of Simplicity implies that we should do for ourselves rather than hiring somebody else to do for us.

Many important functions of our Meeting life are handled by volunteers. Approximately 135 of us serve on committees that care for the life and work of our Meeting. Some of us feel that “having paid staff has allowed individual members/attenders take less responsibility” while others believe that a professional staff can allow us to “do our volunteering profoundly.” A number of members of our community commented on the synergy that occurs with a combination of strong staff and willing volunteers: “volunteers empower staff by providing a strong cadre,” and “staff empowers volunteers by organizing work.” Because staffing is such a large part of our overall budget, many people see this as a natural place to cut spending. There is not unity about this, however. We have heard many voices expressing how vital our staff is to our continuing sense of vitality and ability to grow. These Friends tend to prefer a focus on increasing donations and fundraising rather than cutting spending.

#### IV. A Focus on Outreach

The Design Committee, in its proposal for a Beneficial Cycle Program, included outreach to the greater community as an important aspect of any attempt to increase the vitality of the Meeting. As a result, a number of individuals, committees, and working groups have tried different things. The Communications Umbrella Group designed a print ad campaign in small local newspapers, improved the website and modernized the Newsletter, among other efforts. Fellowship and Outreach Committee worked on the consistency of welcoming and following up with newcomers, and designed pins and bumper stickers. The Resident Friend made significant outreach to Young Adult Friends in conjunction with a YAF Coordinator. The Youth Ministries and Education Coordinator does outreach to youth and families.

Witness activities are an important means of outreach among people with similar values to Quakers; there is a sense that recently such activities have been more consistently and effectively communicated to the Meeting community.

A major component of the Design Committee's budget proposed to the Meeting was a category of Beneficial Cycle Grants, intended to stimulate Friends to creative thinking without having to worry about funding. The Beneficial Cycle Coordinating Group processed, and the Meeting approved, grants for Meeting Friends to attend white privilege conferences; to carry out International Day of Peace celebrations; to pay for workshops on LGBT+ issues; to implement a new pastoral care model at FMC; to participate in an NEYM program on worship, faith, and faithfulness; to help fund the interfaith sanctuary project; to buy a freezer to enhance our pastoral care and Sunday lunch programs; to strengthen welcome of YAFs by hiring a part-time coordinator; and to help pay for a weekly drumming circle for members of our FMC and outside communities.

There have not been the major efforts in outreach that the Design Committee envisioned. The Communications Umbrella Group's ad campaign was the most expensive effort, and while it may very well have acquainted some people in the surrounding community about Quakers and the existence of FMC, it did not noticeably increase the number of newcomers who arrived at our doors. Likewise, the Beneficial Cycle grant applications involved fairly small numbers of people and small amounts of money; the designers of the Beneficial Cycle program envisioned something grander and more exciting. Nevertheless, we feel that the Meeting has learned things from the outreach efforts it has done; the ground, perhaps, has been prepared.

#### V. What We Think We Have Learned through the Beneficial Cycle Experiment

##### *Experimentations in Vitality*

Often, the stirrings of increased vitality have happened without significant expenditures of money for the projects (although increased staffing—which of course involves increased spending—has helped them along). Nevertheless, the availability of relatively small amounts of money coupled with administrative support can smooth the way to getting vitality-building projects going. There haven't been nearly as many applications for grants as we expected and no ideas requiring large grants were seriously proposed during the Beneficial Cycle experiment. The surprising learning is that small inexpensive efforts can make a big difference.

Also surprising is that positive changes in vitality have occurred without central planning. Seeing how positive change can happen stimulates community members to initiate other projects. People have been more free to come up with ideas and implement them. Simply

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paying attention (a form of prayer, after all) to the needs of the community can cause things to improve. From the Threshing Sessions, which were attended by a large number of diverse Friends, we've learned that people will eagerly come together to share what's important to them.

#### *Staff*

Both redesigning the roles of Resident Friend and Youth Ministries and Education Coordinator and making them full-time has had a positive impact. With consistent full-time professional staff, we are benefiting from increased effectiveness, coordination, consistency, communication, and energy levels. There are fewer gaps and fewer forgotten ideas. The function of staff may be to help us pay attention by taking distracting tasks off our hands. We have also benefited from their overview of all of our vitality efforts.

#### *Finances*

In designing the Beneficial Cycle, while we were prayerfully grounding ourselves in Spirit, we also had hoped that it would bring in more people and more money. The expectation among many of us was that if we increased the sense of community and spirituality at FMC, then contributions would increase. While in many ways we have experienced increased vitality (though in other ways we still have much work to do), the assumption that money will follow is not yet happening.

#### *Timing*

Some feel that we have over-reached. *"We're unwilling to say no to new ideas/projects or to set goals for and evaluate them, leading to budget creep."* Others have suggested that we haven't given it enough time: *"we may be well-positioned with this stronger community and new learning to tackle the financial problem."* What we can say is that changing the culture of an organization takes a long time. While we may have taken less of a step than we thought that we would, we don't know how long it takes for things to bear fruit. We also don't know where Spirit/God is leading us. After the Beneficial Cycle project, we're more organized and purposeful. We haven't raised the money we need and there is room to deepen our spirituality. Perhaps we're more ready to do those things.

#### *More to do*

How do we continue to have meaningful conversations about how we are led as a community, and where else do we need to put our attention? Despite a perceived increase in vitality and growing excitement at FMC, there are many aspects of vitality that will require more, and sustained, attention: welcoming of newcomers and keeping them interested in coming back; learning how to communicate with everyone in the Meeting community so that they will be aware of and can contribute to our discernment; supporting spiritual formation and deepening our identity as Quakers; paying attention to who feels included and who feels isolated and adjusting our practices and structures accordingly; keeping guidance by Spirit/God central to our community life; achieving financial sustainability; understanding what vitality really is in the context of Meeting (many activities, depth of worship, growth in attendance, membership or contributions, etc.?).

Another concern that has been raised is that we haven't done a good job of keeping records of things like attendance. While we have lots of qualitative data, the lack of concrete numbers in a number of areas over the past five years makes it more difficult to assess how much things have changed. We have no baseline to which we can compare where we are now.

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We need to keep in front of us a number of queries as we move forward: How do we balance aspects of our life together: staff work and volunteer work; expenditures and income; standing committees and *ad hoc* groups? How can we encourage corporate confidence that we all do what we can, trusting that if one person is devoting time and money to the Meeting, then other people will join them and do their share; while at the same time understanding we each give what we can based on our life circumstances? How do we continue our achieved vitality and support a culture of experimentation?

## **VI. General Recommendations**

- Maintain our attention on youth and young families.
- Keep a Resident Friend who can facilitate and support our efforts to grow and change.
- Keep developing fundraising (and education about what it costs to have the Meeting we love and value).
- Improve communication with all parts of the community.
- Maintain constant attention to outreach.
- Pay constant attention to how we are with newcomers.
- Be led by the Spirit in all things.

## **VII. Specific Recommendations**

- The division of the FMC operational budget into Beneficial Cycle and non-Beneficial Cycle items has led to much confusion and made planning difficult. We feel it is important to eliminate the Beneficial Cycle categories from all future operating budgets (from fiscal year 2020 on).
  - The projects that Beneficial Cycle has funded show that FMC's vitality benefits from having a process to make such projects possible. We suggest providing two funds in this year's and future years' budgets—one for projects undertaken by the Resident Friend (inreach/outreach), the other for projects proposed by committees, working groups, and interest groups and approved by the Meeting (in lieu of grants).
  - We feel the Beneficial Cycle experiment has been completed. We should incorporate the parts of Beneficial Cycle we want to keep into regular Meeting activity and lay down the experiment and the committee that has been administering it.
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## Friends Meeting at Cambridge

Return Service Requested

### Meetings for Worship at FMC

#### 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge

Sundays 10:30 am  
5:00 pm  
Wednesdays 8:30 am to 10 am

#### South Shore Preparative Meeting

155 Washington St. (Rt. 53), Pembroke  
Sundays 10:00 am  
Joanne Heffernan  
781-337-9337

#### Worship Group at Brookhaven

1010 Waltham Street, Lexington  
Sundays 10:30 am  
Elisabeth Cotten  
781-862-7578

### Other Nearby Worship Opportunities

#### Acton Friends Meeting,

Contact Clerk, [acton@neym.org](mailto:acton@neym.org)

#### Amesbury Monthly Meeting, 120 Friend St., Amesbury

Sundays 10:00 am

#### Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, 6 Chestnut St., Boston

Sundays 10:30 am

#### Cambridge Friends School, 5 Cadbury Rd., Cambridge

Tuesdays 8:30 to 9:00 am

#### Framingham Friends Meeting, 841 Edmands Rd., Framingham

Sundays 10:00 am

#### Fresh Pond Monthly Meeting, CFS Cambridge

Sundays 10:00 am

#### Lawrence Monthly Meeting, 15 Forest St., Methuen

Sundays 6:30 pm

#### Nashoba Worship Group, [nashobaquakers@gmail.com](mailto:nashobaquakers@gmail.com)

Sundays 10:30 am

#### North Shore Monthly Meeting, 74 Hart St., Beverly Farms

Sundays 10:00 am

#### Wellesley Friends Meeting, 26 Benvenue St., Wellesley

Sundays 10:30 am