

Southeastern Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends

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Specially Called Yearly Business Meeting

Saturday, 31 Eighth Month (Aug) 2024, 10:00 am, Eastern Time

Agenda and Documents In Advance

We will be gathering online ONLY via Zoom

Topic: Specially Called Yearly Business Meeting

Time: Aug 31, 2024, 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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Agenda and Documents in Advance

Saturday, 31 Eighth Month 2024

SPECIALLY CALLED YEARLY BUSINESS MEETING

10:00 am Opening Worship
Announcements

Discernment on the request by DeLand Worship Group to be recognized as a monthly meeting within Southeastern Yearly Meeting.

Clerk's Report with pertinent emails to and from Deland Worship Group and Orlando Monthly Meeting attached.

NO OTHER MATTERS WILL COME BEFORE THIS SPECIALLY CALLED YEARLY BUSINESS MEETING

Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Quakers in Florida, southeast Georgia & South Carolina

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Friends,

As clerk, I received correspondence from Orlando Monthly Meeting and DeLand Worship Group in early sixth month 2024. These letters indicate their sense that DeLand Worship Group is ready to be recognized at a Monthly Meeting affiliated with SEYM. I presented this matter to Summer Executive Committee Meeting on June 22, 2024, for their discernment on how to proceed. The documents presented are attached.

Unity was found on the following Minute:

24SEC 01 SEYM Executive Committee requests the clerk of SEYM call a special session of Yearly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business to address the request of DeLand Worship Group in unity with Orlando Monthly Meeting that DeLand Worship Group be established and recognized as a Monthly Meeting affiliated with SEYM in a manner consistent with the clerk's report received on June 22, 2024. The Specially Called Yearly Business Meeting will be held on 31 Eighth Month 2024.

As detailed in the attached clerk's report, the authority to recognize and establish a Monthly Meeting affiliated with SEYM is reserved to sessions of Yearly Business Meeting under our Faith and Practice.

As stated in the clerk's report and adopted by Minute, the agenda for this special called session will be limited to discernment on this matter only. All other Yearly Meeting business will continue to be acted on or seasoned through Fall and Winter Interim Business Meetings through normal processes. This meeting will be fully virtual via Zoom.

I am not aware of when we last recognized a new Monthly Meeting, but I do not recall such an occasion in my nearly 40 years as a SEYM Friend. I encourage you to review the attached documents and consider attending.

In Peace,



William E. Carlie, Jr.
clerk, Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Clerk's Report

SEYM Summer Executive Committee Meeting

22 Sixth Month 2024

On June 9, 2024, the clerk received a Minute from the clerk of Orlando Monthly Meeting to indicate their approval of a request from DeLand Worship Group seeking recognition from SEYM as a Monthly Meeting. On June 11, 2024, the clerk received the request from DeLand Worship Group for recognition of DeLand Worship Group as a Monthly Meeting within SEYM (documents attached).

After review of this request and the relevant sections of SEYM Faith and Practice, the clerk responded to Orlando Monthly Meeting and DeLand Worship Group on June 13, 2024 (document attached).

DeLand Worship Group is an active Friends Community that has existed for many years and is attended by a number of seasoned Friends who have and continue to contribute substantially to the life of the SEYM community. They are carrying forward important witness to Friends Testimony in DeLand that involves collecting financial contributions as well as physical contributions of books to be distributed at events like Junteenth and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, as well as supporting other local witness to Friends values and testimonies.

As stated in their request and fairly easily understood, a corporate presence and independent financial presence consistent with Monthly Meeting status would help facilitate the continued growth and sustainability of their active witness. The text of the DeLand request calls for either the SEYM Executive Committee or Interim Business Meeting to take up and approve their request and create a Minute of recognition of the Worship Group as a Monthly Meeting.

Page 239 of the SEYM Faith and Practice specifically states that the formation and recognition of Worship Groups, Preparative Meetings, and Monthly Meetings, may be approved by Yearly Meeting. Faith and Practice does not delegate this authority to approve the formation of these meetings to Executive Committee (EC) or Interim Business Meetings (IBM), (SEYM Faith and Practice, 4th Ed., pp 239 to 244). Page 241 of SEYM Faith and Practice under the topic of Interim Business Meeting reads, "When need arises, interim business meeting may also ask the clerk of yearly meeting to call special sessions of yearly meeting." Page 244 of SEYM Faith and Practice under the topic of Executive Committee reads, "The committee acts for interim business meeting between sessions."

My reading of SEYM Faith and Practice indicates that neither EC nor IBM can approve the establishment of a Monthly Meeting, but that either meeting can request the YM clerk call a special session of Yearly Business Meeting that then could discern and potentially approve this request.

How I would proceed as YM clerk should EC or IBM approve a request that YM clerk call a special session YM Business Meeting:

- I would schedule an entirely virtual session of YM Business Meeting for the specific item(s) requested by minute of EC or IBM.
- This session would be scheduled for convenience of members to attend and announced no less

than 4 weeks in advance with documents in advance for the specific discernment requested by EC or IBM.

- The agenda would be limited to those items that EC or IBM has indicated warrant a special called YBM session.
- All other matters of business will remain in the normal process of seasoning through IBM in preparation for YBM sessions in 2025.
- Scheduling of a special called session would be publicized on the YM website and through SEYM e-news.

A proposed Minute:

SEYM Executive Committee requests the clerk of SEYM call a special session of Yearly Meeting for Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business to address the request of DeLand Worship Group in unity with Orlando Monthly Meeting that DeLand Worship Group be established and recognized as a Monthly Meeting affiliated SEYM in a manner consistent with the clerk's report received on June 22,2024.

Faithfully submitted
Bill Carlie, EC/IBM clerk

June 9, 2024, e-mail message to YM clerk from Orlando Monthly Meeting:

Dear Bill,

The Orlando Monthly Meeting approved the following minute at our Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business today:

DeLand Worship Group, now under the care of Orlando Monthly Meeting, wishes to apply to SEYM for a change in status from worship group to monthly meeting. More than thirty years ago, DeLand Worship Group formed under the care of Orlando Monthly Meeting. DeLand Worship Group then progressed from worship group to preparative meeting status, only to be laid down for a time. It resumed operation in 2019, soon again acting as a preparative meeting in all but name.

Deland Worship Group has thrived, with the attendance of many seasoned Friends, some new and some who attended the original group. It has attracted national attention among Friends, and the media, for its efforts to give books to children and students; books which affirm Friends' testimonies but offend those holding political power who mandate differing views about those testimonies.

Its attenders have taken an active role in both Orlando Monthly Meeting, and SEYM, lending their time, talents, and energy in support of the objectives of these organizations.

In accordance with the Special Circumstances outlined in SEYM's Faith & Practice (p. 223), and recognizing the number of seasoned Friends active in the DeLand Worship Group, Orlando Monthly Meeting approves, and recommends that SEYM also approve, the application of the DeLand Worship Group for a change of status from that of a worship group to that of a monthly meeting.

Please let me know if you need anything else from me in order to place this on the executive committee agenda for the June 22 meeting.

Warmly, Mira

Mira Tanna
Orlando Monthly Meeting Religious Society of Friends

June 11, 2024, e-mail to YM clerk from DeLand Worship Group:

Dear Bill,

I believe you have already received the email and Minute I have attached from Mira Tanna regarding Deland Worship Group's request to become a Monthly Meeting. We were delighted to receive Orlando Monthly Meeting's approval. There is great enthusiasm in our group for this development. Our proposed change of status will help us maintain that momentum.

For example:

1. We have a 900-book reading and give-away event planned for the Juneteenth Celebration in DeLand on June 15, 2024. We anticipate having related follow-up activities subsequent to that event. MM status would facilitate our responses to those potential activities and opportunities.
2. There are potential funders of projects presently under consideration by DWG. MM status would avoid the need to filter any grant applications through OMM's financial structure.
3. There are pending negotiations between Stetson University and the SEYM's Quaker Call Committee, that would be facilitated by DeLand's change in status;
4. There are several attenders at DWG who have patiently waited for its change of status, in order to request membership, or the transfer of membership, to DeLand Friends Meeting.

The normal path for a change of status from worship group to monthly meeting according to SEYM's Faith and Practice, is its existence for a period of time as a worship group under the care of an affiliated monthly meeting, followed by another period of time in existence as a preparative meeting, under the care of an affiliated monthly meeting, followed by another period of time, then followed by a request for a change of status made first to the monthly meeting's care committee, then, by them, to that monthly meeting. If approved by that monthly meeting, it then forwards the preparative meeting's request to SEYM. for its consideration at the following YBM. With the exception of the care committee, DeLand has moved through all of those steps over the last thirty plus years.

This quote from the Elders at Balby Meeting, written in 1656, seems particularly apropos:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by; but that all, with a measure of the light, which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

The issue DeLand Worship Group now wishes to present to E.C. is whether the "Special Circumstances" provision on page 223 of Faith and Practice, allowing worship groups to "request a different path to becoming a monthly meeting affiliated with SEYM," authorizes the SEYM Executive Committee, or, if not, then the SEYM Fall Interim Business Meeting, to adopt a minute FINALLY approving a change in status from DeLand Worship Group to

DeLand Friends Meeting, in order to allow DeLand Friends Meeting, once approved as such, to immediately incorporate, accept and manage its own funds, and receive applications and transfers of membership.

We are hoping that the SEYM Executive Committee will either itself, FINALLY approve DeLand Worship Group's request for a change of status to DeLand Friends Meeting at its June 22nd meeting, expressly authorizing DeLand Friends Meeting to immediately incorporate, open bank accounts, and accept new and transferred memberships, or, if not, that it will then recommend to SEYM's Fall Interim Business Meeting, that it FINALLY approve DeLand Worship Group's requested change of status to DeLand Friends Meeting, authorizing DeLand Friends Meeting to immediately incorporate, create and manage its own bank accounts, and accept applications and transfers of membership.

If you are able to add this item to the June 22, 2024, EC agenda, Dan Vaughen will present our request in person at the appropriate time.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Sincerely,
Jim Cain, Clerk DeLand Worship Group

June 13, 2024, response e-mail from SEYM clerk to OMM and DeLand Worship Group:

Friends,

It is wonderful to read this news from DeLand Friends. I have also received the Minute from Orlando Monthly Meeting that confirms your request to move to Monthly Meeting status is consistent with the sense of OMM. DeLand Friends have long been under the care of OMM, long enough that I served as clerk of OMM years back and had the pleasure of visiting with DeLand Friends as a Worship Group and Preparative Meeting.

I have read the news of your testimony in DeLand with pleasure and believe it has had some role in re-awakening Friends to what is possible in this post pandemic world. I will be attending the St. Pete Pride festival next weekend to share our testimony and man our booth at the festival. There is great energy in our movement to get back out in the world and I am clear as the current clerk of SPMM that news of your work in DeLand played at least a small part in this inspiration. I personally feel that your request is timely and spiritually sound.

I have reviewed your thoughtful request and also the relevant sections of Faith and Practice. I do not want to sound like a compliance officer, even though that is how I made a living, but getting process correct is the job I am not getting paid for, so I will go there for a bit.

I generally concur with your reading of the 'special circumstances' section for recognition of Monthly Meetings. I think it is applicable here, and beyond that, DeLand Friends have been working toward Monthly Meeting status for a very long time. I think the writers of that section were expecting to encounter a very expedited process for seasoned Friends who might form a Meeting quite quickly and wanted to accommodate that should it happen. I do not think the authors expected a 30 year journey. So, it seems to me that this language is easily applicable to this request. We know DeLand Friends and have appreciated their contributions to the life of the SEYM Community.

Now that I have addressed the easy lift, there is a complication. Faith and Practice specifically reserves the authority to recognize Worship Groups, Preparative Meetings and Monthly Meetings to the YM Business Meeting. This authority has not been delegated to the SEYM Executive Committee (EC) or SEYM Interim Business Meetings (IBM). Consistent with Faith and Practice neither EC nor an IBM can adopt a Minute to recognize DeLand Friends as a Monthly Meeting as neither body has the authority to do so.

There is however a path forward. Faith and Practice provides that the EC/IBM clerk and YM clerk can call a special session of Yearly Business Meeting. Now I do not imagine that authors of Faith and Practice had this use in mind, given the logistics of

finding a place for an in-person gathering, the travel expense and such, this authority would have been very unlikely to ever be used short of a crisis. I know of no occasion where it has been used in our past. That said, the provision to allow for it exists. In these times where YM Business sessions can and have been conducted entirely on-line, I think the hurdle we need to clear is lower. While I think the business should be significant to the life of the Meeting and the use of the authority should be rare, I think the purposes proposed here are sufficient, given, that it is the sense of EC for the clerk to call a special YM Business Meeting. If it is the sense of the Meeting at EC I would be most happy to facilitate such a Special YM Meeting.

I will place that discernment of the agenda for EC.

In Peace,
Bill Carlie, EC/IBM and YM clerk