2023 Report for CQL—a lookback over the last year

Concern for Quaker Living (CQL) has been meeting continuously since November of 2015 when it came together to share and address concerns of beloved members forced to move because their housing options were no longer feasible, and they could not find or afford appropriate housing in NYC. Originally focused on aging Friends, this concern quickly grew to include growing families and blossomed into a survey of needs. This 2020 survey identified three key issues: housing, professional social work support and community building. And since then, CQL, under the care of NYQM M&C, has continued to pursue the approval of a feasibility study for mixed use affordable housing (to be funded and staff ed independent of NYQM resources), of a retainer relationship with a professional social worker, while offering a wide variety of workshop and worship sharing opportunities to bring us all together.

From early 2022, Quarter wide opportunities to gather have included 1) Telling our Stories, 2) Soul of Money, 3) Meeting for Grieving (in person in the Cemetery), 4)Potluck in the Cemetery, 5)How to Simplify Your Financial Life, 6)a salute to Callie on her new job, 7) Moving in the Spirit (a musical improv at Brooklyn Meeting House), 8) Life and Spirit After COVID (in person in the Cemetery). Each of these has offered our Friends and fellow travelers the opportunity to meet informally, to share common concerns and together to seek a way forward.

The Housing Feasibility group has entertained various architects and others to put together, send out and sort RFPs (request for proposals). The study would focus on constructability, zoning, air rights and other aspects related to development of a facility. The project envisioned would be mixed use (that is, community space with a paying tenant, perhaps a school), affordable housing along with a few units set aside for Quakers. This team has always assumed that any project would be self-sufficient and provide no call on NYQM resources, either financial or managerial. To quantify the issues, CQL would like to move forward with a feasibility study.

A proposal for professional social work services was prepared last year and given the changing staff complexion the committee was asked to wait a year. This proposal is waiting in the wings for Quarterwide discernment and a budget line.

The persistent inability to reach out to people---an effort to find transportation to the cemetery relies on personal networks but might reasonably include a wider outreach; the effort to publicize workshops and other opportunities to gather informally are blocked by lack of access to contact information for the Quarterwide members and to committee clerks.

CQL is currently meeting twice monthly on Wednesdays (moving to Mondays in September) and welcomes any interested Friends to join us. Please feel free to contact: Charlene at charleneceis@gmail.com.

The CQL working group, represented by:

Elizabeth Gilmore, Joe Gosler, Nancy Hadley-Jaffee, Jing Jia,, Joan Malin, Charlene Ray

July 12, 2023