

06.18.08

Illinois Yearly Meeting Site Envisioning and Development Committee

Report to the Annual Session at the meetinghouse in McNabb

This is the first year of this combined committee. Our charges of Site Envisioning and Development have been two large challenges for us. We began with a focus on the Development component and ended with a focus on Site Envisioning.

At the close of last years annual session, we found that we needed to respond to several issues brought forth during the meetings for business. A new group had been convened to focus on the accessibility needs of friends on our McNabb site. In addition, the Environmental Concerns Committee declared its increasing interest in seeing that our new buildings be as sustainable as possible. We asked for the ability to hire our architects once more to help us discern how best to address these topics. We proposed that we have another design charette to fold these issues and concerns into our thinking as we refined the design for the new buildings.

Our first focus for the year became the fund raising component of our responsibility. We convened at McNabb on October 13, 2007 to identify our process. Later in December, Julia Pantoga and Chip Rorem had a conference call with our fund raising consultant, Henry Freeman, to go over the details of our fundraising effort. Henry gave us guidance as to documents and approach. He stressed that we needed a business plan to validate that we were ready to care for our facility.

We reconvened our group in January at the Bartles to present our progress, discuss refinements in direction and pass out work. We held a conference call with an advisor from the local community college to discuss developing a donor packet as described to us by Henry Freeman which included a formal business plan for the facility. After our meeting, we toured several retreat centers in the area which included a facility particularly interesting to some that was run as a Lutheran Retreat Center.

As we prepared for our charette on April 19, we also looked at an issue coming from Clear Creek. Clear Creek told us that they were uncomfortable with meeting at the relocated Junior Yearly Meeting House. The distance to plumbing and difficulty in heating the meeting room caused the monthly meeting to meet elsewhere in members homes. They said they would like to move on creating a place to meet on IYM grounds if possible (and as soon as possible even this upcoming winter if it can be arranged) We agreed to fold this issue into our charette along with the other issues of sustainability and accessibility.

The charette at McNabb held on April 19 was well attended and included members of the Environmental Concerns committee, the accessibility work group, and several members of Clear Creek. We discussed alternatives to sustainability that could be overlaid onto a building design. Issues of accessibility were discussed but seemingly these issues needed further focus as the design evolved. Clear Creek was active in expressing its requirements for meeting space and first day space. They also stressed their hope that space meeting Clear Creek needs would serve the needs of the Yearly Meeting as well. We adjourned to await a response from Troyer Group.

A response came to us in time for the Memorial Day work weekend. Copies of the Troyer concept were printed and sent to Clear Creek for review and comment. After their review they reported back to us that the new designs were falling short of their expectation. They asked Chris Goode, a Clear Creek attender and an architect to help them discern a reply.

Chris prepared some loose sketches responding to guidance from the Clear Creek Friends. He met with them and reviewed the sketches. The sketches spoke to the meetings condition and they found themselves resoundingly approving them and offering their approval to the SE&D Committee. They suggested we offer the Goode sketches in lieu of the Troyer sketches as a new approach to the development of the site.

This information was coming to the committee just before annual session. We had three phone conference meetings to try to discern the way to proceed. We met on Thursday, June 5th, Sunday, June 8th, and Thursday, June 12th. Over the course of those three meetings, SE&D decided to concur with Clear Creek on the viability of the Goode sketches. We decided to ask Troyer to go on hold for the annual session. They agreed. We asked Chris Goode if he'd be able to present the designs at annual session. He agreed. We told Troyer and Goode that our further work would require guidance from the annual session, so consequently, no further work beyond annual session is authorized.

We look forward to the discernment of the annual session.

Respectfully submitted,

Chip Rorem
Clerk