

Property Committee met on July 20, 2023, and approved recommending to Monthly Meeting for Business scheduled of July 30, 2023, that security cameras be installed on the exterior of the Meeting's three buildings Meeting property. Kevin Lee submitted the following report to Business Meeting on behalf of the committee:

Most recently, over the past four years we have had, in total, 17 separate incidents, a combination of expressed hate speech, theft, and now, just recently, intentional property damage to one of our Community House.

And we know that theft of meeting property didn't begin with our more recent public testimony. Over the past 30 years we have had a large and valuable antique wooden frame that held a Quaker reading in hand calligraphy disappear from the meetinghouse foyer in the days following a private wedding in our meetinghouse. And, at one point, our Meeting owned 60 wooden child-size chairs that we kept in our Community House, which over the years dwindled down to no more than four remaining today. In both instances, a thief obviously carried these away, and we had no way of determining who.

Our three buildings sit on nearly 2 acres of land, with a long frontage on a well-traveled road that has served us well for attracting visitors to our annual Book Fair, and for exposure in expressing our witness to social justice causes that are central to our faith as Friends. The remaining three sides of our boundary border on uninhabited properties, and allow easy access to anyone to enter with ill intent. For the majority of time throughout the week, our property has no one around, and throughout every night our buildings are empty with no one on site.

Property Committee has discussed the pros and cons of installing security cameras on the exterior of our buildings on and off for some time. But the most recent vandalism, the intentional cutting of screens in what are mainly unlit areas behind the Potter House, was a wakeup call. A wake up call because detractors are no longer sending us vulgar emails or tearing away at signage. Instead, it's reasonable to believe that they are now intentionally damaging our buildings. The screens were cut 4, at most 5, days following our decision to display an LGBTQ banner on the front of our Community House.

When the screens were cut, as in previous episodes of vandalism, we filed a police report. I was impressed by the officer who came over to take the report most recently. He noted that we have had three previous police reports, with this one being the fourth, citing damage to our property. His recommendation, of course, was to consider installing security cameras, just as we had been advised previously. The officer also said that it has been their observation that when security cameras are installed on property that had been vandalized repeatedly, that the vandalism stopped.

Our fear as members of Property Committee is that our structures are in danger by not taking additional steps to *obviate* further property damage. Our greatest fear is that someone "will take the next step" and set one of our buildings ablaze. (Just last week, a Unitarian Universalist Church in Austin Texas, a liberal island in a very red state, was firebombed. The church had a fire alarm system, which saved the church, but no security cameras, but they are considering them now. We feel we are blessed to have a Community House that serves our needs, and that of the community, a Book Shed, that helps us meet our annual income requirements, and a 300 year-plus old historic, Meetinghouse, beloved by many, as a structure, and as a place of worship, that should be protected for our use, and hopefully for generations to follow, just as our forebearers did so for us.

Toward that end, and with the encouragement of Property Committee, I reached out to Wayne Electric, the same company that oversees our fire alarm system. Their head technician met with me for a two hour

assessment of our buildings, inside and out, this past Wednesday morning to determine the best location to place exterior cameras, to cover our three buildings, the front parking lot, the large BLM sign, and the remaining sides of our boundary lines. Efforts were made to limit visible cameras mounted on the Meetinghouse itself. The security technician, Gary Bendiksen, sent us a rough estimate on Friday with two detailed options for providing video security, including related video recorders with remote viewing capabilities. One estimate came in at around \$12,000 and the other at \$14,000.

Property Committee, as one body, feels it is time for our Meeting to seriously consider installing exterior security cameras. But we also seek further discussion among members, realizing that many questions likely remain.

Thank you, Friends.