

Annapolis Friends Monthly Meeting (AFM)
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business (MfW wAtB)
5th Month, 3rd Day, 2020
(05/03/2020)
Meeting Minutes
Approved 06/07/2020

Note: The MfW wAtB was conducted using Zoom.

Present: Martha B. (clerk), Ellen M. (recording clerk), Julie R (Zoom host), Carl B. (Zoom co-host), Wes J., Barb T., Phil C., Jean C., Phillis S., Sky E., Nan E., Ruth S., Carl B., Jack L., Mary B., Dorothy W., Ria H., Carin K., Jack H., Karen C., Peter M., Sylvia O., Larry M., Nancy Jo S., Patricia R, Marcia O., Jeanne W., Margaret C., Will C., Pat S., Kim F., and Lee L.

9:00 am Opening: We began with centering silent worship followed by the clerk welcoming all. A roll call was conducted to allow everyone in attendance to know who was present, especially for those who were using a phone without video. The 5th Month Queries from Baltimore Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice (revised 2001) were displayed on the screen at the start of the meeting and read for those on the phone. The clerk shared her screen to show the agenda and read the agenda aloud. Instructions for ways to raise your hand both physically and electronically were shared.

Agenda Items:

1. 4th Month MfW wAtB Meeting Minutes Review & Approve

- a. The meeting minutes were approved from the previous meeting held on 04/05/2020. See the attached.

2. "Virtual" Meeting Presence Update

- a. The clerk presented an update as to AFM's use of Zoom during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order and that the clerks of committees at AFM reached unity in that AFM will continue with virtual meetings only using Zoom through May 31, 2020, at least. There are four people who can schedule a Zoom meeting and Friends were encouraged to contact Ellen M., Carl B., Julie R., or Martha B. with any requests for AFM-related Zoom meetings or events. After the stay-at-home order is lifted, AFM expects to offer "hybrid" meetings and events by continuing with Zoom even when in-person gatherings at the meetinghouse are resumed. Social distancing and other recommendations from the health officials will be followed. Meeting House & Land is thinking about options for scheduling extra cleanings and revised guidelines as to the "care of the meeting" responsibilities. On the upside, the Zoom meetings have afforded F/friends to see each other at great distances.
 - i. A Friend expressed appreciation that those who live far away are finding Zoom to be a wonderful thing.
 - ii. A Friend expressed that he has enjoyed being more connected and is appreciative for all the work and organizing. It allows him to not deal with the traffic.

3. AFM Change Group:

- a. On behalf of the AFM Change Group, Phil C. presented the final version of the "Declaration as an Anti-Racist Faith Community" for AFM (The AFM Declaration). The final version was also emailed to the AFM Announce List prior to the 5th month MfW wAtB. The minute is intended to be a living document that will help guide AFM when making decisions, any

decision, to make for a more just world. This is intended to be an ongoing discussion. Although the Meeting embraced the Minute itself in March, the Change group requested and received approval to adopt the full document. See the attached.

- i. Three changes were made and are highlighted in the attachment.
 1. The whole quote was added to the background section.
 2. The terminology was adjusted, so that the word “slave” was removed and “enslaved people” was used.
 3. The recommended actions section was changed to emphasize that our own behavior needs to be an example for others.
- ii. In support of our Declaration, Phil requested that F/friends provide recommendations for contractors who are African-American or minority owned. Meeting House and Land has several projects that will need to be done in the near future, including the removal of two trees, replacing the floor and other contract work.
 1. A Friend recommended checking with St. Philip’s church; however, AFM has already contacted St. Philips. In addition, other organizations beyond St. Philips have been contacted for referral recommendations to MH&L.
 2. On behalf of MH&L, Kim F. reported on their successful efforts to obtain referrals. Kim informed the Meeting that there are several dead trees which will require removal in the near future and emphasized that the contractors for the tree removals must be a licensed tree expert in Maryland.

4. Pastoral Care (PC) Committee: On behalf of Pastoral Care, Barb T. presented the following three reports.

- a. Memorial Minute: read the Memorial Minute for Dorothy “Dottie” Kinsman Brown who passed away peacefully on March 27, 2020, just shy of her 99th birthday. Her involvement with AFM is noted in the attached memorial minute.
 - i. Several Friends expressed their love, fond memories, and respect for Dottie in their shared experiences, including the work at the Lighthouse and other interactions.
- b. Family Zoom Fun Evening: An inquiry of level of interest was requested of the AFM community with regards to enjoying a pleasant evening on Zoom of Check-In, Show & Tell, and/or a general chat session. This effort is in response to people who may be challenged by the longtime of social isolation, especially for people who live alone. Barb will be sending an inquiry by email. Friends can contact Barb with regards to interest, proposed activities and other suggestions.
- c. In Case of Emergencies Questionnaire: PC is working on a questionnaire that could help Friends in the case of an emergency with contact information and the like. If there is an emergency or a person would pass, what would AFM do or help with? PC would like to be a reliable source in the course of a F/friend’s emergency. More information will be coming in the future.

5. Zoom Break: The clerk suggested that we take break for 3 or 4 minutes to prevent Zoom-fatigue and Friends were most appreciative for the opportunity to stretch and look away from the screens.

6. Peace & Social Concerns (P&SC) Committee: On behalf of P&SC, Phil C presented the following.

- a. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Priorities: Based on input during the April MfW wAtB, changes were made to the preferred priorities and the list was submitted to FCNL from the P&SC. Friends are welcome to submit their suggested priorities individually. Appreciation for Friends suggestions was expressed. See the attachment.

- b. Drone Minute Follow-up: A suggested action from the Minute focused on lawmakers. To that end, P&SC drafted a letter on behalf of AFM to be sent to Congress people in lieu of the original suggestion to send a Letter to the Editor. The letter was read so that all participants could hear the content. P&SC asked for Meeting's approval to have the letter sent on behalf of AFM. See the attachment.
 - i. Friends expressed appreciation for P&SC's efforts and also provided some suggested improvements with regards to removing the first-person position and the reference to timing.
 - ii. A Friend suggested that the letter be submitted to newspapers as well.
 - iii. The Meeting was in unity and approved the letter to Congress.
- c. Emergent Concerns Fund: A total of \$500 was disbursed this past month: donations to Lighthouse (\$250) and Maryland Food Bank (\$250). In addition, the annual ACT (Anne Arundel Connecting Together) dues were paid. Given the current needs in our community, P&SC would like to disburse additional funds. Friends were requested to provide specific organizations and specific dollar amounts.
 - i. Friends heartily agreed with the P&SC work and suggested monies be sent to ACT's Feed Anne Arundel (<https://www.actiaf.org/feed-anne-arundel>) and Anne Arundel County food bank.
 - ii. A Friend suggested that \$2,000 be approved by Meeting for P&SC to distribute as they see fit to local food distribution organizations. On behalf of S&F, Wes J agreed with the approval of the \$2,000 at this time.
 - iii. The Treasurer informed Meeting that the available funds in the check book have dwindled down and need to be distributed judiciously.
 - iv. Meeting was in unity and approved \$2,000 to be distributed by Meeting for P&SC to food distribution organizations that they saw as worthy of the donations.

7. Stewardship & Finance (S&F) Committee: On behalf of S&F, Wes J presented the following:
- a. As previously agreed at Meeting, AFM cannot be a passthrough for special donations, such as to the Lighthouse. Friends were encouraged to send funds directly to their special interests.
 - b. Annual AFM Contribution Letter will be going out in the mail soon and we rely on the accuracy of the directory. The mailing will include a detailed summary of methods for giving and a copy of the 2020 budget. The purpose of the letter is to ask Friends for contributions.
 - c. AFM Directory is in the process of being updated and each Friend is requested to sign into the website (<https://internal.annapolisfriends.org/member-directory/>) to verify their contact information, especially their physical address. Changes can be emailed to Wes J at wesjordan@comcast.net with Barb T, Karen C, and Margaret H on copy. An email will be sent out with this information and a request that Friends review their contact information on the online directory.
 - d. Based on a request from Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM), AFM sent the annual Apportionment funds to BYM early this year, so as to assist with BYM's financial challenges.
 - e. Appreciation was expressed for Sheryl G and all of her hard work behind the scenes with renters, refunds, and website/directory improvement work.

Closing: AFM MfW wAtB ended with centering silence. The plan for the Meeting minutes was for the Recording clerk to send the draft meeting minutes to the Announce List, so that Friends can review the draft minutes and provide feedback. The minutes will be approved at the beginning of the next MfW wAtB.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M., Recording Clerk

ATTACHMENTS:

- Meeting Minutes (approved) from 4th month MfW wAtB
- Declaration as an Anti-Racist Faith Community - Minute, and Queries
- Memorial Minute for Dorothy Brown
- FCNL Priorities from P&SC (final)
- Letter to Congress with regards to the AFM Declaration Minute against Drone Use

Declaration as an Anti-Racist Faith Community - Minute, and Queries adopted by Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) on 4/ 5 / 20 [8th draft]

Background

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one, whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.” - statement of George Fox - 1656.

Earliest Quakers resolved to see “that of God” in others and to live their beliefs including our testimony of equality. Yet, despite our own history of persecution, many Quakers over generations joined in buying and selling **enslaved people** before reaching clearness to seek abolition, education and other **human** rights.

Today, many Friends still benefit from systems that permit lesser educational and economic opportunities for nonwhites, *de facto* racial bias in law enforcement, and other routine discrimination in daily life. So, our faith again asks Friends to answer the Biblical call to “love thy neighbors” as ourselves.

Simply “addressing racism” is too weak. We must immerse ourselves in this concern and act. Our responses must kindly, but explicitly, acknowledge, illustrate, correct, and heal this infection that too often weakens social ties and effective citizenship. To do this, we must be authentic, logical, and empathetic.

We are encouraged by a practice adopted by Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM), Pendle Hill, and other groups to vet each of our decisions and actions using queries based on our Quaker practice.

Minute and queries

Annapolis Friends are called on an ongoing basis to hold ourselves accountable, individually and collectively, in our decisions and practices, our actions and inaction.

Friends are urged to use queries for this purpose. For example:

1. To place our decisions in context, how do we hear the voices and include the concerns of our neighbors in our decisions and actions? Do our assumptions and stereotypes, privilege and assigned social-status impede our efforts to be in community with our neighbors?
2. To consider the impact of our decisions, how might our decisions or practices promote fairness and inclusion of those harmed by racist behavior or systems?
3. To offer a model, how do our decisions or practices fulfill our intention to be an anti-racist faith community? Do they enable us to “let our lives speak” and to be more welcoming?

Recommended actions

Friends recognize that we cannot fully understand experiences of those we do not know. Therefore, we are called to “**be patterns and examples**” so that we can “walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone.” AFM’s Change Group recommends that we adopt this Declaration as a living document that later may be changed and may be part of our learning process. The Change Group also recommends as examples that, individually and as a Meeting, we:

-Make it our custom regularly to seek visits with our African-American neighbors and others we perceive as different in their faith communities and elsewhere to listen and understand their lives and their concerns;

-Invite our neighbors, regardless of race, origin or class, to share our friendship and our communities as they are led; and

-Seek and adopt ways we can act to end racism and other harmful-isms, to undo prejudices, and to make our communities more inclusive, diverse and whole.

Memorial Minute for Dorothy Kinsman Brown
Annapolis Friends Meeting
Approved April 19, 2020

Dorothy Kinsman Brown passed away peacefully on March 27, 2020, just shy of her 99th birthday. She had lived at Collington Continuing Care Community in Mitchellville, MD, since 1995. Prior to moving to Mitchellville, Dottie lived in Riva, MD. She was the wife of Blair Kinsman, and later Wendell Brown.

She was born in 1921 in Lexington, VA, Dorothy Margaret Lewis. She graduated from Oberlin College and served in the Red Cross during the Korean War. She settled in Riva, MD, where she pursued a career as a free-lance journalist. Among other writings, she produced a novel.

Dottie was active in many aspects of Annapolis Friends Meeting, serving on various committees and always pleasant and welcoming each First Day. As a long-time member of the Wednesday night mid-week worship group, she often hosted the group at her home in Riva overlooking the South River.

She was one of the first volunteers for the Lighthouse shelter and was responsible for getting Annapolis Friends involved. She worked there tirelessly, sometimes staying overnight. And when Quaker Market was outdoors in Edgewater, she helped with its busy one-day set up and take down.

Dottie was a great lover of the arts and cats, a boater, volunteered for many causes and was a formidable political conversationalist. She headed an ad hoc group on issues, options and resources on death and dying.

She was a gracious, kind and generous woman.

FCNL priorities - seven (7) x 30 words - survey due 4/10/20 5/1/20:

(NOT NECESSARILY IN PRIORITY ORDER - FOLLOWING FCNL “WORLD WE SEEK”)

- 1) U.S. policies on climate change, immigration reform, mass incarceration, racial and economic justice, and international cooperation for world peace each urgently require fundamental changes, plus better pandemic health services.
- 2) Climate change and environmental degradation trigger widespread poverty and migration. The U.S. again must lead international efforts to reverse these trends before it is too late for our children.
- 3) Immigrants, historically and economically, have made the U.S. great. A legal pathway to citizenship, rather than inhumane detention, should be offered to “Dreamers,” refugees, migrant workforce, and their families.
- 4) U.S. diplomacy & international enforcement of human rights, economic development, & nonviolent change (e.g., International Criminal Court) are needed, not U.S. Presidents’ undeclared wars via drones and other weaponry.
- 5) U.S. mass incarceration and racial oppression should be addressed by marijuana decriminalization and other new, community-focused public health paradigm for policing and corrections.
- 6) Extreme concentration of wealth among few individuals and large corporations threatens U.S. democracy. Citizens’ United should be repealed with requirements that any corporate political contributions be regulated or published.
- 7) U.S. individuals, families, communities, businesses and governments must respond to our ongoing racial, religious and social divides with “truth and reconciliation,” studying reparations and win-win resource allocation.

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Additional comment:

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not revise our priorities but note that there is overlap with other areas of concern including racial & economic disparities, the circumstances of mass incarceration, and the need for international cooperation and assistance to immigrants & refugees. An equitable and caring response to the pandemic should pervade our ongoing concerns.

Process:

We wish you good luck in sorting this out.

We know that FCNL, with advocacy teams, has picked one priority per year. We suggest that, state by state, there may be reasons that Friends may want to select other or additional ones.

We hope that FCNL will find a process to collaborate with the now-developing Quaker Committees on State Legislation (by various names).



Annapolis Friends Meeting
351 Dubois Road
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Friday, April 24, 2020

Re: Lethal military drones & other aggression without declaration of war

Dear _____ -

Some mistakenly see the use of drones and remote military attacks as a low cost – human and financial – alternative to war. Although COVID-19 measures currently occupy much of Congress' and the public's attention, I write on behalf of Annapolis Friends (Quaker) Meeting to urge that you not lose sight of the important efforts to prevent the outbreak of war.

On January 3, 2020, the U.S. used a lethal drone to assassinate Qasem Soleimani, head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and reputedly one of the most popular leaders in that nation—among others killed in the same attack. Iran's surviving leaders promised revenge and, so far, their missiles have injured scores of Americans. This week, the President threatened to “shoot down” any Iranian vessels that “harass” a U.S. vessel in the Persian Gulf.

Drones' lethal use has expanded horrifyingly over the past 30 years: Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump have used them for “targeted killings” in countries where we are not officially at war, such as Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, the Philippines, and now Iraq. How many have we killed? The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) tries to track U.S. drone strikes and their aftermath. By February 4, 2020, BIJ logged 6,876 confirmed U.S. drone strikes since January 2004. It estimates total deaths at 8,459 to 12,105 with civilian deaths between 769 and 1,725 including hundreds of children.

What happens when drones proliferate? Experts report over 50 countries now developing drones and all could acquire armed drones within 10 years. As with the spread of automatic weapons, internet hacking, and other military technology has become inevitable, we foresee that U.S. citizens also may become targets of anonymous and lethal attacks in our own communities.

As with aerial bombing, the intelligence used in targeted killings apparently is often incomplete, unreliable, or just plain wrong. A former State Department official estimates that, for every drone strike, the U.S. generates roughly forty to sixty new enemies.

A problem just as important as the weaponry is the absence of oversight by Congress of the President's use of war powers. There is no declared war against Iran. There is no declared war to authorize killings by drones or otherwise of citizens of Pakistan, Yemen, or Somalia.

Quakers have stood against all wars for more than 350 years. Recognizing that the U.S. Constitution permits Congressionally-declared wars, Annapolis Friends (Quakers) urge you to speak and legislate against any President's first-strike use of nuclear warfare, drone-warfare or any other weaponry that could commence a war without Congressional permission.

Martha Baer
Annapolis Friends - Clerk