GUIDELINES FOR THE CARE RELATIONSHIP OF COLLEGE PARK QUARTERLY MEETING WITH CORPORATIONS UNDER ITS CARE

These guidelines seek to clarify the “under the care” relationship between College Park Quarterly Meeting and the corporations under its care. It could, as well, prove instructive to other Friends’ bodies that have corporations under their care. An ad-hoc committee established by CPQM and consisting of representatives of Ben Lomond Quaker Center, College Park Friends Educational Association, Friends Association of Services for the Elderly and CPQM Ministry & Oversight Committee wrote the guidelines and revised them to reflect concerns raised by representatives of the corporations and members of the quarter. They were accepted by CPQM and each of the corporations in the spring of 2014.

Many of the needs and interests identified by the ad-hoc committee are complementary whether seen from the perspective of the corporation or the Quarter. The committee held a common goal that although there are some differing needs among the corporations, the relationship between the Quarter and the corporations be consistent for all the corporations.

Those needs and interests articulated from the perspective of the corporations are the following: a) Help to maintain the corporations as Friends organizations reflecting Friends business practices, beliefs and values, b) Assist with identification of potential board members, source of volunteers for committee or project work, c) Assist in crisis situations, d) Strengthen the relationships between Monthly Meetings and each corporation, e) Help to support the corporations financially through awareness of opportunities for giving and perhaps coordinated fundraising, f) Have Quarterly Meeting be a source of “customers” to participate in the programs offered by each of the corporations.

Those needs and interests articulated from the perspective of the Quarterly Meeting are the following: a) Corporations utilize Quaker business practices in governance and decision making, b) Corporations function according to Quaker values and foster what might be termed Quaker culture including speaking to our testimonies, c) Corporations provide an environment for Quarterly Meeting Quakers and others for spirit-led financial support or service supporting right action in the world, d) Corporations strive to contribute to the overall strengthening of Quakerism, e) Corporations provide periodic status reports including financial information to the Quarter.

This is a working document whose usefulness will be tested over the years to come. Revisions should be considered from time to time to ensure that the guidelines serve as desired, to strengthen the relationship between CPQM and the corporations under its care.

Expectations of the corporations:

1. Utilize Quaker business practices in its decision making.

1. Maintain a board at least half of whose members are Quakers (members or active attenders). Consider past experience and skill in Quaker business practices as one factor in selecting a Board Clerk. Provide skill development support for any Board Clerk that is not already experienced in Quaker business practices.
2. Hold Quaker testimonies at the forefront of its mission and operation, e.g. in governance practices, employment practices, client relations, socially responsible investing and purchasing and environmental responsibility.
3. Offer opportunities for Quaker worship at their respective facilities.
4. Make an effort to hire staff who will work well within a community based upon the values and practices of the Religious Society of Friends. Among a variety of places, advertise positions in places where individuals with Quaker connections are likely to notice (e.g. Western Friend and Friends Journal).
5. Provide the Quarter with a copy of the current by-laws of the corporation and a roster of the board members on a yearly basis. These are sent to the Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting.
6. Provide a yearly report (more often if needed) to CPQM’s Nominating Committee naming new nominees with short biographical information for each, noting nominees to serve additional terms and naming any resignations.
7. Make an annual status report, including financial information to CPQM. Financial information should consist of enough information to make the organization’s financial performance and position clear, such as a summarized profit and loss statement for the most recently completed fiscal year, and a current summarized balance sheet. A representative of the corporation whose report is being heard will attend and be available to answer questions about the corporation’s annual report.

Expectations of College Park Quarterly Meeting:

1. During the plenary session in which the annual report is presented offer an opportunity for questions and answers with representatives of the corporation who are present.
2. Identify a CPQM Nominating Committee liaison to each corporation’s Nominating Committee, assisting that Nominating Committee in identifying potential board members.
3. Consider reports (referenced in #7 above) in CPQM Nominating Committee and communicate with the Nominating Committee of the corporation within three weeks of receipt of said report should any concerns arise regarding those nominated. If mandated by the bylaws of the respective corporation, seek approval of nominees at CPQM’s next scheduled session. Report to CPQM, whether or not CPQM approval is sought, each corporation’s slate of officers and directors.
4. Have a member or more of either CPQM’s Nominating Committee or Ministry and Oversight Committee attend a minimum of one board meeting for each corporation yearly.
5. Seek ways to strengthen the relationships between CPQM and the corporations, sharing their missions and programs with Monthly Meetings.
6. Foster open communication between the Clerk of CPQM, its Ministry and Oversight Clerk and its Nominating Committee clerk or liaison and the clerk of each corporation’s board with the goal of identifying mutual concerns and areas of cooperation.

Process for addressing crisis situations or concerns from stakeholders:

Quarterly Meeting assistance in addressing crisis situations or concerns from stakeholders, including recipients of services, family members, staff, and Board members, is likely to be the most difficult aspect of the mutual relationship. The corporation should recognize that the Quarter may be approached by any stakeholders and it strives to listen carefully and without prejudice to all viewpoints. It is of benefit to both parties for the corporation to have in place fair and accessible internal grievance procedures and conflict resolution procedures so that issues can be resolved before stakeholders bring concerns to the Quarterly Meeting.

Should concerns arise related to the board, staff or operations of any of the corporations from any stakeholder who holds an interest in the facilities or programs, the individual is expected to:

* First follow the internal grievance procedures or conflict resolution procedures established by the Corporation.
* If a resolution is not forthcoming, then bring the concern to the attention of an appointed ombudsman, Clerk of the Board, or a relevant Board member.
* If a resolution is still not forthcoming, the individual is expected to take the concern to the Clerk of the Nominating Committee of the corporation or to the clerk of any other standing committee.
* The individual and/or clerk or ombudsman may ask a mutually acceptable third person to meet with them to hear the concern.
* If resolution is not forthcoming, the concern should be brought by both parties to the Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting who will assist in determining next steps toward resolution. A mutually acceptable third (fourth) party may also be utilized in this instance.
* If a concern is brought to the attention of the Clerk of the Quarter or the Clerk of M&O, the first question asked should seek to ascertain whether the above steps have been taken.

The Clerk of the Quarter should have on file records of previous stated concerns and their resolutions so that if the current concern has been addressed in the past, this may be used to inform a proposed current process or resolution.

Thinking outside the box is encouraged. Perhaps, if the situation is a financial one, there are particular individuals whose expertise would prove most valuable. If the situation concerns internal conflicts within the board, a former board member could prove invaluable in resolution. Should the concern be about the maintenance of Quaker culture, staff people at the organization might prove essential in the resolution.

Ongoing open communication between officers and individuals of CPQM and the boards of each of the corporations is essential to the health of the relationship. All parties are encouraged to engage with each other using deep listening and always act with goodwill, integrity and the belief that all are seeking a way forward that helps the corporation fulfill its mission.

All parties should expect that if the Quarter and the corporation jointly engage in crisis management, it will be challenging. Representatives from each organization will need to respect the knowledge and perspectives of the other. Taking care to engage in thorough fact-finding early on in the problem resolution process will prove helpful in finding a way forward.