

**Bethesda Friends Meeting**  
**Ad Hoc Committee on Opportunities for Our Future (AHCOOF)**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

*Q: What are Sidwell Friends School's plans?*

A: Sidwell Friends School (SFS) hopes to purchase the Washington Home at the corner of Upton and 37<sup>th</sup> Street in the District of Columbia, sell the Lower School campus in Bethesda, and relocate the Lower School to the DC campus, pending zoning approvals. Information about SFS plans can be found at: [http://www.sidwell.edu/about\\_sfs/one-campus/index.aspx](http://www.sidwell.edu/about_sfs/one-campus/index.aspx)

*Q: What is the timeline for the move?*

A: SFS intends to move the Lower School to the District in the summer of 2019, and BFM can remain at the school until then. A condition of the sale of the Lower School will be to lease the property back to SFS through the summer of 2019 to allow time for renovation of the Washington Home property.

*Q: What is the process for BFM and timeline to make a location decision?*

A: The decision will be made in Meeting for Business. We hope to make the decision by the fall of 2016, or before if Way Opens. An *ad hoc* committee on Opportunities for Our Future has been appointed to gather information and organize the process, which will include a combination of information sessions, threshing sessions, worship sharing and other activities. Information about the charge and timeline for the *ad hoc* committee can be found at: [http://www.bethesdafriends.org/oof\\_charge.aspx](http://www.bethesdafriends.org/oof_charge.aspx)

*Q: What opportunities will I have to ask questions and express my views? How can I get additional information?*

A: Any or all of the following:

- Go to the BFM web site and click the link "Opportunities for Our Future."  
[http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc\\_oof.aspx](http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc_oof.aspx) It has many useful documents and links, including a way to provide input.
- Attend Meeting for Business for regular updates and/or attend scheduled meetings on this topic. See the newsletter for dates, times and locations.
  - Contact any of the members of the *ad hoc* committee: Marion Ballard, Alex Bell, Peirce Hammond, Susan Kaul, Gail Kohanek, Jabez McClelland, Doug Smith, Ralph Steinhardt, and Amy Lear White (see the directory for their contact information).
- Minutes of *ad hoc* committee meetings, notes from information and threshing sessions, and other documents are available from members of the *ad hoc* committee.

*Q: Is there an option for Bethesda Friends Meeting to join SFS in making this move?*

A: Yes. The Head of School and the Clerk of the Board of Trustees have invited BFM to move to the DC campus and expressed their hope that we will accept. Members of the *ad hoc* committee met with the architects and SFS staff to learn about their plans and to share initial thoughts.

*Q: Is there an option to remain in our current location?*

A: If another school purchases the property, the *ad hoc* committee plans to contact them to discuss the possibility of renting space.

*Q: What other options are being considered?*

A: The *ad hoc* committee is gathering information. So far, they have found an opportunity to rent space in a new community services center being built by another church in Bethesda, and church for sale in Glen Echo. The committee is in the process of exploring other options, including additional locations suggested by people in the BFM community. Contact members of the *ad hoc* committee for specifics.

*Q: Where do people in the Bethesda Friends Meeting community live? Are we assuming that just one location will be selected? Could this divide our Meeting?*

A: We are distributed fairly evenly around the current SFS Lower School. A map of the addresses of those listed in the directory is posted here: [http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc\\_oof.aspx#docs](http://www.bethesdafriends.org/ahc_oof.aspx#docs). Our current goal is to find unity around a single location that works for the BFM community as a whole. That said, BFM is a community not a location, and we could select a primary physical location with worship groups meeting in other locations under the care of the Meeting and as part of the BFM community.

*Q: What are the cost implications to rent space or to own our own Meeting House?*

A: We are in the process of gathering cost information, but rental or purchase costs are almost certainly going to be higher than the \$8,000 annual donation we give to SFS now. Many have observed that we currently are able to devote a considerable portion of our budget to charitable giving because our space costs are so low. Thus, one important consideration is whether those in the BFM community are willing to increase their donations to the Meeting and/or reduce the Meeting's charitable giving to others. Stewardship and Finance Committee (S&F) is reviewing budget implications generally.

*Q: Is BFM in contact with other Friends meetings in the area?*

A: Yes, both to learn from their experiences and to discuss implications for our good relationships. For instance, the clerk of Friends Meeting of Washington (FMW) and the Presiding Clerk of Baltimore Yearly Meeting each attended our October Meeting for Business when the SFS Head of School came to discuss their plans with us. We are in the process of following up with FMW. A member of S&F contacted Annapolis Meeting, and they have offered to share with us their experience building a Meeting House. A follow up with them and outreach to other Meetings is being planned.