

Parking / Accessibility Ministry Report

Written by: Esther Bernard

Please list the members currently serving on your ministry or leadership team.

- ❖ Esther Bernard, Nancy Donohue, Kris Forrest, Adam Sherr

Please list what the goals of your group or ministry were for 2018.

- ❖ Our team's goals for 2018 were to explore options for providing parking beyond those currently available.

Background Information:

- ❖ An undated memo from the Elders, of which I received a copy in August 2018, expressed a concern that current parking is, or may be in the future, inadequate for (1) those attending Sunday worship services, (2) those attending special worship services or other events, (3) staff members, volunteers, service groups, and people attending meetings or dropping off supplies during the week, and (4) disabled individuals who need to park less than a block from the church (it has been suggested that there are approximately 12 disabled regular church attenders).

Current Parking Options:

- ❖ A limited number of spaces are available on church property: 6-8 in the courtyard, and 5-6 in the back. (The larger number requires cars being blocked by other cars.)
- ❖ On Sundays, and at certain other times (e.g. Choir Practice on Thursday evening), the church has obtained permission from the Philadelphia Parking Authority to park on the east side of 4th Street between New and Arch Streets, and the south side of Race Street between 3rd and 4th.

Possible Solutions:

- ❖ The above-mentioned memo from the Elders suggested several options. An additional option was suggested at our August 15, 2018 meeting. The options are/were:
 - Work with the Parking Authority to investigate expanding permissible parking designations around the church.
 1. Kristyn is our contact with the Parking Authority.
 2. Perhaps we could request permission from the Parking Authority to park on the north side of Race during church services. I gather we may have had this privilege in the past, but I am not sure.
 - b. Advocate with the Joint Venture Team to ensure that their final plan provides parking for disabled visitors and deliveries.
 - c. Inquire whether the Constitution Center could let us use their garage.
 - d. Inquire whether the Delaware River Port Authority would allow us to park under the bridge between 3rd and 2nd Streets. – This option is no longer available, as this lot has been privatized.
 - e. Reach out to the Arch Street Meeting House to allow us to park in their lot.
 - f. Reach out to St. Augustine's and St. George's to inquire whether they desire partnering with us, in any of the above or below ideas.

- g. Enlist the help of Councilman Squilla.
- h. Explore the possibility of parking in the 444 Building north of Callowhill, which is empty on Sunday. This would require a van, or a volunteer with a large car, to drive people to the church.

Actions Taken by the Team:

- ❖ On August 15, 2018, the Team (plus Michael Caine) met to review the specifics of the problem and identify possible solutions (set forth above). We concluded that the option that was both easiest and most likely to succeed, was to reach out to the Arch Street Meeting House, because they had given us permission in the past to park in their lot.
- ❖ On September 18, I met with Lynne Calamia, executive director at Arch Street Meeting House, who provided much helpful information, set forth in the Addendum to this Report.
- ❖ On September 26, the Team (without Michael) met again, and decided that the Church should submit a written request to the Arch Street Meeting for permission to park in their lot. I submitted a draft of such a letter to the Team, who edited it. Adam Sherr submitted the draft letter to the Elders, c/o Jonathan Atwood, on October 5, 2018.

What we Hope to Accomplish in 2019:

- ❖ I do not know if our letter was sent to the Arch Street Meeting House, nor what their response was. If they responded favorably, that may solve the much of the problem, in which case perhaps our only ongoing mission is to (1) make sure that the Joint Venture team working on housing for the formerly homeless is aware of the need to preserve parking spaces for Church staff, delivery people and disabled church visitors, and (2) confirm that we have adequate parking for our current disabled members.

How the Church Can Support our Team:

- ❖ The Elders could inform us whether they sent the letter to the Arch Street Meeting House and what response, if any, they received.
- ❖ It has also occurred to me, Esther, that the Church's website should be more obvious that there are parking options for Sunday worship. Apparently, the website does state this somewhere, but I've been unable to find it, and others may have the same problem.
- ❖ Perhaps Kristyn can reach out to the Parking Authority regarding parking on the north side of Race Street.

ADDENDUM: REPORT OF MY MEETING WITH ARCH STREET MEETING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEPTEMBER 18,2018:

I (Esther Bernard) met with Lynne Calamia, executive director at Arch Street Meetinghouse, on Tuesday September 18. Here is a summary of what she told me.

No Free Parking: Our permission to use the parking lot *for free* was clearly a mistake, and against their policy. It was authorized by a staff member who has been terminated.

Mikveh Israel currently has permission to use the lot, under an arrangement that Lynne characterized as "informal." Mikveh Israel makes a "financial donation" to cover the cost. The only other authorized users are exclusively people with a Quaker affiliation, who also make a financial donation.

Administrative Authority over Parking Lot: There appear to be several organizations with authority to oversee the Arch Street Meeting parking lot, and they may not necessarily agree on parking lot policy. They are the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the Arch Street Monthly Meeting, and a newly created Arch Street Preservation Trust, a 501(c)(3) organization. The Yearly Meeting has administered the lot in the past, and has wanted to limit parking lot use to Quaker-affiliated cars only (although somehow Mikveh Israel slipped in there).

Her suggestions: Lynne has been charged with developing a formal policy regarding the parking lot, by November, for approval by these various authorities. She recommends that we submit to her a written statement requesting permission to park there, supported by reasons why it would be in the Meeting's best interests to allow us to do so.

The most important consideration would be to demonstrate that allowing us to park there is aligned with the Meeting's mission. We should emphasize (1) what Old First's mission has in common with theirs, and (2) how we are all interested in community development. The reason for emphasizing the alignment of our missions is (1) to engage their sympathies (duh), and (2) to comply with applicable nonprofit law that does not allow the Meeting to have business income unrelated to its mission. With respect to reason #2, she told me that L&I enforces this rule.

Cost: I should have, but did not, ask her what people are paying/donating to park there.