

## **Oct. 3 -First Parish - 7.5% Discussion with Members of First Tuesday Group - Notes**

8 parishioners plus Toby Smith Ropeik from Standing Committee

Paying SA Director out of 7.5% was controversial to begin with. Church leadership was uncomfortable with that. Some people felt that large a portion of the 7.5 shouldn't be given away thru salary.

Congregation doesn't understand how 7.5 impacts decision making. SAC alone decides how 7.5% is spent. But minister and SC have responsibility for other spending decisions.

Zach was hired by Howard, first time minister hired for SA position. Previously done by SAC.

SA coordinator salary should be in regular budget, not from 7.5%.

People in another meeting discussing 7.5 seemed to be happy with the 7.5% set aside for SA, but many felt coordinator position should be folded into regular budget. RE and Music get more like 10% of budget. SA winds up with less.

Zach doesn't have his own budget right now.

Zach should be a staff person and we should then decide what to do for grants.

We should keep doing grants, they help organizations.

Not everyone supports 7.5%. Some believe charity begins at home and do not like that big a percentage of the church going to charity. Instead budget should be spent at First Parish for salaries and expenses.

Some grant money goes now to international organizations - very worthy projects. Other grants go to local groups. Then there are groups in First Parish who might want to participate in marches or protests. That could be

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considered part of using 7.5% for First Parish. And there are a few grants that go out to some parishioner's individual interest. There *should* be focus on programs our parishioners are interested in.

Members of congregation have usually made site visits to organizations they recommend. Though not SAC grant awarders.

We need a staff person to lead the SA activities at First Parish.

Difference between social action associate and SA coordinator explained.

It would be nice to have SA activities that bring the congregation together and gets more people involved.

Four focuses of SA for Zach:

1. Women and empowerment
2. Race conversations
3. Environment
4. Reverence for Life

We are discussing intersection of all these groups, instead of acting in silos. Looking for areas where we can do something together. That really requires a coordinator.

Oct 21 - 10 am - 1pm Meeting to discuss this.

Wendy Holt has asked people to take over awarding grants, has advertised. But NO one has come forward.

Suggestion made that we have a wider congregational meeting with a presentation about process of grant giving to try to interest people in participating.

My friend at another UU church says Share the Plate works better than grants. People wind up being more generous.

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Intuitively, people are more generous when they know where money is going.

It's also been hard to get people to serve on the SAC Board.

Share the Plate seems to be a better way to build community.

Money accumulating from Bethany's salary was partly why SA reserves accumulated. Along with some parishioner gifts. Another part is the SAC Board thinking that we should have money set aside for emergencies.

I would vote to change 7.5% and instead add a line item in budget for SA which could go to grants, or emergencies, and to support parishioner SA activities.

It makes more sense to me that SA should have its own budget. Don't know what percentage should be. But proportional to other programs at FP.

First Parish has provided a lot of leadership in social action. Some people come here because of that. SA should be an adult and kid focus, church-wide. Considered seriously. It's a major piece of our church.

It's important to recognize that people also do SA outside of church. It would be interesting seeing where people are sending their money or time volunteering.

Bethany had a sac newsletter and communication that was very helpful. She was good at doing both administration and spiritual side. Zach is great at coordination and spiritual. We're missing what Bethany did on administrative side.

Maybe if we move SA into regular budget, Zach could become full time and handle the administrative piece.

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It's a struggle now without someone handling admin piece.

There are people in this congregation working butts off for SA. We need someone to coordinate that, including admin support.