

February 1, 2011

To: Site Envisioning Committee, Illinois Yearly Meeting
From: Oak Park Monthly Meeting of Friends, Oak Park, Illinois

Response to Site Envisioning Committee's request for consideration of queries regarding the future of the IYM Campus at McNabb

Respectfully submitted by
Wil Rutt, Clerk of Oak Park Friends Meeting and Adrian Fisher, Convener

Oak Park Meeting of Friends had several opportunities to consider and discuss the queries regarding the future of McNabb. The queries were published in our newsletter, and queries were considered during Meeting for Business, January 9, 2011; after a potluck, January 16, 2011; and after Meeting for Worship, January 23, 2011. Using the pictures supplied by Chris Goode was very helpful, and enabled persons who have never been to McNabb to participate. There may be more visitors as a result! In each case the number of participants was small. We offered three opportunities to comment in order to "catch" the greatest number of people. We chose not to try to arrive at a single unified statement, but offer these responses for Site Envisioning Committee's consideration.

What vision does this committee/group/meeting have for the future of the site of IYM near McNabb?

(Sentences are in the declarative but are meant as suggestions and ideas.)

- Make the site even more of a central gathering place than it is now for retreats and meetings.
- Leave the Meeting House be: no external building additions, add-ons, etc. to this beautiful historic structure.
- Make the campus a retreat center that can be used in winter by expanding Clear Creek House for use as a dormitory (rather than a separate dorm building). One participant said she had been to a winter retreat at a site with an old Meeting House and farmhouse: the farmhouse had been expanded so that there were dormitory-style bedrooms for men and women to accommodate approximately twenty-five persons. These could be closed off when not in use.
- Make the site available to scout troops (with leaders) for short camping trips during the summer (for a fee). These groups are small and clean up after themselves. They'd need information about local nature sites along the Illinois River. Campground hosts/caretakers could be retired seniors or college students willing to stay from, say, early June to early October, to oversee site care and administrative details.
- Have short camps (three days?) for Quaker children during the summer.

What concerns come up?

- Kitchen and dining room should be handicapped-accessible. We should get out of the basement.
- Plumbing to accommodate all these people. A new place for the porta-pots.
- Transportation to McNabb
- Insurance and liability if outside groups use the property

What features, facilities are important?

- Birdhouses, bat house, bee houses (as for mason bees)
- Native plants and wildlife habitat
- Kitchen and dining room
- Places to enjoy the out-of-doors
- What's there now: Meeting House, porch, dancing lawn, cabins and so on

What ideas are important?

- Spiritual regeneration, earthcare.
- All participants value the peaceful, rural atmosphere.
- Keep, enhance and deepen the site as a sabbath place. (One participant cited this as one reason to keep the Meeting House separate from dorm facilities.)
- Make it a place like Pendle Hill for peaceful Quaker retreats.
- Reaching out to local community.

What barriers are in the way?

- Handicapped accessibility to kitchen and dining room
- Lack of winter accommodations
- No way to get there other than by car
- Lack of caretaker
- Funds

How can the Quaker testimonies of Peace, Equality, Integrity, Community, Simplicity and *Earthcare* (*O.P. Friends Meeting addition*) be represented and guide us?

- Don't overdo landscape manicuring, campus-ization, buildings and conveniences: rustic and sustainable is better suited to our testimonies and the character of the place.
- Many people go there for a reprieve from modern urban/suburban life, to refresh and re-center in the spirit and in the testimonies.
- Lots of land, few structures help remind us of our place within creation
- Reach out to the local community: hire locals for work, hold gatherings for local groups or make available for local groups' meetings.