**Property Committee’s Annual Report: May 2014**

**Committee Members:** Steve Brooks, Neil Froemming, Jay Harris (**Recording Clerk**), Jean Harman (**Clerk**), Brian Lutenegger, Ken Orvis, Martha Solt.

Our Committee meets on the first Monday of each month, and the third Monday of each month if a second full committee meeting is necessary. This is a lively committee with a number of members who have served on this committee for five years, a member who is an engineer, another member who is a planner by profession. This year we are focused on improving communications with members and attenders of the meeting, our tenants, our staff, and our ability to record minutes for the future of the meeting.

We are truly fortunate in having staff committed to helping maintain, and where appropriate market the property. Our Property Manager, Ken Orvis, and Administrative Secretary, Debby Churchman, have made our responsibilities and goals more pleasant and more attainable. Meeting Attender Ron Washington has been consistently helpful and available as a “casual” employee, and a great pinch-hitter on more than one occasion. More than one committee member has helped clean up floods, checked on CO2 alarms, and restart furnaces at odd hours of the day and night.

Early this year the committee met for a planning day to solidify existing, and develop new, plans. We toured the entire property with the Property Manager, discussed the Capital Improvement Task Force’s (CITF) work in developing the expansion of the meeting property to include an elevator making the FMW property accessible to all, and we defined a priority list of renovations, upgrades and maintenance projects. We began this year working in “sub” committees as follows:

* **Contracts/Bids/Construction:** Development of statements of work and research into contracts and contractors. Includes the HVAC work.
* **Finance:** Preparing the annual budget, financial (committee) planning, property inventory and maintenance study.
* **Workdays:** Planning, outreach, managing the activities and days.
* **Pet Peeves and Beautification of spaces:** Identifying and addressing issues around space use and improvements.
* **Policy Development:** Clarifying our policies, making them transparent and accessible to everyone.
* **Greening of our space:**  Initially looking at alternative providers of electricity—and from there… we will see.

**This year, in some cases after multiple years of debate and planning, we have seen the conclusion of several projects** including the completion of a kitchenette in Quaker House for tenants’ use; the launching of a contract which will repair and strengthen one of the walls in Quaker House and complete a restroom for tenants’ use on the first floor; and the initiation of combined heating and cooling (HVAC) for all of Quaker and Carriage House has begun and will likely be completed in the next two months. There are many accomplishments that are “unseen” owing to the nature of property management, for which we have our property manager to thank.

As a committee we have come to realize that it is a necessity to have a Property Manager for all of the recurring and “surprise” issues arising at any moment, in addition to the basic maintenance requirements. We have budgeted for a full time position beginning next year, increasing from a current ¾ time position.

Another recurring need is for notably improved housekeeping and cleaning in all corners of the meeting. What is currently in place is an improvement from years past but remains inadequate; the committee is in the process of finding better and more extensive services.

**Rentals, short term and longer term (tenancy), increasingly provide income for the Meeting, however not without operational costs.** Owing to the benign neglect of the facilities over many years we are still addressing issues with aging pluming and electrical systems inter alia. Within the committee there is not unity on how much we should push to maximize what income we could accrue. In the coming months we will be doing a use survey and analysis from the last two years, hoping to give us some answers and guidance. Both the property manager and the administrative secretary have been exceptionally good at helping to attract potential users of our space. We are approaching capacity of space use, for income generation and for FMW’s own space needs. This is a good thing, however one that requires we recognize the need for maintaining an appropriate balance. Another issue that arose last year, but has not yet been presented to the Meeting, is the potential for events to permit alcohol use through a licensed caterer. We intend to bring this to Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business in the immediate future.

**As a designated “religious organization” Friends Meeting of Washington is tax-exempt**, unless renting to a for-profit or non-exempt non-profit organization under the statues of the District of Columbia: if taxes are to be paid, it is done on a pro rata basis. Through the concerted efforts of the committee, led by Steve Coleman, a previous committee member, a formal appeal was made to the DC government, requesting that a review be made of the value of the property, believing the DC government tax office had over-valued the property. The outcome was not as robust as we would have liked, but the value was lessened somewhat for that particular tax year (2012), and subsequently (for the coming year), reduced even further.

**Last year we had three very successful workdays.** Workdays are a particularly good way for members and attenders to contribute to the meeting with a visual and tangible outcome. A lot of painting, cleaning, sorting and tossing, scraping, yard work other activities have been accomplished with the donation of volunteer labor. The painting of the Terrace Room, window washing, and drilling holes for drainage are some among the many activities. We ask that you please come to the upcoming workdays…. Help make a difference!

**We have a number of activities we have launched or will launch soon.** We are closely working with the Capital Improvements Task Force to ensure the best use of funds for activities that cross between the task force and the Property Committee. We will be reducing the cost of some upgrades (electricity and heat/cooling as examples) by doing it ahead of the expansion and not including it within the principle contract for the expansion. We are working closely with Trustees on funding issues.

We will be issuing a survey to the members and attenders of the Meeting, and working more closely with our tenants for increased customer service. We will launch a “reserves study” this year so that we are focused on regular maintenance and upgrades, and are less reliant on disasters or emergencies to call our attention to needed upgrades.

The Committee believes the property of the Meeting should be managed in a way that supports the Meeting’s activities and its mission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jean Harman, Clerk.