

Quaker Earthcare Witness Continuing Counsel Committee
Minutes of Electronic Meeting
2010 February 23

(Approved on 2010 March 23)

Present: David Ciscel, Dick Grossman, Mary Jo Klingel, Susan Swanstrom, Roy Taylor, Roy Treadway, Rod Zwirner, and Ruah Swennerfelt (*ex officio*). Hollister Knowlton joined us from Washington, DC part way through the meeting. Jack Bradin was unable to be with us.

Beginning of the Electronic Meeting

We started with a moment of silence as we joined the electronic meeting. We reviewed the use of Skype by both computer and phone. Mary Jo started the meeting with a reading from Martin Luther King, Jr. We sent our prayers and support to Barbara Letsch, currently undergoing medical treatment.

Approval of the Agenda

The Continuing Counsel Committee approved the agenda which Dick sent out in advance.

Approval of 2010 January Continuing Counsel Committee (CCC) Minutes

CCC Minute 2010.02.01 Continuing Counsel Committee approved the Minutes of our 2010 January 30 Continuing Counsel Committee Conference Call.

Increasing our Use of Worship During Electronic Meetings

We considered how we could increase the feeling of worship during our electronic meetings. **As we have done already, we could start with a reading, have a brief silence after discussion, use silence as approval instead of everyone concurring at once, and rest our egos to get things perfectly right.** Practice with electronic meetings will help us feel more worshipful. Despite the time pressures with our long, packed agendas, we might use large periods of silence before and after decisions in a worship-sharing like setting. We could also prepare for the meeting with individual worship before we meet.

Direction of QEW for Searching for New Staff for QEW

Before the this electronic meeting, CCC agreed to reflect on the direction of QEW and on role of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Staff Transition. We need to develop our faith to overcome our fears of the problems of the earth, particularly as that fear affects us in QEW. We need to worship more. In our purpose, we need to hold true to our own leadings while not being offensive to other Quakers, to be supportive of our beliefs without giving in to others outside our belief. QEW should provide general environmental education for Quakers, a job which has only begun for QEW. QEW needs to be fundamentally spiritually based, embracing all Friends, with some activism, but we need to avoid getting bogged down on what we are about. Crucial to the focus of QEW is to lead Friends in reducing the use of the earth's resources to avoid ecocide. Because of the importance of what we do, we need to increase our fund raising.

As our sharing continued, we realized that what we sought for QEW gave us a clearer sense of what we wanted for a new General Secretary. Most importantly, at this time in QEW's transition, we became clear that QEW needed one General Secretary (with possibly a separate bookkeeper), since we were all QEW's field secretaries. The General Secretary now is the networking hub of QEW, empowering us as representatives to do our work. We should seek to simplify the position of General Secretary, and hope the use of our website will help reduce the General Secretary's work load. We do not need to figure out in detail the direction of QEW in the future but rather we can also look back on our successes in the past. We can let go having everything we are

seeking in a General Secretary set in stone. Rather we need to find a creative person to give direction to QEW and make use of that person's new ideas. The role of Field Secretaries can emerge as needed with a new General Secretary. We need to develop a budget for the new General Secretary position.

We felt that the current job description of the General Secretary was satisfactory with some changes in the use of electronic communications and fund raising. The General Secretary should ship books, not the Publications Co-ordinator. An announcement could go in the next *BeFriending Creation* that Ruah is retiring at the end of 2010 to let people know we are looking for a new General Secretary.

CCC Minute 2010.02.02 Continuing Counsel Committee approved focusing our search for new staff on a General Secretary, with the role of a possible part-time bookkeeper to be worked out in the search process. The current job description of the QEW General Secretary and Office Manager should serve as the basis for the new staff position(s), with modifications concerning the use of electronic communications, fund raising, and shipping of publications to be decided by the Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Transition in consultation with the Clerk by 2010 March 15. The Continuing Counsel Committee will review these modifications to the job description of the General Secretary during its 2010 March electronic meeting and bring its recommendations to the Steering Committee for approval during its 2010 April meetings. A general announcement about the opening for a new General Secretary for QEW should be posted in the 2010 March-April issue of *BeFriending Creation*.

Nominating Committee

Rod Zwirner, Clerk, reported no further developments on finding a Clerk of the Finance Committee. The Nominating Committee will meet electronically in the next couple of weeks, and hopefully all the members of Nominating Committee will be present in Chicago at the end of April.

Adding the Treasurer to the CCC

CCC has appreciated the participation of Treasurer David Ciscel on the CCC in the absence of the Clerk of Finance Committee. **We considered whether having both the Treasurer as well as the Finance Committee Clerk on the CCC would be desirable**, especially during the transition to a new General Secretary. The Treasurer does serve as an officer of QEW. We will season this issue and consider it during our next electronic meeting.

Planning for the 2010 April Chicago Steering Committee Meeting

Dick has sent a revised agenda for the 2010 April Chicago Steering Committee Meeting to CCC by email for our review and comment to Dick.

Planning for the Houston 2010 Annual Meeting

Ruah reported that a decision by the planning committee for the 2010 Houston Annual Meeting on the speakers is expected soon. **The focus will be on activism and water.**

Schedule for Face-to-Face Meetings of QEW

According to Susan Swanstrom, Clerk, **the Outreach Committee is continuing to review the best time and place to hold our face-to-face meetings.** The Outreach Committee is concerned that several members of QEW did not receive a survey sent out at the end of January about the preferred frequency (once or twice a year), time of year (Spring or Fall), and place for holding QEW's face-to-face meetings. Ruah will resend the survey to the earthcare email list, emphasizing the importance of responding to the survey; she will also send to

Susan the procedure for getting the results of the survey. By the time of the 2010 April SC meeting, we still need to make a decision about holding the 2011 Annual meeting in the Spring in Chicago. **CCC supports the process of the Outreach Committee of discerning the best time to meet face to face**

Threshing Session at the 2010 Spring Steering Committee Meetings on “What Direction Do You Think Quaker Earthcare Witness Should Take”

A Threshing Session has been proposed for Friday morning at the 2010 Spring Steering Committee Meetings on “What Direction Do You Think Quaker Earthcare Witness Should Take.” **This threshing session might focus on long-range planning, that is, where is QEW going in the long run, including specific goals (not just general goals), and where do we want to be taking what we are doing in one, two, and five years.** Where do we want to go with all the changes we have made? We might also want to consider internal work in clarifying communications within QEW, including email lists and monthly meeting contacts. We need to avoid getting mired down on discerning our “purpose,” but rather focus on how we are getting things done. **We were concerned that we make space for leadings and grace amidst all our planning. Mary Jo will work with Dick on how to set up and focus the threshing session; others are invited to assist.**

Sign-ons by QEW

The CCC continued discussing a process for discerning and approving QEW’s signing on to statements on policy about earthcare issues. We considered appointing two or three members of QEW to review proposed sign-ons, but decided instead to use a “Clearness Committee,” with those Friends being suggested by the proposers of the sign-ons. We want to reconsider the process at the 2010 Fall Meeting in Houston. **The SC should consider this process of sign-ons for approval at its 2010 Spring Meetings.**

CCC Minute 2010.02.03 Continuing Counsel Committee approved a process for carefully considering signing on to statements of another group. To clarify the process of deciding on sign-ons, the person or persons requesting the sign-on should state succinctly the purpose, organization, time frame, and criteria of the sign-on, and send that information to the Clerk of QEW to process the request. In order to facilitate proper support of the statement or position of another group, two or three members of QEW suggested by the person(s) requesting the sign-on (acting as a Committee of Clearness) will consider any suggested sign-ons and post their recommendation within 48 hours using the earthcare list serve. The entire Steering Committee will be given 48 hours to consider and approve the requested sign-on, with silence considered as approval. QEW will re-evaluate this process for approving sign-ons at the 2010 Annual Meetings in Houston.

Accreditation with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

According to Ruah, with her help the UN Support Working Group is continuing to fill out the accreditation forms for the United Nations ECOSOC. Jack Bradin, David Millar, and Phil Emmi feel strongly that being accredited will give QEW a stronger role in the UN and open a new door to international Quaker activity around the globe. The application has created little additional work for Ruah.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Annual Meeting in 2010 March

Mary Gilbert, David Millar, and Hollister Knowlton have registered for the FWCC Annual Meeting in 2010 March outside Baltimore. Marge Abbot of FWCC has suggested that QEW might help with queries about earthcare on the FWCC website and assist in organizing regional meetings. More about FWCC’s environmental meetings will be announced at the end of February. Hollister will write up events of the FWCC annual meeting.

New QEW website

According to Ruah, Louis has continued to smooth out problems with the website, still tweaking it. Not only has Louis learned about secure sites and ordering online, but now registrations and donations are both possible and encouraged online. **Friends are urged to help with improving the website. CCC extends our kudos to Louis for his work on the QEW website.**

No Impact Project

Stephanie Bleyer, Associate Director, No Impact Project, has asked QEW to be involved in this project calling on faith communities to have no impact on the earth. A movie, "No Impact Man," has been produced on DVD, copies of which could be shown to congregations and meetings at cost of distribution. The movie with challenging ideas is worth seeing. **CCC recommends having a possible screening of this movie in the evening of our 2010 April meetings in Chicago, possibly before the Threshing Session to help our thoughts on the direction of QEW.** After seeing the movie and learning more about the No Impact Program, we can decide on future action steps for QEW using this movie. **Dick will follow up on arranging for this movie for the 2010 April SC Meetings.**

National Council of Churches Climate and Energy Campaign

Hollister has received a request for QEW to be involved with the National Council of Churches Climate and Energy Campaign. As part of the campaign, materials will be sent to Senators in March about Climate Change. The campaign will involve a wide range of churches. **Hollister will provide details about the campaign, and Dick will propose to the QEW earthcare list an appropriately-changed letter from the original letter. CCC will consider further follow up during our next electronic meeting.**

Next Electronic Meeting for CCC: 2010 March 23 at 6:30 p.m. EDT

Because this time on Tuesday was a convenient time for our electronic meeting, we suggested having our next meeting by Skype on 2010 March 23 at 6:30 p.m. EDT, subject to this time being satisfactory for Jack and David.

Review of our Electronic Meeting

This electronic meeting by Skype worked well in general with few people being difficult to hear or getting cut off. Being sure all people are heard will help bring unity.

Closing

We closed with a brief silence after about two hours of meeting together.

Roy C. Treadway
Recording Clerk