

Report to March 3, 2012 Illinois Yearly Meeting Continuing Committee – from Finance Committee

Finance Committee held two teleconference meetings after the Fall Continuing Committee, on January 28 and on February 4. Three of our members had participated in the two day long sessions convened by the Site Envisioning Committee, the results of which were a major focus in our own meetings. We explored aspects of the Site Envisioning process and our committee's role and observations. We see that it is easier to understand Finance Committee work when it is specific and action-oriented, but harder to know when and how we can help the Yearly Meeting where our responsibility is not so direct.

We looked in depth at ways to approach the financial aspects of the likely outcomes of Site Envisioning and active committees. We bring what we hope are useful observations and recommendations for some ways forward in a very complex situation.

First, our committee observes that there is a practical desire to be able to know and care for our current property well before we attempt any significant new additions. We need to proceed to acquire the $\frac{3}{4}$ acre south of the meetinghouse, though, to "square off" the property and have alternatives and a land use buffer for the future. This has been approved by the 2009 annual session, is budgeted for at present and needs to be done while the owners are willing to proceed.

We suggest specific work for the next two years, including a land use plan for the built environment (present and future) and natural environment on our site. Ideally the plan would have priorities.

We have noted that it is easier to identify the costs of creating change than those for maintaining facilities. Our expenditures of the last few years reflect a lot of adding new items and not so much on maintenance. We need to learn to use the CAMP report as a working tool and possibly develop a practice of estimating recurring and periodic maintenance costs of proposed big improvements, in addition to their installation costs. Finance and Maintenance and Planning Committee are arranging to meet and work together, with the Stewards, to teach ourselves how to understand and use the CAMP report so as to refine our budgeting process.

We need to examine our present pattern of financial support for the routine operation and maintenance of the Yearly Meeting property. This is to see if it is reasonable to assume in the future that all of this can continue to be borne by the monthly meeting contributions, or if we routinely need seek additional gifts from individuals and meetings. This would have major development implications. With either model, we will need to be effective in putting together good, working budgets and providing reserves for routine and emergency maintenance.

We will also need

- to have committee and inter-committee structure and activities, effective with fixing up and operating our expanded campus;
- to expand the circle of involved Friends;
- to develop and assess concepts of a caretaker or resource person on-call;
- to consider interim improvements for restrooms to serve the meetinghouse, the campground shower house, and basic accessibility for Clear Creek House;

- to make the bunkhouse safe and inviting for our young people.

Doing new things and even continuing what we have as a Yearly Meeting will require money and the need for careful planning and budgeting, and stretching our budgeting beyond the usual past patterns.

We anticipate seeing the committees bring forth some new, important items in the next year or two.

Some of these new proposals will likely appear in the upcoming budget process beginning this month. In fact, committee clerks can expect to receive budget questionnaires shortly. The preliminary budget for 2012-13 is drawn up in May.

Finally, the development function of the Yearly Meeting needs to be revitalized. Finance Committee will participate in any and all efforts in this regard. Meanwhile, and without hesitation, we need to encourage a culture of Friends' choosing bequests and planned giving tools. These would be to generally benefit ILYM in the future, independent of a building project. And we all need to ask which Friends are the movers, shakers and interpreters of Illinois Yearly Meeting, both "old timers" and rising adult Friends? How can we keep the message in the foreground on what and why Illinois Yearly Meeting is important, especially for those who do not visit our site or participate in the work of the Yearly Meeting? How do we keep advancement active and vital? What should our messages be to our family of Friends? This is the starting point of development. "People don't give to buildings; people give to what happens in them."

On other matters, Finance Committee and the Treasurers have moved to a new way of performing payroll services, because Tom McPeak has laid down his Philadelphia payroll business. Co-Treasurer Valerie Lester will prepare the paychecks and necessary payroll reports on the QuickBooks software program she and Dawn Amos use for keeping our books. There is a fee, comparable to what we had been paying to Tom McPeak. We'll evaluate the new procedure in the fall.

Finance Committee will meet next on May 12 at Urbana-Champaign Meeting.

Judy Jager,
Clerk