

Minutes of Peace & Social Concerns Committee, 4/23/20

Present: Diane (clerk), Ka (recording), Jane, Joel

We begin with silence

FCOO funding requests:

Soul Fire Farm from Ruth Hazzard – review not needed. Can be passed on to MfB

New requests that need presentations to P&SC:

Gardening the Community from Ruth Hazzard – new – needs presentation to P&SC. We are unable to advance this request because no one is present at our meeting to speak about it.

The Climate Disobedience Center from Mary Link (new presentation). We are favorably inclined to support the Climate Disobedience Center, but we are unable to consider this request because no formal proposal has been received, and no one is present at our meeting to speak about it.

Friends' Peace Center San Jose, Costa Rica, from Joel Plotkin: He has previously sent information about this group, abbrev CAP. They help house Nicaraguan refugees, monitor national police issues, work with migrant and refugee pops. They maintain a hostel to support Quaker activities in CR. See supporting documents attached to these minutes.

Friends agree to recommend \$200 donation from budget item FCOO for Friends Peace Center in Costa Rica. We agree to defer action on Gardening the Community and the Climate Disobedience Center until someone can be present to speak on behalf of these organizations. We are sympathetically disposed, especially to Climate Disobedience Center, and postpone with reluctance, but acknowledge the importance of a knowledgeable advocate both here and at MfB.

We end with a period of silence.

Attachments

From Joel Plotkin:

Centro de los Amigos de la Paz (CAP) , San Jose, Costa Rica

A donation of \$200 is requested to assist the Casa de los Amigos de la Paz in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Association of Quakers in the capital city of San Jose offers a space for social justice activities including refugee support, meeting space for activists, hosting visits from foreign peace and educational institutions. Weekly meeting for worship is held in their modest space. They operate a hostel, Casa Ridgway, whose income supports their peace and social justice work (in the manner that guests at the William Penn House in Washington, DC provide income to support the work of the Friends Center). Recent changes in municipal regulations and badly needed repairs have necessitated fund-raising to address a serious budget shortfall.

The donation will provide a modest boost to their fund-raising, but also raise awareness among New England Friends of their important work in Central America. Costa Rica is a recognized global leader in ecological awareness and pacifism We have the opportunity to reach out to our sibling Quakers to offer a helping hand.

Here is my latest correspondence from them with a description of their activities:

I inform you that the national sanitary measures that the Government of Costa Rica has adopted consider the extension until April 30, 2020 of the closure of airports, ports and land border crossings, of visitors to the country. In addition, the measures of confinement of the inhabitants in their homes and the closure of all educational establishments and all activities involving group meetings and massive events of all kinds are expanded.

Practically the hostel has not had guests since March 12, 2020, this, together with the financial reserves crisis that we were having at the end of last year and the beginning of the present, has generated great pressure on the operation of the Hostel itself and consequently the CHAP.

What is worrying is that the only source of financial resources for CAP is the income from lodging generated by the Hostel Casa Ridgway and, to a much lesser extent, donations for the use of meeting rooms.

This implies that the functioning and operation of the CAP is being seriously affected in its substantive tasks in the promotion and defense of Justice, peace and human rights in Costa Rica.

So the Board of Directors and the Administrative Coordination of CAP and the team of the Hostel Casa Ridgway are very grateful for any management that you carry out for the benefit of our organization.

Regarding your specific queries, which you ask us in this last email you send us, I indicate:

The areas of action developed by the Friends for Peace Center in Costa Rica are the following:

1. Permanent surveillance of the formation of the national police forces, trying to avoid the instruction of a military court in an international training center in coordination with the Observatory of the SOAW School of the Americas.
2. Promotion of the defense of the rights and autonomy of indigenous peoples in Costa Rica.
3. Ensure the defense of human rights in the country, focusing attention on the defense of the right to protest.
4. Solidarity action to serve migrant and refugee populations through the Hostel and its solidarity accommodation component.
5. Solidarity support to national social organizations that do not have their own spaces for reflection, meeting, discussion and work meetings. They are offered the spaces of the CAP rooms, so that they can hold their meetings, in many cases they do not make any financial contribution for the use of these spaces. Facilities are lent to ecological, peasant, interfaith, student organizations, etc.
6. Promotion of reflection actions in the area of Spirituality and Interreligiousness. Inter-religious dialogue for Peace.
7. The formation of a permanent commission to support the Hostel Casa Ridgway. A group of professional volunteers provide advice and establish administrative and political guidelines to consolidate the identity of the Casa Ridgway Hostel as a productive project with a clear social vision.
8. In addition, CAP maintains as an activity to promote social awareness and a meeting space for Film Cycles and Friendship Nights. Throughout the year, two film presentations are scheduled per month where, in addition to presenting a film with a sensitizing message, an informal meeting space is promoted between members of the CAP, visitors and even neighbors and guests.

The legal name of the Friends for Peace Center is:

Asociación Centro de los Amigos Cuáqueros para la Paz (Quaker Friends for Peace Center Association).

I am attaching again a document with all the legal information of contact with the CAP.

The legal representative of CAP is Mr. Luis Angel Céspedes Rodríguez, President of the Board of Directors of CAP

The Administrative Coordination of CAP is in charge of Mrs. Marcela Zamora Cruz, Treasurer of the CAP Board of Directors.

CAP means: Friends for Peace Center, it is the abbreviated name and in common use.

Regarding the connection of the CAP with the Quakers of Monteverde, I indicate that there is a communication and rapprochement relationship between the CAP and the Quakers of Monteverde, but no request for financial aid has been made with the friends of Monteverde in these moment.