“How can NPYM be Family Friendly?” First, care must be taken in both our actions and advertizing about being “Family Friendly” that we do not leave people feeling left out if they do not consider themselves being in a family currently.

There are many factors that make attendance at the Annual Session difficult for families with children. Most of them are beyond NPYM's control, such as competing priorities for the family's limited vacation time. However, the cost of attending the Annual Session is one area that we can affect by cost-shifting in various ways.

Therefore, our discussion focused on that with attention to the following concerns:

The cost shifting discussion is a manifestation of reaching for a new vision of how the Annual Session can add value to the monthly meetings.

Should certain costs of Annual Session, such as the program fee, be borne by Yearly Meeting as a whole rather than just by those who attend?

The cost of room and board clearly is a cost for attenders to pay, but does the Yearly Meeting have a responsibility for all or some of the program fee?

This will raise current assessment, which is now $48 per year. The increase could be as high as $20. About $120 per person is the approximate program fee in recent years.

Is the personal gain from attendance at Annual Session transferred to the Yearly Meeting as a whole or does it accrue largely to the individuals who attend?

Members of worship groups and isolated Friends do not have the resources to support as rich a Quaker experience as those who attend Monthly Meetings. If they felt they had already paid part of the cost of the Annual Session they might be more motivated to go

It may be that Friends who do not necessarily attend themselves would be willing to pay a higher assessment to support attendance by Junior Friends and Young Friends?

Closely related to cost shifting is the discussion on increasing the attendance at Annual Session:

Is the impetus to shift cost a way to encourage attendance generally or an attempt to create more equitable way of funding?

Would a more robust scholarship program increase attendance? Is the cost an impediment to attendance? Survey by children's program indicated that cost was somewhat of a barrier for some families. Other barriers were also cited.

Could an aspect of Annual Session be developed to compete with “summer camp” as an option for some families?

How can the Yearly Meeting be more family friendly and also make it more friendly for the rest of the membership to attend?

Is part of the reluctance to attend that Annual Session is seen as a family – parents and children – event and as less relevant to Friends who don’t fit that description.

Would more “talking up” of Annual Session – letting Friends know what goes on there – help motivate attendance?

Would making the weekend a self contained experience at Annual Session convince Friends to come for
part of, but not the complete, Session.

This brings us back to the fundamental question of the relationship of the Annual Session to NPYM and to monthly meetings, and the need for broad discernment among the meetings concerning these relationships. We concluded that if the Annual Session is discerned by meetings to be as vital as our committee thinks it is, then the cost of holding it should be shared in some way by NPYM as a whole and by the attenders. Specific ways to share the costs need to await the outcome of the discernment process.

Historically, the Annual Session has been self-supporting, with the its entire cost paid by the attenders (supplemented by Financial Aid through their monthly meetings and indirectly as needed by the NPYM Financial Aid fund). This means the ASPC has full authority to determine the entire budget for the Annual Session. We [the ASPC] have used various cost-shifting strategies at different times to make the cost burden more “Family Friendly”, including reducing the Program Fee for children of various ages, adjusting the Meals Fee for children (especially at those venues where the adult meal price applied to everyone 4 years old or older), and with the Children's Cap for larger families. Note that whenever we reduce the price for one group, the revenue to cover that cost needs to be shifted into the overall Program Fee.

**Our recommendations** to Coordinating Committee and NPYM Executive Committee:

1. To create a new Ad Hoc Committee with a charge to survey the monthly meetings and spark discussion there about the relationships among the Annual Session, the Yearly Meeting and themselves. The discussion should include the effect that greater participation in the Annual Session would have for the participants and for their local meetings. It should also include consideration of how to make the Annual Session as affordable for families with children as possible.