

Orlando Friends Meeting

Seventh Month Minutes 2014

Attending: Tom Ensign, Frances Stacey, Miquel Adams, Stephanie Preston, Mary Ellen Meagher, Tom Gottshalk, Vicki Carlie, Sandi Illardi, Minerva Glidden, Chris Laning, Kate Joseph

Meeting opened from the silence

Miquel Adams presented a request to use the Meetinghouse.

01.07.14 Project to end the New Jim Crow is approved to use the Meetinghouse on July 20, 2014, and for their meeting in August as available.

Clerks Report (attached)

The Clerk read the attached Clerk's report to Meeting for Business

After some discussion and discernment, Meeting approved the following minutes:

02.07.14

Meeting delegates unto itself the entire process of forming a Meeting corporation.

03.07.14

Meeting names Vicki Carlie and Ed Chew as the Representatives of Meeting to work with Charles Cramer (attorney) to complete the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the Meeting Corporation, and to bring these documents to Meeting for Business for decision.

04.07.14

Meeting approves the Clerk to work with Nominating Committee, in its capacity and, Ed Chew as Trustee to determine the schedule and process to notice and conduct a meeting of the Incorporated Trustees. The purpose of this Corporate Meeting shall be to approve new officers as may be recommended by Nominating Committee for the Incorporated Trustees and other such business of the Incorporated Trustees as appropriately noticed.

05.07.14

Meeting approves setting up an Ad-Hoc Financial Planning Committee to review the assets and structure of the Meeting's endowment with concern for its management to support the Meeting.

06.07.14

Meeting delegates to nominating committee the process of nominating members to the Ad-Hoc Financial Planning Committee to be approved by minute at MFB.

Meeting closed in Silence

Faithfully submitted,

Bill Carlie, Clerk

Clerk's Report

7th Month 2014

At the request of members of the Trustees, the Clerk began attending all Trustee committee meetings in late 2013. Since that time the Clerk has consulted with members of Worship and Ministry Committee, Care and Community Committee, and Nominating Committee. I have also met with the members of the Trustees individually and in small groups. The initial intent was to assist to resolve a conflict among the members of the committee. This conflict in essence remains unresolved.

After consultation with Care and Community and Worship and Ministry committee, and in consideration of Dean Engstrom's declining health, the intent of my participation was modified toward seeking unity or at least an agreement on a path toward releasing Dean from further responsibility for this work and to facilitate the Meeting's assumption of responsibility for this work. No unity or agreement has been reached. No part of the work has been turned over to the other members of the committee and there is no agreement or plan to turn any part of it over in the future to the other members of the committee as currently composed.

It is my sense that the impasse here is complete. I find that the rift between the Trustees Clerk (Dean) and the remaining membership to be a gulf too large to bridge in the context of doing this work. The lack of unity and trust has rendered the committee incapable of carrying forward business in the manner of Friends. This conclusion is not a disparagement of any member of the committee as a Friend, it is just that in the context of this committee as currently composed and the given the work it is charged to do, these Friends cannot currently and are very unlikely to find unity on how to proceed.

In the context of any other Committee of Meeting, it would fall to the Clerk at this point to simply recommend that the particular committee be laid down. In this case however, the Trustees are the legally incorporated entity that enables the Meeting to own and manage funds as well as property, Cisney House in particular. The long and short of it is that this committee cannot be summarily laid down at this time. A further complication lies both in Florida Law and our own articles of incorporation and bylaws which appear to require a properly noticed meeting of the corporation to elect new officers (Trustees).

Trustees currently manage, at their entire discretion, Cisney House (with professional assistance) and an investment portfolio recently valued at 2.25 million dollars. While 30 years ago, the Trustees managed the investment funds, it was a far smaller fund then and all decisions about moving assets were brought to Meeting for Business. Meeting delegated the management of Cisney House to the Trustees about 20 years ago, prior to that time all management decisions for Cisney House were handled by a "Cisney House Management Committee" and brought to Meeting for Business. In short, while the Trustees cannot be laid down at this time legally, the amount and type of work delegated to Trustees and the extent of independent decision making authority granted to Trustees is potentially subject to change.

This background stated the Clerk has queries for Friends to consider:

Without regard to the specific Members selected, is it consistent with Friends Practice and a reasonable concern for the Spiritual care for our Members to task a small group of Friends with discretionary decision making authority over and responsibility for this endowment?

Much of the work has been delegated to Trustees over time as it was seen as too complex and onerous to regularly bring to Meeting for Business. Should the Meeting generally be engaged in business that is too complex to bring to Meeting for Business?

How do we move forward in a manner that speaks to how we value each other's time and our commitment to the Testimony to Simplicity?

Recommendations

(Immediate – today)

As this is the focus of the current conflict within Trustees, Meeting should delegate unto itself the entire process of forming a Meeting corporation.

Meeting should name Vicki Carlie and Ed Chew specifically as the representatives of Meeting to work with Charles Cramer (attorney) to complete the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for the Meeting corporation, and to bring these documents to Meeting for Business for decision. (No intermediate step requiring a recommendation from Trustees would be involved)

(Near term)

Meeting should consider holding a meeting of the corporation to appoint new officers. This would normally occur with approval of Meeting nominations, typically in first or second month 2015. It seems well advised in this case to call a special meeting of the corporation (held at Meeting for Business) and move forward at an earlier date.

(Longer term)

Meeting form an Ad-Hoc financial planning committee to review and study the entire endowment to determine how to move forward in a manner that best serves the interests of the Meeting Community.

In this planning process, Meeting should consider carefully and likely restrict sharply the extent of business that is delegated away from Meeting for Business.

