

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Kristin Haddad	Chair	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	N
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	N
Mark Russell Prior	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Treasurer	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Guests		
Jan Hutslar	Ministerial Intern	Y
Eric Moore	Nominating Committee	Y

Howard opened the meeting with Julia Kasdorf’s *Flying Lessons*.

Minutes of our September 11 meeting, with minor adjustments to the final draft version, were approved for record.

Chair’s Report

Kristin briefed the committee on several issues, including subcommittee and liaison assignments. Kristin reminded the group about the upcoming Standing Committee (SC) retreat scheduled on Saturday 10/29 from 9-1, to be facilitated by Laura Graham at Kristin’s house. Lunch will be pot luck. Kristin also reported:

- An update on the First Parish response letter to the Concord Historic Districts Commission. This item will be discussed later in the meeting.
- The First Parish website reorganization continues, recently including a meeting between Stoney Ballard, Toby Smith Ropeik and Howard Dana. The Standing Committee’s web presence has been relocated under the About/Governance tab, which is a content adjustment and does not represent a change to the existing web site menu.
- On Tuesday, Nov 29th a Transylvanian Partnership update meeting is being arranged by Howard, and will be a chance for the Partnership delegation to meet with staff and lay leaders. SC members are encouraged to attend.
- The SC auction activity – raking at Kate Svrcek’s house – has been scheduled to take place on Saturday Nov. 5, at 10AM. Baked goods will be provided by Patty, and the activity may involve more planting of bulbs than raking of leaves!

Concord Historic Districts Commission Letter Response

The committee discussed the comprehensive, well researched and well considered nature of the First Parish letter that is to be sent to the Town’s Historic District Commission (HDC) in response to the Town’s Black Lives Matter banner violation letter. After discussion, the letter from First Parish (which is

appended to these minutes) was approved with Peter, who is on the HDC, abstaining from the vote.

Minister's Report

Howard's September report was reviewed. One member suggested that the "proposed" goals should become "actual" goals. The committee also discussed the merits of a fuller Minister's report each month, including for instance more formal updates on Religious Education and other parish activities. Howard believes that he already spends too much time reporting and not enough time ministering, so he would like to not increase that reporting burden.

Howard also discussed an outline of the November spiritual development calendar, including activities such as local walking retreats, and further development of First Parish's approach to men's spirituality that may include a formal retreat and the formation of a men's group.

As noted above, Howard described how the Transylvanian Partnership will be hosting about 8 members from our Partner church in November. The delegation will be taking part in an "organizational day", and Howard welcomed the SC to participate in afternoon sessions between 12-4 on 11/29.

Finally, the Committee had a short discussion on Fair Labor Standards specifics, mentioned in Howard's report, specifically as to how First Parish employees can or cannot participate in the current Comp Time system. Following Fair Labor Standards will affect several First Parish staff members, and we are proceeding carefully to make sure First Parish is following the rules properly.

Director of Operations report

There were no changes or requests for approvals this month. Fifi reviewed August numbers, and of note were the following items:

- Contribution Income, \$58,068 in August 2016, was up compared with the average of \$44,136 in August 2015, \$45,276 in August 2014, and \$61,051 in August 2013. The average of these three prior-year months is \$50,154.
- Percent paid of *FY16* pledges: Final *FY16* pledges totaled \$972,750. During *FY16*, pledge payments totaled \$924,201. Prior Year Pledge Payments received in July and August 2016 (the first two months of *FY17*) totaled \$7,193, increasing the *FY16* pledge paid percentage to 95.7%.
- As we ended the last year with a small surplus, the question about staff raises and capital investment was raised. Mark mentioned the possibility of a staff bonus as a one-time expense, rather than raises that would be permanent.

Treasurer's Report

Tom reported that on November 6-7, the Finance Committee will host focus groups scheduled to discuss First Parish's finances, including an overview of our budget and plans for the coming year, with the purpose of getting a sense of the congregation's thoughts about how we spend our money.

Tom also reported that The Wright Tavern open house was a great success, and that the first floor has been cleaned and greatly refurbished. Similar open houses will probably happen twice a year, in October and April.

Tom described a Legacy Giving Program that is under development. A steering group for this effort has met once, and is finding very useful assistance from the UUA.

Finally, Tom and the Finance Committee recommended Rudi Scheiber-Kurtz for a 3-year term

appointment to the Finance Committee. This nomination was moved, seconded and approved unanimously by the SC.

Member's Reports

A member reported that she has received some good feedback from youth about spiritual development at First Parish. Members additionally reported:

- First Parish was mentioned in a positive light at a Concord Carlisle Community Chest event.
- Attendance is up in RE and in general numbers seem to be up in church.
- A member noted that there have been comments received from a member of Kerem Shalom concerned about the Black Lives Matter movement and if that movement is aligning itself with anti-Semitic groups.
- The committee discussed an open question about whether First Parish can/should provide an American Sign Language signer for translation during services.

Group and Liaison Reports

In general, our role as SC member in these groups' meetings is to be an observer, to listen and advise, but not to speak for the committee. Kristin took member's preferences into consideration, and has made the following assignments for 2016-2017:

Group Assignments

Ministerial Support – Kristin Haddad, Mark Russell Prior, Jeff Brainerd
Information Technology – Kristin Haddad, Peter Nobile, Toby Smith Ropeik
Governance – Mark Russell Prior, John Lowe
Evaluation – Lora Venesy, Kate Svrcek, Mark Russell Prior
Nominating Committee – Patty Popov
Finance Committee – Patty Popov, Tom Wilson
Congregational Outreach – Toby Smith Ropeik

Liaison Assignments

Denominational Affairs – John Lowe
SAC – Jeff Brainerd, Lora Venesy
Religious Education – Dave Elwood
Membership – Kate Svrcek
Ministerial Intern – Jeff Brainerd
Arts – Kate Svrcek
Forum – John Lowe

Updated Financial Policies

A new version of First Parish's Financial Policies was distributed. The distinction between pledges, gifts and bequests was discussed at length. Members arrived at a clarification in the language about the appropriateness of earmarks – "targeted" gifts – that are made because someone does not want to pledge in to the general fund. A motion was made to finalize these policies; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Congregational Sponsorship of Hannah Gallo

Hannah Gallo, a seminary student who attended RE at First Parish in her youth requested that our congregation sponsor her journey into ministry. Toby provided a positive reference in absentia and the Standing Committee voted in favor of the sponsorship. A motion was made to make this sponsorship

formal; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Woburn Fund

Lora reviewed discussions she has facilitated that resulted in a list of possible Woburn Fund application ideas related to Social Action. Two possible project areas rose to the top of the list:

- Local issues, including learning from GA, responses to homelessness, or addressing climate change
- Disaster response, e.g. to storm events in Haiti

Some discussion has occurred around education and awareness outcomes from these projects. One idea is to develop a “toolbox” for the congregation to fuel belonging and to continue to do good after any project has been completed. A suggestion was made to gather project-related data from successful groups like ELT and the Transylvania Partnership.

Standing Committee Goal Formation

The Standing Committee’s SMART 2-year goals were reviewed, with three subgroups presenting a summary of what the Committee might consider for approval. Each group presented, facilitated a discussion, and revised or approved as follows:

- Governance goals were discussed and accepted as is.
- Leadership goals will be refined by Kate, Patty and Peter and posted by 10/31 for committee review and comment prior to our 11/13 meeting.
- SAC goals were discussed, and the second goal will be revised for committee review.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45PM.

/pn
attachments

October 17, 2016

Town of Concord
Historic Districts Commission
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742
Attn: Terry Gregory, Chair

Re: Temporary Banners at First Parish Church In Concord

Dear Mr. Gregory,

Thank you very much for your September 1st letter on behalf of the HDC. I am responding on behalf of the elected governing board of First Parish in Concord, known as the Standing Committee.

We appreciate the Commission's diligent efforts to retain the historic character of Concord and very much share that objective. When Concord was founded in 1636, the church and town government were a single institution. In the 380 years since, the institutions, though separate, have continued to work for the good of the town and its citizens. We are all part of the historic tradition that you work to preserve and protect and are proud of our record of standing up for individual rights and liberties.

Having reviewed the Concord Historic Districts Act (CHDA), which defines the responsibilities of the Concord Historic District Commission, we request that the Commission determine that the First Parish "Black Lives Matter" and "Join the Conversation" banners may be excluded from the provisions of the Concord Historic District Act (CHDA) Section 5, as allowed in Section 6, detailed below.

"The following structures and signs may be erected or displayed within the historic districts without the filing of an application for, or the issuance of, a certificate of appropriateness:

- Temporary structures or signs for use in connection with any official celebration or parade, or any charitable drive in the Town; provided, that any such structure or sign shall be removed within three days following the termination of the celebration, parade or charitable drive for which said structure or sign shall have been erected or displayed. Any other temporary structures or signs which the commission shall determine from time to time may be excluded from the provisions of Section 5 without substantial derogation from the intent and purposes of this Act."

We believe that excluding our temporary banners pursuant to this exception is appropriate, and will not substantially derogate from the intent and purposes of the CHDA.

For your reference, I have enclosed a picture of our banners. The banners are three feet by six feet and are made from vinyl. They are hung from the pillars on the front of the church with elastic cords. I have also enclosed a copy of our denomination's 2015 resolution to support the Black Lives Matter Movement. After months of congregational conversation, the First Parish Standing Committee voted on December 13, 2015 to approve the placement of the banners through June 12, 2016. The end date was subsequently extended until January 2, 2017. Further extensions will be considered by the Standing Committee.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 978.254.5012 or at kristin.haddad@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin Haddad, Chair
First Parish Standing Committee

enclosures (2)

Support the Black Lives Matter Movement [1]

2015 Action of Immediate Witness

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists have a goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, allowing injustice to go unchallenged violates our principles;

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained powerful traction in conjunction with recent tragic events involving, in particular, police brutality and institutionalized racism that target the black community;

WHEREAS, Tanisha Anderson, Rekia Boyd, Michael Brown, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux, Shelly Frey, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Kayla Moore, Tamir Rice, and Tony Robinson are just a few names of people who were recently killed by the racism that exists in the United States today;

WHEREAS, people of all ages and races are killed by law enforcement, yet black people ages 20-24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement;

WHEREAS, mass incarceration fueled by for-profit prisons and racially biased police practices drive the disproportionate imprisonment of black and brown Americans;

WHEREAS, the school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of students expelled from U.S. public schools are black and one out of three black men is incarcerated during his lifetime; and[1]

WHEREAS, we must continue to support the Black Lives Matter movement and Black-led racial justice organizations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls member congregations to action, to become closer to a just world community, and to prevent future incidents of this nature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly urges member congregations to engage in intentional learning spaces to organize for racial justice with recognition of the interconnected nature of racism coupled with systems of oppression that impact people based on class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and language;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly encourages member congregations and all Unitarian Universalists to work toward police reform and prison abolition (which seeks to replace the current prison system with a system that is more just and equitable); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly recognizes that the fight

for civil rights and equality is as real today as it was decades ago and urges member congregations to take initiative in collaboration with local and national organizations fighting for racial justice against the harsh racist practices to which many black people are exposed.

No matter who you are, black lives matter, and a system of fair, transformative, and restorative justice that is accountable to communities is something to which each of us has a right. Unitarian Universalists and our greater society have the power to make this happen. Let's do it!

Footnote

[1] This sentence was edited for accuracy. The original clause, as adopted by the General Assembly, read "WHEREAS, the school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of black students are expelled from U.S. public schools and one out of three black men is incarcerated during his lifetime; and".

For more information contact socialjustice@uaa.org [2].

Source URL: <http://www.uua.org/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>

Links

[1] <http://www.uua.org/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>

[2] <mailto:socialjustice@uaa.org>