

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Crosby	Standing Committee member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Kristin Haddad	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	Y
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Mark Russell Prior	Chair	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Alec Walker	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Treasurer	N

Howard opened the meeting at 6:00pm with words by Forrest Church. Guests included Darien Smith, Bethany Lowe, Shawna Reid, Leslie Trietman and Marilyn Lowitt.

The Standing Committee minutes from 9/13/15 and minutes from the 2015 Annual Meeting were both accepted and approved unanimously.

Chair’s report

Mark reported receiving an mail from Sara Ballard re: a possible “Black Lives Matter” banner; Mark raised the point that we may need a process for getting approval for banners, rules on number of banners, time period that may be displayed, etc. Given the Town of Concord’s strict requirements in the historic district, the subject was deemed worthy of future discussion.

Mark reported that Dave Elwood, in concert with Howard, is developing the agenda for the October Standing Committee Retreat on 10/24/15. Themes may include development of spiritual leadership and further evolution of the SC’s relationship with the Senior Minister.

Minister's report

In addition to his report, distributed by email (attached), Howard noted that as part of her ministerial training, Bethany will be learning about financial matters and fundraising, so she will be shadowing Howard and others. In support of this process Howard will be taking a supervision certification course at Andover-Newton. Howard also explained a bit more about the purpose and use of the Holden fund, the value of which is currently about \$130,000.

Bethany reported on the SAC discussions to date. There have been 4 sessions so far, with between 7-20 people attending each, and two more sessions planned for the coming week. Bethany is hearing a desire for a shift away from long term social action commitments toward more one-off events; and also a bit more interest in the 7.5% issue. The working group is in “listening” mode, and the overall process is year-long with no specific output in mind other than to sound out the congregation. A survey will be published at the end of October. As part of the process, Roslyn Romberg has connected with about 50 other UU churches and is

gathering data for analysis about how social action activities are funded.

Howard reported that the annual pledge campaign would begin in October, with Rebecca Curzon as one of the leaders. The first campaign team meeting will occur sometime in November.

The first auction meeting is this coming Tuesday evening, 10/6, and is intended to be a listening session to gauge participation and identify possible auction leaders.

Director of Operations' report

The August 2015 (second month of FY 2016) was reviewed. Of note are a slight adjustment in available cash, which Fifi explained was reduced to \$41,500. As indicated on the financial changes report, spending on line items 7040 (Ministerial Intern salary); 7045 (MI professional expenses) is expected to decrease, while income on lines 3185 (Coan House rental) might be reduced. A motion was made to approve these changes in expected spending, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's report

There was no formal report (Tom is unfortunately ill) but both the proposed FC Charter and Trustees Line of Credit agreement will be reviewed later in this meeting.

Group/Liaison Assignment Review

Mark reviewed Group and Liaison assignments, which are listed below for reference purposes.

Groups

- a. HD communications support: Mark, Alec, Kristin - group will set up a meeting some upcoming Tuesday, after 7PM.
- b. Evaluation SC: **Lora**, Toby - no questions/concerns
- c. Evaluation HD: **Toby**, Dave - no questions/concerns
- d. Nominating: **Patty**, other - no questions/concerns
- e. Governance: Mark, Alec, Kristin, Jeff, Dave - Alec volunteered to organize meetings.
- f. Congregational Outreach: **Dave**, Kate - charge could include notification of SC meetings, etc.
- g. Leadership selection: **Alec**, Patty, Jeff - Mark suggested December as a first meeting date
- h. FinCom: **Tom**, Patty - no questions/concerns

Liaisons

- a. Membership: Kristin - no questions/concerns
- b. RE Council: Dave - no questions/concerns
- c. SAC: Toby, Lora - no questions/concerns
- d. Ministerial Internship: Alec - no questions/concerns
- e. Denominational Affairs: Kate - no questions/concerns
- f. Trustees: Tom - no questions/concerns
- g. WPA: Lora - no questions/concerns
- h. Arts Council: Tom - no questions/concerns
- i. Auction: Open to all

Howard expressed hope that the liaison process will open a two-way conversation so these groups will know the SC is listening, which all agreed was the primary purpose of assigning liaisons.

Members' reports

- Alec: a member mentioned being thrilled about how RE is going, including “breakfasts with Amy”.
- Jeff: some RE grade levels are larger than others and that might feel overwhelming for some teachers.
- Lora: will Howard attend one of the RE breakfasts? Howard says yes.
- Mark: when people are uncomfortable with changes, how do people give feedback to Howard and staff? Howard says mostly by email; some in person, and people are not shy; the service planning committee is trying to modify service structure slowly. Mark asked what mechanism SC members should use to provide feedback. Howard said it would be best for members to send him constructive criticism by email. Howard explained that not all of the changes are geared toward all worship attendees. Bethany commented that one cardinal rule in ministry is “don't try to preach to everybody all the time.”
- Kristen: hearing some negative feedback about the 11:15 RE dismissal time; Howard will discuss with Amy.

Finance Committee member proposed charter refinements

The Committee reviewed the refined charter in draft form. Mark reported that the charter clarifies that the Finance Committee is NOT a fundraising committee. A motion to approve this draft was made and approved unanimously. Mark will clean up the document and post it on the SC website.

Trustees of Parish Donations: Line of credit.

The Standing Committee reviewed the proposed line of credit agreement. A motion was made to approve this agreement (appended to these minutes) and was approved unanimously. Mark will sign the document representing the Standing Committee, along with Tim Jacoby for the Trustees, and Howard.

Other SC Member Business

Web site update: Fifi reports that Stoney Ballard is migrating our site to a UUA template. Last report was that migration was targeted for end of September. However there might be a delay due to revisions to the template. The short term goal is for a full draft to be presented for staff review ASAP. One of the main changes is to make the site mobile device friendly, along with a general cleanup of content. Darien asked if site will be more user-friendly and flexible; current navigation can be a challenge. Jeff observed that our web presence is super important, and suggested that if necessary, Stoney's volunteer efforts should be supplemented with additional help. Alec pointed out that he and Toby had reviewed other UU web sites during the recent Senior Minister search, and that there are a lot of less successful web sites out there – our current web site is already head and shoulders above many others.

Dave and Howard are to “preview” the upcoming SC retreat topics with the committee.

Howard will be arranging for additional staff presentations to the SC, similar to Bethany's this evening. These presentations will be informational only, as Howard is responsible for supervising staff. Howard noted that department heads may attend SC meetings in a listening capacity.

Review of Future Agenda Items

The Committee would like to keep UUA Fair Share in mind as a future topic. Darien commented that she hopes we do eventually reach our appropriate dues. Strategic visioning will also stay on the list of future topics.

8:10 – Senior Minister annual goals

Howard reviewed his 9/2015 document's four priority areas: (1) developing long term vision; (2) developing a path to membership; (3) begin fundraising beyond the Annual Campaign; and (4) support the RE Program and RE Council. During the discussion of Howard's goals, members asked that the goals be more measurable, so that SC members understand how the goals will be accomplished and whether efforts had a positive impact. This would also facilitate the annual Senior Minister evaluation. A point was made that sometimes we don't meet our goals, and that this too is a valuable experience. Howard's 2015 goals are attached as part of his Minister's Report.

8:40 – SC annual goals

The Committee reviewed another draft of Standing Committee goals for the current year. Mark summarized that the purpose of these goals is to direct us above and beyond operational activities and to help us attain a longer term vision. The goals should support current and future SC work – we have to take action steps every month, every year to achieve our goals, and the goals should be something we consider important. Members agreed that our goals should be tied to our strategic ends. One hope is that the SC's goals and SM's goals could be more closely aligned. After a roundabout discussion, Mark agreed to write up the current working draft of our SC goals and to circulate them for feedback prior to the next meeting.

There was no Executive Session; a motion was made to adjourn, was unanimously accepted, and the meeting ended at 945PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Nobile, Clerk

2 Attachments:

Minister's report

Line of Credit Agreement with Trustees

Minister's Report to the Standing Committee

First Parish in Concord—September 2015

Rev. Howard N. Dana

Director of Operations' Goals for 2015-16:

One—Continue to improve First Parish use of technology to streamline operations. Progress: We are in the process of migrating the First Parish website to a new platform. We are doing a small campaign to get more people to “like” us on the church Facebook page. We also have a new First Parish Twitter account.

Two—Delegate more work to First Parish volunteers. To start, form a new HR Committee to research and implement relevant improvements. Progress: None to report.

Three—Continue work with the First Parish Finance Committee to update financial policies and agreements. Progress: The Finance Committee will go over the church's policies in October. The Finance Committee will do a “benchmark” study of other local churches to see how they manage financial matters. In September the committee designed the survey and worked toward its implementation in October.

Senior Minister Goals for 20145-16:

One—Partner with Standing Committee members to develop a longer-term vision to achieve the mission of First Parish in Concord. Description: this work can include sharing significant plans or concerns with the Standing Committee; identifying opportunities for the Standing Committee to support operations; additional programs to support Standing Committee leadership development and teamwork; and increased clarification and further definition of roles. Progress: I met with Standing Committee Chair Mark Russell Prior to talk casually about the coming year and how we might start to move the congregation forward in its long range planning.

Two—Develop a Path to Membership suitable for a large congregation. Description: gather a group of volunteers to design and implement a system for welcoming new members into the congregation. This work would create opportunities to show parishioners the deep connection between involvement, belonging, and financial stewardship. Progress: I have invited people to a Membership Committee meeting in October. There are about 12 people who are excited about this work and are interested in my vision for doing it differently.

Three—Begin fundraising work beyond the Annual Pledge Campaign. Description: Work with the First Parish Treasurer and other volunteers to reach out to members and friends who have been pledging at a level below their potential. Form a group to organize the First Parish Auction and support its work. Include regular communications to the Standing Committee about the process and progress of mid and large donors and church finances. Progress: I have invited all of the past Auction chairs to a meeting in October. About eight people have indicated that they will come to this meeting. From there I will assess how much energy there is for doing an auction and when it might take place. I hope a former chair or two will be interested in chairing or co-chairing again.

Four—Support the reorganization of the Religious Education Program and the RE Council.

Description: Work with Minister of Religious Education, Rev. Amy Freedman, as she engages with children, youth, and adults at First Parish who are invested in our Religious Education Program. Work alongside her to get to know the RE families better, help them adjust to necessary changes, and begin planning for future growth in the program. Progress: Amy had a strong start as our new Minister of Religious Education. Her work with Dawn and Bethany has been collegial. Leslie Pelton is doing a good job as RE Council chair. Teachers indicate that they are pleased with Amy's leadership and organization. One immediate change has been taking accurate attendance so we know which children are in the program and which Sundays they are at church.

Updates on day-to-day ministry

- I met with our Electronic Communication Specialist Victor Curran and explored with him ways our communications might be more effective. He was open to my ideas and has implemented many of them right away.
- I met with RE Council leadership to help them get started on their work this year.
- I met with the other members of the Holden Fund to clarify how the church's money will be given away to people who qualify for support from this fund.
- I led a daylong orientation session for the Ministerial Fellowship Committee at the UUA headquarters in Boston.

Update on Staff issues and changes

- No changes in September.

Senior Minister's plans for denominational work, study leave, and vacation

- October 19-21, 2015 Cedar Hill Study Group, Cape Cod
- January 11-25, 2016—Winter Vacation
- February 22-26, 2016—SMOLUUC Retreat, Santa Barbara, CA
- March 28 - April 4, 2016—Vacation—Parents' 50th Wedding Anniversary in MT
- May 23-25, 2016—Cedar Hill Study Group, Cape Cod

**Proposal to the Trustees of Parish Donations
Regarding line of credit for First Parish in Concord
Memorandum of Agreement**

This document is an Agreement between the Standing Committee (“Standing Committee”), the Senior Minister (“Minister”), and the Trustees of Parish Donations (“Trustees”) regarding access to funds to support the operations of First Parish in Concord (“the Church”).

WHEREAS, the Church intends to operate in a fiscally responsible manner, and to adhere to sound financial management practices; and

WHEREAS, the Church intends to manage its cash flow and financial resources in a manner that provides for the sustainability and security of the Church’s operations and obligations; and

WHEREAS, from time to time the Church may encounter a need for cash that exceeds its current cash holdings,

NOW THEREFORE, this Agreement will establish a line of credit with the Trustees by the Church according to the following terms and conditions:

1. The Church will be able to borrow up to a total of \$100,000 under the terms of this agreement.
2. The Minister will make the request for funds—with the approval of the Standing Committee—to the Trustees, and the funds will be provided to the Church within 10 business days.
3. When these funds are transferred from the Trustees to the Church, it will constitute on that date a loan by the Trustees to the Church.
4. The loan will have an interest rate that is the prevailing Prime Rate of major banking institutions in the Concord, MA, region as established by the Trustees and agreed to by the Standing Committee. The interest rate will apply to any outstanding balance and be payable on a monthly basis.
5. The Church may make a payment toward the outstanding loan balance at any time without any fees or considerations.
6. Any loan outstanding must be repaid within 5 years unless an extension is granted by the Trustees.
7. Both the Church and the Trustees will keep appropriate records of the timing and amounts of any transactions made under this Agreement. Any discrepancies will be resolved by mutual agreement between the Standing Committee and the Trustees.

This Agreement is being signed by designated representatives of the Standing Committee, Minister, and Trustees. The parties agree to these terms effective on this date: _____

Chair, Standing Committee

Senior Minister

Chair, Trustees of Parish Donations