

Recommendations Regarding the Transition from the Trusteeship to the new Situation under Incorporation

At last year's annual session, Illinois Yearly Meeting authorized an *ad hoc* committee to address issues regarding the transition from the Trustees system for holding and managing our property to that of our new incorporated legal framework. The *ad hoc* Transition Issues Committee proposes a set of recommendations to implement the change in the structure of how we handle yearly meeting property. These recommendations are presented below. The *ad hoc* committee began its work by surveying the range of considerations it thought might bear on its work. These fell into three general categories:

1. Duties and responsibilities formally and informally administered by trustees in the past.
2. The relation between Clear Creek Friends and Illinois Yearly meeting.
3. The identity of the yearly meeting.

The *ad hoc* committee's findings can be found in the "Background Documents." They are included, in the hope that they will provide a useful context for understanding the recommendations.

Please note: Some revisions to the Recommendations may be made before they appear in the printed set of Advance Documents. The committee is scheduled to meet June 23.

Please read these carefully and address any questions they prompt to a member of the *ad hoc* committee. The members are Dick Ashdown, Carol Bartles, Cathy Garra, Sharon Haworth, Margaret Katranides, Pam Kuhn, Roy Treadway, and Tom Paxson (clerk).

Recommendations Of the *ad hoc* Transition Issues Committee

1. Revise the proposed corporate Bylaws so that Article IV #2 reads as follows:
The officers of the Illinois Yearly Meeting shall be a Presiding Clerk, Recording Clerk, a Treasurer, the Stewards, and such additional Clerks as the Illinois Yearly Meeting may appoint as officers.

Rationale: The duties and responsibilities of the trustees, under the trusteeship need to be transferred to designated persons under the new structure. These persons the committee proposes calling the "stewards." The Bylaws do not define the responsibilities of any of the corporation officers, so the responsibilities of the stewards are not defined here, but are to be considered by the Yearly Meeting, minuted, and included in the Handbook and/or Faith and Practice.

2. Minute the following understanding regarding the nature of stewards:
Stewards may be thought of as analogous in the new structure to the trustees in the earlier one. At the direction of the annual sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting, stewards will have responsibility and authority to manage the real estate and tangible property of Illinois Yearly Meeting and shall appoint

and/or employ persons as required. Stewards will represent the Yearly Meeting in renovating the buildings and grounds, in securing insurance, and in case of easements or leases and other management needs as they arise. Among these may be planning, zoning, and building permit issues, and property tax matters. The annual sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting may direct others to assist the stewards in specific matters.

Rationale: This minute serves to define the role of the stewards.

3. Minute the number and constitution of the stewards as follows:
There will be three stewards, at least two from Clear Creek Monthly Meeting; the three stewards will serve as corporation officers, with staggered six-year terms, renewable indefinitely.

Rationale: The stipulation that at least two stewards be from Clear Creek is to ensure that at least two stewards live near the yearly meeting property. This proximity to the property is desirable both for the regular monitoring and oversight of the building and grounds and for working with local contractors. In addition, they will be sensitive to the needs of Clear Creek Monthly Meeting, which uses the facilities weekly, except during the Winter when it uses the meetinghouse about twice a month.

The six-year terms, renewable indefinitely provide continuity – an important consideration given the turn-over of other officers of the corporation and of clerks of Maintenance and Planning.

The corporation officers are those Friends named in documents submitted to the state as responsible persons in our organization. It is important to include the stewards because of their long time association with and knowledge of the property.

4. Minute a special element in the Nominating Committee's process of discerning persons from Clear Creek Monthly Meeting to nominate to be stewards:
The Nominating Committee will consult with Clear Creek monthly meeting in its process of discerning nomination of the stewards from that meeting.

Rationale: With those positions coming from Clear Creek Monthly Meeting, Clear Creek Friends are likely to have knowledge of worthy candidates and have insight on candidates' ability to represent the yearly meeting to local officials.

5. Minute of guidance regarding the process to be used by Stewards with respect to major contracts:
Stewards consult with the relevant yearly meeting committees and the clerk of the yearly meeting prior to signing any major contracts. Care is to be taken that interim decisions accord with the spirit and direction of decisions and policies approved by the yearly meeting at annual session.

Rationale: The ability to represent Illinois Yearly Meeting in signing contracts is recorded through a minute of the business session to Friends serving in designated positions.

The Stewards carry property responsibilities which will involve contracts for work to be done, including some involving large amounts of money. This minute clarifies these responsibilities as large commitments are made, for these major contracts, and recommended steps for consultation.

6. Minute of guidance to committees recommending changes to buildings & property:
Committees considering making changes to yearly meeting buildings and/or grounds are expected to consult with Clear Creek Monthly Meeting concerning these changes and *vice versa*.

Rationale: Clear Creek Friends use the yearly meeting property weekly through much of the year and provide weekly monitoring and care for it; they are potentially affected very directly by changes made to yearly meeting buildings and property and may see implications that those who do not use the property as regularly would not see.

7. Minute regarding relationship between stewards and Maintenance and Planning:
The three stewards will be *ex officio* members of the Maintenance and Planning Committee.

Rationale: The trustees have been serving as *ex officio* members of Maintenance and Planning and have worked closely with the committee. The stewards are expected to continue this practice.

Background Documents

The following “documents” collect considerations that the ad hoc committee identified as bearing on its work. They provide background information that helped to inform the committee’s recommendations and may be useful to Friends as they consider the recommendations.

- I. Duties and responsibilities formally and informally administered by trustees in the past.

The trusteeship was originally formed to hold, buy, and sell property for the yearly meeting. It was recognized that while it was not necessary for trustees to be responsible for all of the activities mentioned below, these things had to be done by Friends living near the Yearly Meeting’s property who were involved in the yearly meeting and committed to it. The trustees have had that commitment. The committee recognized that there will continue to be needed people who look after the yearly meeting’s property and buildings throughout the year and who are empowered to sign contracts, and represent the yearly meeting to local governmental officials.

This list is not exhaustive.

- Signing contracts with companies and individuals for work to be done on or for the site.

- Represent the yearly meeting to local governmental officials.
- Addressing planning, zoning, and building permit issues.
- Addressing any property tax issues.
- Maintaining and overseeing the property including seeing to it that needed work is done, e.g. in such areas as plumbing, insurance, termite control and inspection, identifying needed preventative work, and addressing emergencies.
- Such on-going maintenance activities as seeing that the grass is cut, winterizing the buildings, etc.
- Co-management of the safe deposit box.
- Responding to questions from IYM members regarding the property.
- Monitoring the condition of property and buildings owned by IYM.
- Serving ex officio on the Maintenance and Planning Committee.
- Working closely with the Site Envisioning and Building Committee.

II. Relation between Clear Creek Friends and Illinois Yearly Meeting.

It was noted that Clear Creek Friends cherish the yearly meeting house and the gathering of Illinois Yearly Meeting Friends in McNabb for their annual sessions. Clear Creek Friends described how in preparation for the annual sessions they open space in their hearts, as it were, for the yearly meeting and afterward close the circle again to their monthly meeting. At the same time each year they are reminded that they have not had a space of their own since the 1920s and put away their things to make way for the Yearly Meeting's annual sessions, then bring them out again afterward.

Many Illinois Yearly Meeting Friends outside Clear Creek Monthly Meeting revere the site as "holy ground." The yearly meeting grounds provide a strong sense of identity and continuity for many of our younger Friends.

Clear Creek Friends have been the "face" of Illinois Yearly meeting to the local community over the years, a role that has not always been a comfortable one.

Historically the trustees have been Clear Creek Friends, with only one or two exceptions. Clear Creek Friends, especially those who have become trustees have felt a great responsibility to preserve what we have and what we want to keep. Clear Creek Friends have borne a heavy burden over the years for site preparation and clean-up, often leaving Clear Creek Friends exhausted after the annual session.

Several Concerns were identified:

- The need to make clear who would be responsible and have the necessary authority for the management and care of the property.
- The feeling that the Bylaws as proposed last year did not consider the authority of those assigned the responsibilities formerly carried by the trustees.
- The need for consultation of Illinois Yearly Meeting and its committees with Clear Creek Friends, and *vice versa*, regarding changes to buildings and grounds.

III. Identity and Nature of the Yearly Meeting.

- (i) **The locus of authority** in the yearly meeting is the annual session and minutes, supported by the Bylaws, Handbook, and Faith and Practice; this issue of

authority is seen to bear on the Committee's formulation of its recommendations. It was noted that some anxiety regarding the proposed Bylaws stemmed in part from their silence regarding who would bear responsibility and the requisite authority with respect to the property in the absence of any clear alternative assignment of such responsibilities and authority.

It was understood that the proposed Bylaws were intended to enable the Yearly Meeting to conduct its business according to Friends procedures and practices within the framework provided by incorporation without being overly prescriptive. It was also understood that the proposed Bylaws might be revised to include reference to persons assigned responsibilities and authority regarding the property as officers of the corporation.

- (ii) Another dimension of the **identity issue** is the growing perception that the Yearly Meeting is no longer the body of Friends gathered at annual session, *and constituent monthly meetings*, but includes a collection of committees whose work is done outside the annual session by Friends some of whom do not attend the annual session.
- (iii) It would seem appropriate for the Yearly Meeting to consider at some future date the **nature, extent, and limitations of authority it grants to its various committees**, including the Continuing Committee.