

Property Committee Report

09/20/2026

The Property Committee met in person on the evening of August 11, 2026 to discuss the courtyard remodel. Those in attendance were Von K., Pam S., Julia H., Josh R., and Bill W. The meeting began with silence.

Update on Other Issues:

- ✓ Our lawn person, Kenny, picked up the riding mower the Meeting purchased and things being as they are (hot & dry) has cut the lawn once. He seems grateful for our assistance. He will discount his rate by 50%, which will result in him paying back \$250 of the \$3,599 cost every time he services the property.
- ✓ There have been issues with roaches in the children's bathroom. Current approaches have not been effective, and we are looking at some alternatives.
- ✓ We had a storm-related power outage that has resulted in the timers on our exterior lights being reversed. (They come on during the day and go off at night.) We are trying to correct this problem but have been unsuccessful thus far. We may need new timers. In other storm-related news, we lost a tree at the corner of Eisenhower and Vandiver and large branches of a tree along the walkway. These have been cut and are awaiting pickup. Thanks to those Friends who cleared part of the tree by the walkway so that Emily Provance could continue her session.

As stated previously in this report, the primary purpose of the August 11 meeting was to focus on the courtyard remodel. We reviewed the summary of our various discussions since February (attached), and determined we were ready to start thinking about landscape architects that might be able to help us move forward. We agreed that we would search out or seek recommendations for these professionals. Members of the committee provided suggestions. There seemed to be some interest in two designers and Bill W. provided them with our summary document (attached) and some photographs of the space.

An initial meeting was held with Jean Robinson (<https://www.jeanrobinsondesign.com/>) on September 11 with Bill W., Bill S., and Pam S. in attendance and Kaidan Nguyen of Coral Studio (<https://www.coral-studio.com/>) on September 16 with Bill W. in attendance. Both of these folks had some interesting insights and thoughts about next steps that will be discussed at the next meeting of the committee once we identify a date.

The meeting ended with silence.

Faithfully submitted for the committee,

Bill Wilkinson, Clerk

FMSA Courtyard Feedback Summary

Over the course of 2026, the Property Committee has had both formal and informal discussions about the courtyard and consideration of an updated design. Much of this has been accomplished by providing images of what possible modifications could look like and reactions to those images. During this time several themes have emerged and are summarized here.

Broad Agreement

Friends generally envision the courtyard as:

- ✓ A welcoming and peaceful space.
- ✓ Functional for multiple uses rather than designed around a single purpose.
- ✓ Reflective of Quaker values of simplicity and stewardship.
- ✓ Attractive without becoming difficult to maintain.
- ✓ More inviting than the current courtyard.

Many comments suggest the design should balance beauty with practicality rather than maximize landscaping.

1. Flexibility and Open Space

Strong Agreement

This was one of the strongest recurring themes.

Friends consistently expressed a desire to preserve:

- ✓ room for circles
- ✓ outdoor worship
- ✓ community gatherings
- ✓ tables and chairs, when needed
- ✓ children's play

Many felt that flexibility is one of the courtyard's greatest assets and should not be compromised.

Representative comments include:

- ✓ "More open space for possible gatherings."
- ✓ "People could use the courtyard for events."
- ✓ "Forming circles and setting up tables and chairs."
- ✓ "Space to run through and gallop about."

Some Disagreement

Some concepts included:

- ✓ outdoor classroom
- ✓ children's discovery areas
- ✓ additional seating
- ✓ pollinator gardens

Others worried these elements would create clutter and reduce usable space.

2. Landscaping

Strong Agreement

There is overwhelming support for:

- ✓ native plants
- ✓ xeriscaping
- ✓ drought-tolerant species
- ✓ pollinator habitat
- ✓ wildlife-friendly landscaping

Many comments specifically mention stewardship of water resources.

Plant Suggestions Receiving Positive Comments

- ✓ Frog Fruit
- ✓ Horseherb / Straggler Daisy
- ✓ Native Portulaca
- ✓ Pollinator plants
- ✓ Wildlife habitat plants

Concerns

Non-native plants were a concern for Friends as well as making sure proposed plants actually perform well in San Antonio conditions.

3. Maintenance

This was perhaps the strongest practical concern.

Strong Agreement

Friends repeatedly emphasized:

- ✓ low maintenance
- ✓ realistic volunteer capacity
- ✓ avoiding designs that require intensive upkeep

Representative comments include:

- ✓ "We cannot keep up with what we have."
- ✓ "Ground cover should be low maintenance."

Suggested Maintenance Strategies

- ✓ mulch
- ✓ cardboard instead of landscape fabric
- ✓ raised beds
- ✓ planters instead of in-ground beds
- ✓ minimizing total garden area

4. Garden Beds

Significant Disagreement

View A

Reduce garden beds.

Reasons:

- ✓ maintenance burden

- ✓ preserve open space
- ✓ reduce clutter

View B

Keep gardens but improve them.

Suggestions:

- ✓ raised beds, though they can create maintenance issues
- ✓ brick edging
- ✓ larger but fewer beds
- ✓ pollinator gardens
- ✓ educational gardens

Areas of Agreement

If gardens exist, they should:

- ✓ be attractive
- ✓ be manageable
- ✓ not overwhelm the courtyard

5. Ground Cover

General Agreement

Ground cover should be:

- ✓ drought tolerant
- ✓ low maintenance
- ✓ attractive
- ✓ compatible with Texas climate

Options Discussed

Support for:

- ✓ Frog Fruit
- ✓ Horseherb
- ✓ mulch
- ✓ small lawn
- ✓ flagstone with living ground cover

Less support for non-native species

6. Lawn

Mixed Opinions

Some Support

A small lawn:

- ✓ gives children room to play
- ✓ is easier to maintain than many garden beds
- ✓ provides functional gathering space

Concerns

Traditional lawns:

- ✓ require water
- ✓ require mowing
- ✓ are less consistent with xeriscaping goals

7. Seating

General Agreement

Seating is important.

Desired characteristics:

- ✓ Chair/benches need backs for older adults
- ✓ comfortable
- ✓ permanent seating

Additional Ideas

- ✓ folding chair storage
- ✓ stump seating for children
- ✓ benches around perimeter
- ✓ circular gathering space

Concern

Too many benches could reduce flexibility.

8. Accessibility

Suggestions include:

- ✓ supportive benches
- ✓ avoiding unnecessary steps
- ✓ maintaining accessibility

9. Shade

General support exists for additional shade.

Ideas included:

- ✓ shade sails
- ✓ preserving tree shade

Concerns

Shade sails:

- ✓ collect water
- ✓ require substantial supports
- ✓ may be difficult to install correctly

10. Educational Features

Several Friends liked:

- ✓ outdoor classroom
- ✓ pollinator gardens
- ✓ children's nature spaces
- ✓ butterfly, bee, and bird habitat

Others worried these features could limit flexibility.

Conclusion

Major Areas of Consensus

The strongest points of agreement appear to be:

- ✓ Use native, drought-tolerant plants.
- ✓ Design for realistic maintenance.
- ✓ Preserve significant open space.
- ✓ Make the courtyard flexible for worship, gatherings, and community use.
- ✓ Provide comfortable seating with backs.
- ✓ Use water wisely.
- ✓ Reduce unnecessary hardscape while limiting softscape maintenance issues.
- ✓ Create a welcoming and beautiful space.

Possible Design Considerations Emerging from the Discussion

Rather than focusing immediately on individual design elements, the Meeting might find unity around a set of guiding principles such as:

1. **Maintain flexibility** so the courtyard can accommodate worship, community events, children's play, and informal gatherings.
2. **Practice stewardship** through native plants, water conservation, and sustainable landscaping.
3. **Design within our capacity** by choosing features that volunteers can realistically maintain.
4. **Create a welcoming space** that is comfortable, accessible, and inviting to visitors of all ages.
5. **Balance beauty with simplicity**, avoiding unnecessary clutter while providing visual interest.