

First Parish in Concord Standing Committee

Meeting October 12, 2021

Fifi Ball	Manager of Operations	Y
Michael Beer	Standing Committee Member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Jim Hawks	Standing Committee Member	Y
Jennifer Izzo	Clerk	Y
C.C. King	Standing Committee Member	Y
Gib Metcalf	Standing Committee Member	Y
Caroline Washburn Minkin	Standing Committee Member	Y
Heather Packard	Treasurer	Y
Jim Reynolds	Standing Committee Member	N
Liz Rust	Chair	Y
Susan See	Standing Committee Member	Y
Virginia Taylor	Standing Committee Member	Y
Beth Norton	Director of Music Ministry	Y
Amy Freedman	Minister of Religious Education	Y
Peter Lowitt	Congregation Member and Chair of Greening the Congregation Committee	Y

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Howard opened the meeting by lighting the chalice and reading a poem by Linda Hogan, *The History of Fire*.

Minister's Report

- Church Administrator Sarah Burns is still out on sick leave with a bad concussion. She is improving.
- Adrienne Betancourt has left First Parish. The Social Action Manager position has been posted on the UUA job site and the First Parish website. The hiring committee will be the same committee used for Adrienne. The position will be for 33 hours per week.
- Liz noted that Howard is spending a lot of time on staffing issues.

Director of Operations Report

- Gib presented a "Primer on Reading First Parish Monthly Financial Reports."
- Fifi distributed the Semi-Annual Staff Compensation Review. The spreadsheet revealed that First Parish pays its staff at about 93% of the UUA recommended salary midpoints for a congregation of our size and location.

- The Steeple refurbishing (supported with Town CPA funds) and the Sanctuary insulation (per the Greening the Campus committee) were completed in late September 2021. A decision has been made not to have the dome or weathervane regilded at this time. Instead, the front, sides and back of the main building will be repainted in rotation over the course of a couple of years.

Standing Committee Operations

Minutes approval

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the meeting minutes from September 14, 2021.

Appointment of Vice-Chair

Liz Rust proposed that CC King serve as a “non-ascending” Vice Chair, and CC is willing to do so.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: That CC King will serve as Vice Chair of the Standing Committee for the current church year.

Report on Greening the Sanctuary Project

- Peter Lowitt attended the meeting on behalf of the Greening the Sanctuary committee to give an update of their efforts. Their current focus is hiring a Mechanical Engineer to develop a solution that is a best fit for the First Parish campus. Next, they will hire an architect and a commissioning agent. The committee visited the church in Bedford to understand their process and got some ideas from them (such as a plan for insulation).
- Heather asked about the estimated cost for L&N. Peter said it would be about \$54,000. The Greening Committee will have to fundraise for the amount not covered by the amount already raised (which is about \$60,000). Liz asked if we should wait to raise the money before entering into the contract, or if L&N can redraft the scope to only fit the amount of money that we already have. Peter will confer with the Greening Committee, and will try to do this.
- Gib and Heather asked for a detailed project schedule with sequencing (e.g., how much will be done before the money already raised runs out and how much will be done before having to go to the church for more funds, presenting the plan to the congregation, etc.).
- Special storm windows are included as part of the plan. Storm windows are required (rather than modern windows) because of the Concord Historic Commission. The solution is removable, interior storm windows. A few windows have been installed as samples. The windows will filter germs. The group discussed that filtration and health are a priority, and will be a relevant concern in the years ahead. Beth and Amy noted that the open communication about the plan is critical because it impacts other functions and groups.

Other Matters

- The First Parish Trustees will visit the Standing Committee in November to present an overview of what they are working on.

- **SC Subcommittee: Governance**

The group's proposal for how it will approach this task is as follows:

1. Review FP's current policies before the next meeting.
2. Talk to Howard about his thoughts on the governance structure.
3. Understand the governance structure of other churches.
4. Seek input from the congregation.
5. Develop a continuous process improvement plan. Every few years, the Standing Committee will review the governance structure and FP's policies to determine if the structure and policies are helping FP to achieve its mission. FP's mission is to: (1) deepen spiritually, (2) build community, and (3) make a positive impact on the world.

The review of the policies should be focused on the governance issues. Specifically: How is our congregation size changing, and what does it mean from a governance perspective? If we notice provisions that are outdated or inaccurate, the committee should send a note to Liz. She will keep track of them so that the group can fix the issues in the future.

- **SC Subcommittee: Belonging**

Annual Congregational Inventory. The group reviewed the Annual Congregational Inventory, which details the demographics of the church. CC mentioned that in the future, when we are answering questions for the Inventory, we should think about how to broadly collect information for the report.

Touching Base with Congregation. Liz discussed the need to talk to people who pledged in prior years, but not this year. She asked if anyone would be willing to check in with these people to make sure they are OK and feeling connected in this year of transition. Susan, Heather, CC, Liz and Virginia volunteered to call a few people.

The group will provide an update in December.

- **SC Subcommittee: Financial and Sustainability**

The group will meet next week.

- **Standing Committee Retreat**

The Standing Committee will have an in-person retreat from 8:30-noon on October 30th. Topics to be discussed: What will the church be like in 2 years? What are our strengths and challenges right now? What does the Standing Committee most want to accomplish this year? Liz and CC will develop the agenda.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Izzo, Clerk