

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jane Barnes	Treasurer	Y
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
Rev. Liz Weber	Minister for Pastoral Care	Y
Alec Walker	Standing Committee <i>alumnus, serving tempus esse</i>	Y
Guests		
Eric Moore	Nominating Committee	Y

Rev. Liz Weber opened with an adaptation of a piece by John O’Donohue. Howard lit our chalice and we held a moment of silence.

July and August minutes with comments incorporated were accepted into the record, and comments on the just released September minutes will be accepted through the end of this week and then posted for an electronic vote.

Director of Operations Report

Fifi reported no outstanding issues on the budget summary that was distributed by email. Fifi suggested the biannual (November and May) staff compensation reviews, including comparisons of staff salaries to UUA guidelines, might be reviewed by the Finance Committee instead of the entire Standing Committee. After some discussion, it was agreed she would send the report to both committees and would welcome discussion with either group. She also shared an artifact about First Parish from 1965 found by Peggy Gallo.

Senior Minister’s report

Liz Rust thanked Howard for his work with staff at the South Bay Correctional Center where he will visit Central American men being held for deportation. Since that prison is so restrictive, there is a great need for Spanish-speaking clergy to do these visits.

Finance Subcommittee

Jane reviewed the current policy regarding the acceptance of funds for restricted use. The group discussed thresholds and guidelines as outlined in the policy, and the conversation will continue by email

prior to a vote at the November Standing Committee (SC) meeting. Jane also reported that the Finance Committee discussed their own charter, and that some modifications will be forthcoming for SC review. Jane mentioned the idea of pew cards as a good idea for soliciting input on budget priorities, and the group discussed various methods of gathering input including surveys. SC members were encouraged to briefly mention connections and responsibilities, e.g. liaison relationships, when standing up next to Howard at the conclusion of Sunday services.

Jane reported on work the Trustees are doing regarding maintenance on the Cottages and the use of the Wright Tavern. John Boynton, Tom Wilson, Mel and Laura Bernstein, Rev. Howard and others participated on a recent call that covered a range of exciting ideas leading up to the 250th anniversary of the gathering of the first Continental Congress in the Wright Tavern, to be held in 2025.

Governance Subcommittee

Liz Rust reported that results from last week's retreat include good thinking work done on banners, signage and political activities and events, which will be discussed in Executive Session and at next month's meeting.

Standing Committee Business Items

- Peter discussed the ongoing general planning, with Susan and Dave, for a thrice annually committee chair breakfast. The group will work with Howard to vary the time of meeting in order to capture various populations at First Parish.
- The Partner Church delegation has requested a meeting with the Standing Committee at 2PM on Thursday October 31st to discuss connections between our churches, and several SC members will be attending.
- Dave described work that the UU Urban Ministries are doing around connecting to their community and needed work on their facility. Members discussed various experiences and work done with the UU Urban Ministries, and CC King will be the point of contact for questions going forward.
- A non-denominational Southern Border vigil to bring attention to human rights abuses perpetrated by the US Government has been organized with TriCon and other organizations. The vigil will be held on our front lawn on Sunday 10/11 at 3:30.
- The group agreed to try meeting in the Parlor for our October meeting for a change of ambience and to try to encourage a less corporate, more collegial character to our meeting.

Retreat follow-up

Dave briefly reviewed our Saturday 10/5 retreat and polled the group about outcomes and next steps. We discussed how best to elevate congregation-wide conversations into actions, how to address membership challenges, and future financial issues facing First Parish. Tom brainstormed several ideas about how to better connect with new and existing members, and we talked about who will be best suited to take ideas forward.

The group discussed current and proposed vehicles for communication. Outreach opportunities include making sure that First Parish has a stronger presence – by literally opening our doors – during events like the Town tree lighting, or on Patriot's Day. We talked generally about marketing and communications. We discussed further developing the church's web site calendar, which is done in a program called

WordPress which presents certain functional software limitations. Tom lamented the marginal use or lost opportunity of bulletin boards in the main hallway, that could be better used to communicate to people especially as they file down from Sunday service to the kitchen or social hall.

We discussed ongoing activities in the four affinity groups. The Building Spiritual Connections group is moving along and does not seem to need much guidance, but the Belonging Group could use more structure and feedback from the SC. The Growth and Diversity group is combining with the Expanding our Connections group in order to achieve more critical mass, especially as their purposes are well aligned. Peter (or the current Clerk) will solicit input and gather updates from all groups in order to maintain and report on a running list of group activities and initiatives. Who sponsors or endorses activities is an open question – is the Standing Committee sponsoring these initiatives or pilot activities, overseeing the evaluation and reporting back? The group generally discussed how best to make happen and then communicate about such activities, but other than reporting via liaison to the Clerk there is no oversight function that the SC will play. This will be revisited after January 1, 2020.

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Nobile, Clerk