

**First Parish Church in Concord
Minutes of the Annual Meeting
June 14, 2020, at 11:00AM**

The virtual meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Moderator Kristin Moore, who reviewed this year's unique format on Zoom. Just under 150 members joined this morning's meeting. Special thanks were given for technical support this morning to Sarah Richie and Lille van der Zanden. Rev. Howard Dana opened the meeting with a prayer.

Ms. Moore then introduced the articles for this morning's meeting.

Article I: To hear and receive the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations, and the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force. Motion by Kristin Moore, Moderator.

Upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously

VOTED: To hear and receive the reports of the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee, the Trustees of Parish Donations, and the Wright Tavern Futures Task Force.

Senior Minister report: Howard's report was distributed in the Annual Meeting handout that made available electronically. Howard spoke about the challenges brought about by the impacts of Covid-19, and more generally how he navigates the giving and taking of constructive criticism. He rededicated himself to working with us on improving communication and asked for patience with him and the church staff as we navigate this new world together – he likened it to wandering together in the wilderness. Howard specially thanked the Social Action Council, whose members stepped down on Monday to help clarify the future role of the Council and our approach to social action more generally, and for their continued dedication to First Parish.

Standing Committee (SC) report: Dave Elwood briefly shared an overview of the Standing Committee's report. Dave noted that while our congregational membership is stable it is not growing. He reported that the two All Committee Chair meetings were a great success and the reinvigoration of a more collaborative atmosphere between groups, and that those meetings will continue in the fall. Dave thanked Howard and the staff for responding so competently and for their endurance during the Covid-19 crisis, and he also thanked the annual pledge campaign team for their hard work. Dave noted that we have had our Black Lives Matter (BLM) banner up continuously for several years, which of course is now more relevant than ever. Dave encourage all attendees to read through the Belonging Team's report on their ongoing efforts to explore ways of strengthening community at First Parish. Dave answered a question about our governance structure model – comparing Policy Governance to Shared Leadership – by noting that we function basically under a modified policy governance structure. However, there are still some open questions about the appropriateness of our leadership model, and the SC will continue this discussion in the coming year.

Trustees of Parish Donations report: Philip vanderWilden reviewed activities this year, including a reappraisal of all Church properties for updated insurance coverage purposes, and work on creation of a robust retirement package for Doug Baker, including the investment purchase of a nearby condominium for Doug and Diana to live in. The legacy investment fund, which is managed under a socially responsible investment policy, is currently valued at \$3.276 million, and the Trustees will be providing around \$148,000 to the church's annual budget, a slight increase to what was given last year even with the

volatility of the financial markets. Tom Wilson's efforts have grown the Legacy Giving Fund, and Roselyn Romberg has done heroic work in assessing and stewarding the church's properties. Philip noted that in response to Covid-19 challenges the Trustees have granted some rent relief to our commercial and residential tenants.

Wright Tavern Futures Task Force: Tom Wilson presented a report on the Task Force's work, including a history of the Tavern and some specifics about its storied place in United States history. As we approach the 250th celebration of the US Declaration of Independence, this new Task Force is developing a plan to reveal the Tavern's key location in the founding of our country, including the development of partnerships to help fulfil this vision by October of 2024. Tom reviewed the structure of the plan, beginning in 2020 with a "Getting Ready" year.

Article II: To recognize outgoing members of the Standing Committee and Nominating Committee and choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year. Motion by Eric Moore.

Upon motion duly made by Eric Moore, of the Nominating Committee, and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To choose all Parish officers for the ensuing year. Mr. Moore moved that we nominate the following candidates for the terms noted:

SC member at large

Jim Hawkes, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a three-year term
Peter Nobile, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a one-year term
Jim Reynolds, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a three-year term
Virginia Taylor, Standing Committee Member-at-Large, for a three-year term

Officers

Jane Barnes, Treasurer, for a second one-year term
Kristin Moore, Moderator, for a third one-year term
Laurel Doggett, Clerk, for a one-year term

Peter Nobile recognized and thanked outgoing Standing Committee members Lora Venesy, Tom Wilson, David Elwood, Alec Walker for their years of service and dedication to the life and well-being of First Parish in Concord. Eric Moore recognized and thanked outgoing Nominating Committee member Jen Izzo.

Upon motion duly made by Kate Svrcek, Standing Committee member, which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To nominate the following candidates for the Nominating Committee for the terms noted:

Mark Russell Prior, Nominating Committee, for a second 3-year term
Lora Keane Brown, Nominating Committee, for a 3-year term

Article III: To ratify the UU General Assembly delegate slate. Motion by Jim Sherblom, of the Denominational Affairs Committee.

Upon motion duly made Jim Sherblom, which was seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To ratify the 2019 UU General Assembly (GA) delegate slate. The motion lists a slate of 13 delegates as follows:

Lillian Anderson
Holli Jones-White
Marilyn Lowitt
Peter Lowitt
Peter Nobile
Jan Power
Liz Rust
Susan See
Jim Sherblom
Darien Smith
Hank Sorett
Lois Suarez
Fred Van Deusen

Article IV: To raise money for all parochial purposes, including the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). Motion by Treasurer Jane Barnes.

Jane reviewed the annual campaign results, including the number of pledging households, pledge amounts and other details. In 2020 it cost over \$2,000 per household to run First Parish. Jane thanked the Annual Pledge campaign team for their hard work and dedication. Jane then reviewed the proposed budget for FY21, which was balanced in part due to the receipt of a large Payroll Protection Plan infusion of cash. Pledge income accounts for 72% of our annual budget, the Trustees contributes another 10%, and this combined with miscellaneous sources of income adds up to a total FY21 budget of just about \$1,454,000.00. Jane introduced Fifi Ball and thanked her for the tireless work on our budget, and Fifi reviewed key changes in our FY21 budget including the elimination of building rental and private function income, given the uncertainty of how things will go in the fall. Our planned expenses include money for Zoom technicians, as well as reduced expenses for worship aesthetics, coffee hour and in-person Religious Education classes. Sexton hours are budgeted at about half of what we need during a typical year, and Assistant Sextons Pat Halloran and Biff Holt will be retiring this year. Fifi and Howard answered several questions about the proposed Budget and discussed what we anticipate regarding group gatherings and building use after the summer. Howard noted that we will be offering online alternatives as best we can, but that we need to follow best practice guidelines and make gatherings as safe as possible for our community.

Upon motion duly made Jane Barnes and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To raise money for all parochial purposes, including the proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 as noted above.

Article V: To act upon a resolution sponsored by the Environmental Team. A motion was made by Brad Hubbard-Nelson as follows:

Resolved: That First Parish in Concord will establish a goal of eliminating or reducing our church's dependence on fossil fuels and thereby achieve net zero carbon emissions. This can be accomplished by upgrading the heating, cooling, and insulation systems for all FP buildings. This action is consistent with the UUA 7th principle, which calls upon us to respect the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part. It reflects our recognition that the entire planet is under threat from climate change and that climate change is caused, in large part, by human consumption of fossil fuels.

To accomplish these goals the church shall establish a design and fundraising committee by October, 2020, to be chartered by the Standing Committee and Senior Minister and to be comprised of a broad representation of First Parish, including but not limited to two representatives of the Environmental Team, representatives from the staff, the Facilities Committee, our youth, and other at-large members to be determined by the committee. The committee shall report back to the congregation on its progress when the design is complete.

Brad reviewed the above resolution that proposes to establish a goal of eliminating First Parish's dependence on fossil fuels, as well as the establishment of a design and fundraising committee that will be chartered by the Standing Committee and Senior Minister. Brad presented background information on ongoing climate change efforts at First Parish, as well as background and details about fossil fuel impacts due to heating and cooling the First Parish campus. Brad gave an overview of discussions to date about insulation, heating and cooling system types for the main sanctuary/office building, and conceptual cost ranges for the implementation of some of these strategies. The first short-term goal of this resolution is to hire professional design advisors to help us define and specifically estimate the potential costs of an approach to greening our entire campus.

After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made to end the debate and call the question; that motion was seconded and passed by a near unanimous vote.

Upon motion duly made by Brad Hubbard-Nelson, which was seconded, and passed by a near unanimous vote, it was

VOTED: To act affirmatively upon the Environmental Leadership Team's resolution, as written above.

Article VI: To act upon any other business that may come before the meeting.

There was no other business before the meeting, a motion was made to adjourn and to dissolve the Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded and approved with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Nobile, clerk