

Albuquerque Monthly Meeting of Quaker Friends

*Towards a Common Vision of Sustainability during
New Building Construction*

March 18, 2026

AMM New Building Basics

- 2000 s/f auxiliary building adjacent to current Meeting house
- Single story, fully accessible building
- Primary purpose: primary area for children/youth program
 - currently children programming located in dark basement
 - downstairs area not accessible by anyone with mobility issues
- Secondary purpose: Social hall, classrooms, meeting room
 - dual use design for children's programming and social hall
 - meeting space for community groups

What AMM already agreed to do...
On January 4, 2026 AMM passed the following Minute:

“Albuquerque Monthly Meeting will strive to proceed with an ethically and environmentally informed, climate ready, Quaker testimony aligned construction process for an auxiliary building adjacent to our existing Meeting House and to our existing built structures”

Query: How will AMM honor this Minute?

Quaker Values Overview

This slide show highlights 2 critical aspects of sustainability and how they relate to Quaker Values

Foundational Quaker Value:
“We live in that virtue of life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars”

- George Fox, “Journal of George Fox”, vol. 1, 1650

- **Equitable Labor Practices**

- Avoids child and exploitive labor, supports safe working environments, empowers workers

- **Responsible material sourcing and production practices**

- Materials used are sourced in a manner that minimizes environmental impact and unfair labor
- Production of materials does not contribute to climate change

First let's establish a common understanding in our language...

Climate/Carbon related Basics

“CO2” - a greenhouse gas that traps heat in the atmosphere, driving **climate change**. Released by burning fossil fuels.

“Carbon footprint” - the total amount of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide, CO2—released into the atmosphere as a result of human activities.

“Embodied carbon” - the total greenhouse gas emissions including CO2 from the entire life cycle of a product or building, covering raw material extraction, manufacturing, transport, installation, maintenance, and disposal

Climate/Carbon Building Considerations

- **“Operational carbon”** - refers to greenhouse gas emissions generated by a building's energy consumption during its use and operation over its lifetime, including heating, cooling, lighting, and equipment.
- **“Net zero carbon building”** - a highly energy-efficient structure that produces on-site or procures enough carbon-free renewable energy to balance its total energy consumption, resulting in zero or negative annual carbon emissions.
- **“Climate Ready”** - Constructing a building for the climate we will have during the building's lifetime. Over the next 60 years NM will be roughly 8 degrees hotter with unstable weather patterns.

Other Construction-Related Definitions

“Made in USA” -Made in the USA" means a product is "all or virtually all" made in the United States, with nearly all its components, materials, and processing occurring domestically, under Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines; it signifies substantial U.S. content, labor, and final assembly.

“Fair Trade” -Fair trade is an ethical, audit-based certification system ensuring producers in developing countries receive fair wages, work in safe conditions, and use sustainable, environmentally friendly practices. “Equal Exchange” is a type of fair trade that emphasizes democratic ownership of production and fair prices for the producers. It often refers to agricultural and food crops and small-scale handicrafts.

Example - Embodied Carbon

2 Bricks, they look and function the same



High embodied carbon (& less sustainable/less known production process) -

- made in a foreign country in a coal fired plant with unknown safety and labor standards from clay mined with unknown labor and safety standards. Transported long distances.



Lower embodied carbon (& more sustainable/known production process) -

- made in Albuquerque (Kinney Brick) in natural gas fired plant with federally mandated safety and labor standards from clay mined from a NM mine regulated by the US Mine Safety and Health Administration. The minerals and materials are sourced in a way that is honest and fair that empowers both laborers and consumers.

Example – Embodied & Operational Carbon

The embodied and operational carbon in any material can vary over a wide range from very low to very high

High embodied and operational carbon: A gas range with low efficiency ratings made in a country without fair trade credentials.

- EMBODIED CARBON: CO₂ emitted in manufacture and transporting range to USA
- OPERATIONAL CARBON: burning gas emits CO₂ into the atmosphere + low efficiency in combustion of gas emits greater amounts of CO₂
mining/extraction of gas creates additional ongoing carbon emissions
- OTHER: uncertain labor practices in country of manufacture



Low embodied and operational carbon: An electric range with high efficiency ratings with “Made in USA” certification powered by solar panels.

- EMBODIED CARBON: lower CO₂ emitted in manufacture and transporting range to USA
- OPERATIONAL CARBON: stove emits no CO₂ during operation
efficient conversion of electricity to heat
electricity provided by on-site solar panels
- OTHER: fair labor practices assured



Commercial Construction Considerations

“Commercial vs. residential construction” - Code requirements, zoning, location and building use define whether a structure is deemed commercial or residential. A key factor is if a structure is used by “the public” vs. private family use.

- The AMM project, as a religious space, is designated by the City of Albuquerque as a **“commercial”** project, as it meets the definition above.
- Licensure requirements for commercial contractors is more stringent than residential contractors. In New Mexico commercial contractors are licensed as a “GB-98” contractor vs. a “GB-02” for residential contractors. A commercial contractor can build homes and commercial structures but a residential contractor cannot build commercial structures.

Building Site Considerations

A major driver for whether a building is built in a sustainable manner and performs at or near Net-Zero energy is the suite of traditional, passive practices that affect a building.

- site location
- wind and light patterns
- passive heating and cooling
- air circulation and ventilation
- glazing location and type
- shading of windows and other spaces
- drainage and other passive design elements.

Collectively these considerations can have a dramatic impact on the overall energy use, comfort and maintenance requirements of a building.

Additional Design Considerations for Sustainable Construction

- **Water-** In the arid Southwest designing for efficient water use is critical.
- **Comfort-** A comfortable building is a well used and loved building. Mechanical systems, light, traffic flow, ventilation, and sound are all considerations in creating a comfortable space.
- **Durability-** Minimal maintenance and reducing the need for replacing materials and systems over time reduces the operational carbon footprint of a building.

Proposal: the “Just Green Path”

Within every industry producing materials used in construction, there are individuals and companies very concerned about climate change.

The “Just Green Path” represents that portion of an industry that is striving to produce their product in a sustainable manner that reduces CO2 emissions and establishes equitable labor practices.

- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for wood products, Environmental Product Declarations (EPD's) for steel, the Concrete Sustainability Council for concrete and cement, LEED for built structures and Energy Star for appliances are some of the certifying agencies.
- Understanding the complete supply chain for a given material is key to identifying the “Just Green Path” for that material and industry.

A Just Green Path Example: Low embodied carbon steel

Steel production is a major contributor to climate change, generating roughly 10% of global CO2 emissions.

Conventional steel production (high embodied carbon)

- open blast furnace represents 80% of world production of steel
- extracts iron ore from mines with unknown labor/safety practices
- uses coal to fire production
- mostly offshore and must be transported to USA

Just Green Path Steel (low embodied steel with fair labor practices)

- made from recycled metal
- uses electric arc furnace process to melt steel
- electric power can come from solar farms
- most steel mills in USA are electric arc furnace (but power not always from wind/solar)

A Unique Opportunity for AMM

- Build a **net-zero, equitably sustainable/low harm commercial** building
- Strive to **find and promote the Just Green Path** in materials and processes used during construction
 - Evaluate amount of embodied carbon in construction materials
 - Research the supply chains for construction materials and other items
 - Document our research and create carbon “score sheets” for products and processes used.
 - Advocate with all parties in the supply chain to seek and support the Just Green Path.

An Opportunity to Demonstrate Equitable Sustainability

- Sustainable solutions which take into consideration Quaker Testimonies, seeing that of Spirit in those people harmed in the materials mining, sourcing, and manufacturing process
- Equitable practices which do not export the consequences of our desire for an eco friendly building, into vulnerable communities located near rare earth mines (pollution of air, ground water, and soil for the materials in our buildings, batteries, electronics)

Can we state the Who, What and Why?

If the AMM new building is to be a “demonstration” project...

Who...are we demonstrating to?

- Which audience are we trying to address?

What... are we demonstrating?

- What goal are we trying to achieve or what values are we illustrating?

Why... is this goal/value important?

- Why should others become enthusiastic about our Project or become supporters?

A Who, What, Why Statement for AMM

- **Who:** Albuquerque Monthly Meeting will create a demonstration project for Quaker Meetings, organizations and other faith communities in America as well as commercial contractors, architects and other interested parties.
- **What:** We will develop a model to evaluate construction materials and processes for alignment with Quaker testimonies, equitable sustainability, low embodied and operating carbon while building a simple and elegant commercial building. AMM will produce educational materials for wide dissemination to assist organizations in lowering their carbon footprint in construction, remodeling and maintenance of commercial built structures, highlighting the research and activities we followed in constructing our new building.
- **Why:** Our goal is to demonstrate that the construction process can reduce the seeds of violence and war, inhumane labor practices and human rights violations, slow climate change, and to encourage and highlight fair trade practices. We can “bend the arc” in the supply chain for commercial construction materials to reduce CO2 emissions and reduce suffering. By highlighting the Just Green Path within industries and developing training materials, we will forge a path for others to follow, that collectively, has a chance of making a tangible and real difference in climate change and reduce the human harm present in the global supply chain, manufacturing and disposal.

Potential Partners

For AMM's focus on Climate Change, there are many local partners willing to assist

- UNM Sustainability Studies Program
- UNM School of Architecture
- Quaker EarthCare Witness and other Quaker organizations
- American Institute of Architects (AIA) "Architecture 2030" Initiative (Based in Santa Fe)
- Carbon Leadership Forum
- US Green Building Council (New Mexico chapter)
- The International Living Future Institute
- Interfaith Power and Light

Secondary Benefits to AMM

In adopting this “Quaker Testimony Aligned” framework for our building project, there are many potential benefits and opportunities to AMM

- A deeper understanding of equitable sustainability and the potential to reduce violence
- A potential long term multi-year Mission for AMM within the Quaker community
- Could generate a high level of enthusiasm within our AMM community as well as regional and national enthusiasm
- Deeper ties with our neighbors and local community
- Deeper alignment of our modern lives with our values as Quakers
- Fundraising potential at the regional and national level
- Multiple potential grant funding opportunities

Closing Thoughts

Whatever direction AMM takes in honoring our Minute on sustainability, lets remember that...

We must not let the Perfect be the enemy of the Good

“Let us be careful neither to out-go our guide, nor yet loiter behind him; since he that makes haste, may miss his way, and he that stays behind, lose his guide.”

– William Penn

With Spirit’s guidance, we can build a beautiful, simple, accessible, elegant and functional building, full of light and joy, that meets the needs and callings of our youth, our members and our community for many years to come.

On the way, there may be stress, compromise, and the need to care for one another. Our building can reflect both our Quaker values, including our ability to find way forward together as a community.

And, we hope to “bend the arc” for other construction projects towards a path that values justice, peace, and sustainability.

Thank You!

For further information or to financially support this project, contact:

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