

**Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees**

268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Marianne Alt, president, called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Also in attendance: Board members Ed Dobrowolski, Nathalie Edmond (process observer), Patrick Kahney, Pete Rafle, Lynne Quinto, Pam Shadzik, John Ueng-McHale (timekeeper), Colin Unsworth, Rev. Kim Wildszewski.

Consent agenda

Marianne explained the rationale the new approach to the Consent Agenda (see Appendix A.)

Discussion:

Questions were raised about the reasons for this approach. Marianne explained that by having details available as pre-reads before the meeting, the Board can begin with questions rather than a presentation. The pre-reads will also allow for reflection and research as needed.

The Consent Agenda included the staff reports, a report from the Executive Team, an explanation of the new approach to the Consent Agenda and an update on of the Strategic Visioning Task Force.

The staff reports are included as appendices.

Clarifications made during the discussion of the Consent Agenda:

- Difference between the Faith Forward and Coming in to Connection courses.
- A heads-up should be given if the Board or Executive Team refers an action to a Committee, Team or Task Force.
- SVTF team will not hold additional Cottage Meetings prior to the Congregational Meeting. Additional meetings will be held when firm prices for renovations are determined.

Pam moved to accept the consent agenda. John seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurers Report

Lynne reported that the books for 2016-2017 are now closed. John asked Lynne to explain the difference in the cash reserve line in the June and July reports. Lynne also explained that 3 to 6 months of reserve is sufficient and the current reserve is 4.5 months.

Racial Justice Initiative

Nathalie updated the board on RJI plans and shared the notes from the last meeting. She explained that the Praxis Self-Assessment needs a cross section of the congregation to participate. While some have volunteered, people representing the following demographics are needed: Romeos, a new member, Worship Associates, Choir, Finance and a Millennial. The Praxis group will meet from September through June and will be facilitated by Nathalie and Dan Tuft.

Executive Session

The Board went in to Executive Session at 8:03 PM.

Motion for Congregational Meeting

Ed moved that the Board of Trustees direct the Board Secretary to call a Congregational meeting on September 17th to present the findings of the Strategic Visioning Task Force and to obtain Congregational Approval to proceed with a Capital Campaign. The motion was seconded by John and passed unanimously.

Annual Evaluation of the Minister

After a discussion of the pre-read material, Lynne moved and Patrick seconded that we authorize Pam to conduct an annual evaluation of the Minister to be carried out in the next two months and to assemble a task force to develop a methodology to ensure a consistent process for future evaluations.

Board Retreat Planning

Marianne will send an email with Retreat details.

The following items were added to the Retreat Agenda:

- Proposed time change of the first service on Sunday.
- Article for the next edition of Cross Currents (An article on Board Goals was suggested.)

Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on September 13 at 7 PM. A Special Meeting will be held on August 16 at 7 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Ed Dobrowolski

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendices

Appendix A: A New Approach to Consent Agenda

Appendix B: Minister's Report

Appendix C: DLRE Report

Appendix D: Administrator's Report

Appendix A: A New Approach to the Consent Agenda

This is a summary on the idea of a Consent Agenda and our evolving use of it. This is new to most of us, so it feels a little bit like the blind leading the blind. There are advantages, which I list later in this summary.

First, a Consent Agenda assumes that decisions are being made and actions need to be taken prior to the monthly board meeting. Things happen and need attention, but not by the full board. The consent agenda can communicate those and the decisions/actions ratified by the full board. e.g.: Our current C.A. contains three reports from the Minister, DLRE and Administrator. We accept/ratify these reports each month as actions taken as part of the work of the church.

Second, it assumes people are meeting formally and informally to make those decisions and take those actions. Moving forward the Executive Team of the Board (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and Rev. Kim) will meet to discuss current issues, make decisions and take actions. The 'minutes' from this meeting will be part of the Consent Agenda. No decision will be binding and no policy decisions will be made. In addition, the Exec Team will develop the agenda for the upcoming Board meeting. Right now, we are planning one exec team meeting a month 1-2 weeks prior to the board meeting. Informally, Rev. Kim might call the Pres. or other Exec. Board member for input or help making a decision. This would be communicated in the Minister's Report which, as explained above, is part of the Consent Agenda.

Third, the Consent Agenda requires more from each Board Member PRIOR to the meeting. Any report that would normally have been given AT the Board meeting should be submitted PRIOR to the Board Meeting. e.g. Pete will submit a short report regarding his recent attendance at the Strategic Visioning Task Force meeting last week. All pre-reads need to be fully read. Any questions can be directed to report providers prior to the meeting or at the meeting, if useful to the full group.

Fourth, board members can pull anything off of the Consent Agenda if they wish to re-open discussion rather than ratify a decision. (Again, no decisions are binding in the C.A. until ratified by the full board).

Fifth, some things should NOT be included on the consent agenda: the Treasure's Report and any information involving congregants or staff.

Advantages: Relying more heavily on the C.A. for decisions and actions allow us to;

- 1) focus on policy vs. management. This is what the congregation needs from us. The committees and staff can manage, we need to give them the framework to work within.
- 2) free up monthly meeting for discussion of proposals rather than listening to the presentation of information.

Other Practices

These practices are not directly linked to a consent agenda but are suggested (by another minister) to help us function as an effective, efficient, thoughtful board. We will not discuss these but you can keep them in the back of your mind for meetings and the retreat. My notes are italics.

* Present policies, procedures, or other more thoughtful votes at one meeting and vote at the next. Have dialogue in between the meetings- not at the meeting itself.

Not sure I agree with this entirely...could create fractured discussions. Still think some initial discussion at board meeting is helpful.

* Unless it is an emergency- if it takes more than 20 minutes to discuss- then table it for a month and have discussion in other forums.

e.g. Changing the time of the first service...Ed offered to talk to Romeos and Kim suggested holding feedback circles after services.

I feel we do these three fairly well, and will continue to improve:

* Return as much work to committees and teams as possible. Refrain from micromanaging. Trust the committees to do their work. (In the last two churches, dealing with rodents came up on the agenda. I calmly asked, "why is this on the board agenda?")

* Org charts help clarify. I ask what the limitations of decision making for individuals, committees, teams, staff, minister, board. Where does the decision finally rest - does it have to be the Board?

* Appropriate staff as ex-officio members of the Board. Especially the DRE if they work 20 hours or more.

Consent-Based Decision Making

This is a different idea from Consent Agenda – it's a process rather than a procedure but they are linked. We can discuss this at the retreat, as well.

Different than consensus-- sometimes called sociocracy, consent-based decision making uses some principles of consensus, but instead of asking "what do we all want" it asks "what can we all live with." It's also proposal driven, which means you have some convo about a topic but try to get to a proposal pretty quickly, and then use reactions/objections to the proposal to tease out a better proposal. Objections are treated as information, vital to getting to the best possible solution.

Appendix B: Minister's Report

Board Report
August 2017
Minister's Report

UUCWC Mission

To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World
What does it mean to be a Community of Rootedness?

Create Community

For the last month we've moved through the theme of Hospitality and now we enter Rootedness. Caryl Tipton, Rich DiGeorgio, and Beloved Conversations representatives led worship on my Sundays off. Attendance remains steady and strong for summer services; religious education attendance has been up; and I led a Roots class for newcomers in July.

Robin and I met with a group of elders in the congregation to discuss "elder invisibility". The conversation was nuanced and important, bringing to light the need for specific age or ability demographics to be understood by the wider whole, including but not limited to the older population.

I have written an Adult Coming of Age curriculum this summer with a lot of help from Robin. We both believe this program could be hugely impactful in addressing some of the above-mentioned invisibility, but more so a yearning for connection across generations and time in congregation.

This upcoming Sunday we welcome Sue Flynn, Ministerial Resident, to the congregation. She begins on Monday and we are all thrilled! Similarly, Ana DelCorazon returned to NJ / UUCWC this past week and has already begun meeting with our Neighborhood Potluck coordinators as well as many others to tighten our opportunities for intentional connection. New publications have been made to talk about membership and general experience at UUCWC. We continue to be hopeful that we will be able to implement the Faith Forward program.

Celebrate Life

There is a lot of heavy pastoral care in the congregation right now. Hard diagnosis; life transitions; Right Relations work continues to weigh on congregants from all perspectives and involvement in the work.

In July I co-officiated a wedding. Since then, I've been meeting with one couple to plan their wedding for this upcoming March and another two couples to plan their children's dedications this fall. I will be officiating a wedding this weekend.

I was on vacation for one week and Study Leave the week following. I did not take advantage of my full time off this year and while some of this carries over, I am striving to be more intentional about using both Study Leave and Vacation throughout the year rather than only in the summer months which feels unfair to the congregation and too much time out of the work for me.

Change the World

I meet with Noreen Duncan, the head of the racial justice work of the Episcopal Diocese of NJ, tomorrow for discussion on how we can partner with her and the communities she represents.

Angelo Lewis, a friend of UUCWC, publishes a podcast on religion and spirituality. I will be featured on one of these in late August.

Not for congregational publication:

After a few unsettling interactions with a visitor and an inability to communicate this to anyone other than the Worship Associate next to me, I called for a Safety Team meeting. Realizing that we have no form of communication to alert anyone outside of the pulpit to a potential issue, and that the worship leader and associate are both “stuck” in the pulpit for at least the first 10 minutes (until the opening hymn) this “band aid” was agreed to: If the Worship Associate or I are concerned about a situation or person(s) either of us will say into the microphone to the sound person, “Can you please check the HVAC?” This will work throughout the year and not be confused with the heat or ac. The Sound person will then alert an usher or greeter to this and they will call Hopewell Police that, while they don’t know what the concern is, through our process the minister has alerted them to a concern. Could they come and do rounds in the parking lot and building?

After the “rebuttal banner” was placed next to our own, the visitors name was shared with the police. While they are likely entirely unrelated, the officers felt it was smart to share regardless.

Appendix C: DLRE Report

To: UUCWC Board, Barbara Jensen, and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Aug 7, 2016

Re: Monthly DRE Report

Create Community:

- Planning, organizing, and recruiting teachers for 9 RE classes including: 9:15, PK, K-1, OWL K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 Neighboring Faiths, OWL 7-8, and youth group. Planning, organizing, and recruiting teachers for 4 ARE classes (with additional sections): Chalice circles, Beloved Conversations, Coming in to Connection (COA for adults), Soul Matters Conversations.
- Coming in to Connection is a new class that Kim and I are writing (mostly Kim). We have had several meetings to brainstorm what this class will look like and how it will meet the needs for people feeling disconnected to the congregation. We are pairing people with a partner and having them meet on their own for 5 of the 8 sessions.
- Soul Matters Conversations is a new class that we are developing.
- Each Adult and Children's class (13 in total) has its own recruiting, training, registration and preparation needs.
- For children's RE, recruiting RE teachers involves personally reaching out to most RE families and some non RE family members, finding out what their needs are and where they want to teach this year. This is a dance as I try to meet their needs and the RE programs' (which is always more teachers).
- For ARE we want to recruit facilitators that are skilled and at the same time, we do not want to recruit the same people. ARE can be a good place for people to grow in to a leadership or more involved role at UUCWC.
- Kim and I met with a group of older members about "elder invisibility. It was a powerful conversation and made us aware of not only elders but also the various groups who may feel invisible at different times at UUCWC.

Celebrate Life

- I celebrated life by being on vacation the last week of July and 3 days this week.
- The sabbatical Task force (Dan Tuft, Sonia Hardaway, Jenn Rehbein and Wendy Stassola) met and will continue to meet monthly. They are energized with their task and had good suggestions for me about streamlining and delegating my work. Some of their suggestions will be implemented permanently. This is one of my sabbatical goals.

Change the World

- I attended Star Island RE week where the theme was "Growing Unitarian Universalists in a Changing World".

Appendix D: Administrator's Report

Susan Irgang
August 2017
Administrator BOT Report

UUCWC Mission:

To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World

Creating Community

We are finishing final plans to prepare office space for Sue Flynn so we can welcome her to our team on August 13th.

I have been working with Ana DelCorazon as she learns about our membership database, visitor processing practices, as well as with orders for materials she will be using in the coming months.

Celebrate Life

Our numbers continue to hold at 290 Church Members, 32 Friends, 36 Participants and 12 Attendees.

Change the (UUCWC) World

Facilities: This past month has been all about upgrades to the facilities. The long awaited bathroom renovation project took place in one full week in July, with the upstairs bathrooms mostly completed. New toilets, partitions, vanities, sinks and faucets, flooring and temporary mirrors were installed, and a fresh coat of paint rounded out the work done in one week. Remaining to be done are new permanent mirrors, lighting and ceiling upgrades and installation of new soap and bathroom tissue dispensers. Andrew Kidd and Farzad Shadzik coordinated the purchase and installation of materials, with a crew of helpers; the result is amazing! Similarly, as per the Board's request, the lower level bathrooms received cosmetic makeovers, with partitions sanded and painted (by Denny Rodgers who made them look almost new), new toilets installed, fresh paint on the walls and the floors refinished. Additionally the lower level hallway, kitchen and landings had their floors cleaned and refinished.

New chairs sometimes bring fresh eyes and new energy: on the Building Committee, fixing the leak in the skylight has been re-addressed as has determining a solution to the cracking front steps. Scott Drew has joined Steve Saddlemire as co-chair of Grounds; projects so far included spreading new wood chips for playground safety, setting up weeding parties, and dealing with ticks and stinging insects.

Parking: I am hopeful that I can convene a parking task force later this summer, as most of those who would be part of this group had been directly involved in bathroom renovations or are assuming new leadership duties.

I am now on reduced summer hours (10/week), but I have been using hours from my "bank" to coordinate facility's needs (running errands during the renovations, overseeing vendors for floor installation and floor refinishing, etc.).