

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jane Barnes	Treasurer	
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair	Y
C. C. King	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Liz Rust	Standing Committee member	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svreck	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y

Howard opened with Marge Piercy’s *To Be Of Use*. Liz lit our chalice and we held a moment of silence.

Part I. Standing Committee Business

Acceptance of July and August minutes, which were posted earlier this evening, will be deferred one week for a reading and review period, and final versions will be accepted via electronic vote.

Director of Operations Report

Fifi reported all generally good news on the budget, with no outstanding issues. Artwork appraisal and new phone system costs have both come in under budget. Another \$5,000 gift was received into the Social Action Reserve fund, and there was a general discussion about the consequences of accepting such gifts.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously
 VOTED: to accept a \$5,000 gift into the Social Action Reserve fund.

Senior Minister’s report

The SC discussed Howard’s proposed goals and how they may weave together with work being done by the YfRaV task forces. Some wordsmithing was suggested. Howard noted that this church can be particularly hard on staff during their first year. The Social Action Coordinator effort will begin by interviewing 10 candidates(!) Howard reported very good energy around the Religious Education program this year.

Finance Subcommittee

Tom described the committee’s work on several goals including developing both the long term capital budget and more generally the structure of a large capital campaign, promoting our legacy and endowment programs, increasing donor base diversity, looking for other sources of income, our fixed asset inventory/appraisals, and preliminary budgeting for FY 2021. The group discussed John’s

suggestion of creating a separate development or fund-raising committee.

Governance Subcommittee

Dave asked for another SC member to join Liz and Susan, and the group enthusiastically supported Tom joining this group. Liz described the subcommittee's work on several governance goals including:

- Approval of SC goals after the fall retreat
- The Senior Minister evaluation
- Confidentiality and conflict of interest
- Review of political advocacy and involvement

Standing Committee Business Items

- Assignment of a provisional SC member to replace John will be discussed during Executive Session.
- A three-times-yearly Committee Chairs breakfast was discussed. Peter, Dave and Susan will work to arrange the first such breakfast this fall.
- The group discussed increasing Standing Committee visibility, coalescing around the idea of a rotating roster of SC members who would do three things around Sunday Services: greet people at the side door, stand up with Howard during announcements, and then be present during coffee hour. Kate will help organize the list via Google Docs.
- Kate described the Third Sunday Suppers program that will begin this month, with Sue and Beau Ryan volunteering to do the cooking for this first supper.

Fall Standing Committee Retreat

Dave, Liz and Howard are busy planning the retreat. First half will include Howard briefing the group on trends in the UUA and how FP fits in, and SC business around goals; then a working lunch with the 4 YfRaV working groups, with the afternoon session still in the works. The committee discussed the importance of giving a charge to the 4 groups.

Part II. Themed Discussions

Political Activity

This month Dave introduced the topic of what limits there are on churches around political activity, and the group discussed how we might better focus on highest and best use of the church for political purposes. Howard explained that while we cannot endorse candidates, we can invite candidates to speak. The gray area is around how the church speaks – e.g. getting out the vote in a particular direction – versus renting out our space to a specific candidate or campaign. The group discussed whether we need specific policies around allowable use of space, equipment, email, access to the congregation and so forth. Candidate or party-specific advocacy activities are not allowed, but taking stands on issues is, and seated legislators can be welcomed to talk about issues in a forum setting. Howard pointed out that the SC is the ultimate deciding body. The question of authority was discussed – e.g. is the SC charged to make decisions on behalf of the congregation? One consideration is whether the UUA General Assembly has endorsed any specific issue. The group discussed the need to develop a written understanding, and the Governance subcommittee will draft something for the SC to review as soon as possible.

Howard led another conversation around banners and more permanent displays on the building, and what the specific process might be for deciding about such displays.

Future Topics

A list of possible future topics for discussion includes

- Banners and exterior signage
- Social Action grant processes
- Facilities and capital investments (January?)
- The future of Policy/First Parish Governance
- Evaluations
- “Pillar” reports, e.g. RE, Pastoral Care, Social Action
- Denominational Affairs
- Consent Agenda

The main meeting was closed at 8:50 PM, and there was an Executive Session. With no further business before the Committee, the Executive Session was closed at 9:45PM and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Nobile, Clerk