

Quaker Earthcare Witness Continuing Counsel Committee
Minutes of Conference Call
2009 December 08

(Approved on 2010 January 30)

Present: David Ciscel, Dick Grossman, Mary Jo Klingel, Hollister Knowlton, Susan Swanstrom, Roy Taylor, Roy Treadway, Rod Zwirner, and Ruah Swennerfelt (*ex officio*).

Beginning of conference call

We started with a moment of silence as we joined the conference call. We reviewed protocols of using Skype. Dick began our sessions with a reading from William Penn: "If we better studied and understood God's creation, this would do a great deal to caution and direct us in our use of it. For how could we find the impudence to abuse the world if we were seeing the great Creator stare us in the face through each and every part of it?"

We approved the agenda.

Approval of 2009 November Continuing Counsel Committee (CCC) Minutes

CCC Minute 2009.12.01 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Minutes of our 2009 November Continuing Counsel Committee Conference Call.

Clerk of the Finance Committee

Rod Zwirner, Clerk of the Nominating Committee, reported that Barbara Williamson has resigned as Clerk of Finance Committee. A new representative to QEW from New York Yearly Meeting, Buffy Curtis, has financial experience at Powell House, and is interested in being considered for Clerk of Finance Committee. She has attended QEW in the past and is known by several members of QEW. We wanted to be sure that she will attend Steering Committee Meetings regularly in the future. **The Nominating Committee is considering her nomination as Clerk of the Finance Committee and will send its recommendation to CCC by email for further consideration and possible approval.**

Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Transition

Dick Grossman reported that he feels he cannot continue as Clerk of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition. Hollister Knowlton has been assisting Dick with the committee. They are both seeking a new clerk of the Committee and hope to have someone to recommend to CCC shortly.

CCC Minute 2009.12.02 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the resignation of Dick Grossman as Clerk of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition and the search for a new Clerk of the Committee.

QEW's Finances and the Result of the End-of-Year appeal

Ruah reported that QEW received more contributions in November 2009 than in most of the last five Novembers; for instance, during the month of November, we received \$6,523 in 2009, compared to \$4,898 in 2008, \$5,732 in 2007, \$6,705 in 2006, and \$3,597 in 2005. **We are waiting to see how we do December, our most important month, before we know how QEW has done financially in the calendar year 2009.**

Special Fund-raising for Members of the Steering Committee

Since it has been two months since the 2009 Fall Steering Committee Meetings in Bellingham, we did

not feel it was still relevant that we contact SC members who did not come to Bellingham for special contributions, although Mary Jo has recently drafted a letter. In fact, many have contributed to QEW. **Rather, we suggested that a letter might be sent to all SC members at the time of registration for the 2010 April SC meetings, reminding SC members to contribute to QEW, especially if they are not able to attend the 2010 April SC meetings.**

Future Annual Steering Committee Meetings

Susan Swanstrom reported that the Outreach Committee proposal at the 2009 QEW Annual Meeting in Bellingham for alternative regional meetings is not finding support, although Roy Treadway did make a proposal for regional groupings of yearly meetings. Instead, support for one national meeting a year seems to be gathering favor. In a December conference call, the Outreach Committee will revisit its proposal made at Bellingham. **If we have just one annual face-to-face meeting, we would need to have considerable time to conduct SC business, but we could also have one or two days for a program at this meeting, possibly interspersed with business. We will need to decide which meeting to have, whether in the Spring (now in Chicago), in the Fall (now in another place around the country), or in conjunction with the Friends General Conference Gathering in the Summer.** Factors to be considered are the ending of our fiscal year in October, availability of public transportation, and access to nature. If we meet face-to-face only once a year, we should consider expanding the CCC to include all committee and working group clerks. We suggested evaluating for a specific number of years the alternative meeting format that we choose.

Planning for the 2010 April Steering Committee Meetings in Chicago

Dick Grossman suggested that the theme of the 2010 April SC Meeting in Chicago be based on the book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver. One of the authors, possibly Geoffrey Garver, might be invited to be a speaker at the meeting. While the Chicago meetings have not had a theme and have focused mostly on business, we have often had special times for broader consideration of issues or spiritual matters important to us. Using a theme for a year for QEW would be a good idea and would be a possible way to enhance QEW's outreach.

We also considered whether to start the Chicago 2010 Steering Committee Meeting with a two hour long worship sharing on the topic: "What is the Purpose of Quaker Earthcare Witness?" We suggested that Friday morning, not Thursday night, would be the best time to have this worship-sharing. **Alternatively, we wondered if we really need a purpose statement, but rather just a general sense of what our purpose is and what we should be doing. CCC could consider why we have such a difficulty with finding a purpose. We agreed to put this on our 2010 January agenda.**

Program for the 2010 October Annual Gathering in Houston

As the Planning Committee (Bob First, Joe Morris, Ruah Swennerfelt, Hollister Knowlton, and Sally Merrill) for the 2010 October Annual Gathering in Houston began their planning, the question of when to start the program for the gathering – Saturday morning or possibly Saturday afternoon – was raised. Alternatively business could run through Saturday evening, or we could possibly intersperse business and program. The program part of the annual gathering does bring new, interested persons. Mixing the program and business might create confusion about role of business for some persons coming for the first time or such interspersing might make the full work of QEW more apparent. **As part of our consideration of possibly having only one meeting a year, the Houston Gathering will give us a chance to try out how business and program might be balanced. The Houston Planning Committee will continue working out the best arrangements of program and business; concerns and suggestions about the Houston gathering can be shared with Ruah and Hollister.**

QEW List Serve Etiquette

A concern was raised about the large volume of email on QEW Discussions list serve that crosses our computer screens. We agreed that careful discernment is needed of what and how often to send email messages on QEW Discussions. We suggested that the use of QEWNET and other email sources of information for those who are interested. We reminded ourselves of the different uses of the various QEW list serves.

CCC Minute 2009.12.03 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Publications Committee reviewing email etiquette and developing a statement, which will be sent to all users of each QEW list serve, reminding persons of the appropriate and considered use of each list serve.

QEW Sign-Ons

CCC continued to consider how we might approve Sign-Ons. While we might set certain criteria for appropriate Sign-Ons and have one person shepherd the sign-on proposal from start to finish, we were not clear what group of people should make the decision on approval. **While the by-laws say that the FCNL [Support] Working Group should consider “legislative matters or endorsements relating to public policy” (under the functions of the CCC), the FCNL Support WG is focused on national issues, not international or local issues. Alternatively, we might appoint a small group of QEW or CCC members to review Sign-Ons, acting as “elders” or a clearness committee. We will consider this further during our conference call in January.**

Format for the 2010 January 30 conference call.

We will start at 10:00 a.m. EST and plan to finish at 6:00 p.m. EST, breaking for 20 to 30 minutes at 11:40 a.m. EST, 1:40 p.m. EST, and 3:40 p.m. EST. We will use Skype when possible. Everyone should be prepared to be present except during the breaks, including having lunch prepared before the appropriate break. During the breaks, we will either hang up and all be called again or just put our earphones down.

Support for Mary Gilbert in Copenhagen

CCC Minute 2009.12.04 Continuing Counsel Committee approved sending our support to Mary Gilbert during her time at the Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

Close of Call

We closed with a moment of silence and gratitude for the sharing we have had on QEW business and concerns.