

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	N
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	Y
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
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		
Shawna Reid	Nominating Committee	
Bob Brack	Social Action Community Board	
Jan Hutslar	Ministerial Intern	
Alane Wallis	Nominating Committee	

Howard opened the meeting with words by Adrienne Rich. Kristin then read our Standing Committee (SC) covenant.

Minutes of our October 16th meeting, with minor amendments, were approved unanimously.

Chair’s Report

Kristin reported that the SC retreat was an enjoyable and successful team building, connection-strengthening experience. Kristin also updated the committee on the following items:

- The SC auction activity, yard work at Kate Svrcek’s, was a lovely way to spend a fall morning.
- The Church has mailed the letter sponsoring Hanna Gallo, and Hannah has expressed her thanks.
- There has been no formal response yet from the Concord Historic District Commission (HDC), regarding our letter to them in response to their violation letter regarding the Black Lives Matter (BLM) banners. Margie King Saphier has requested an extension of the BLM banners timeline, and we will discuss this issue at our December meeting.
- There will be a delegation from our partner church in Transylvania visiting this month, and SC members are encouraged to attend events and to help welcome our guests, especially at a welcoming event on November 29th in the afternoon.

Minister’s Report

There were no additional comments on the October report Howard submitted to the SC.

Howard was encouraged by and appreciative of First Parish’s "Get Out the Vote" on Election Day, even as the results of the election were more than disappointing to many at First Parish. Howard reported

that the launch of the 2-year Social Action Community (SAC) pilot program is going a bit more slowly than expected, mostly due to the complexity of the work involved.

Sound system upgrades in the sanctuary are underway, and these include a new pulpit microphone that has already been installed and is in the process of working out bugs. The speakers in the sanctuary need to be changed out, and a sound engineer is working on design and implementation of that work with Doug Baker and Howard. Money required for these efforts shall be considered unplanned expenses.

Semi-Annual Staff Compensation Discussion

The group discussed current staff compensation data, as well as the UUA compensation guidelines, using a report by Fifi that demonstrates how the salaries of our church staff align with the UUA recommendations. The recommendations are published annually and include considerations based on our church size and location. The report provided in November showed that much of our staff is currently below the midpoint guideline for our church. This is extremely relevant information, as forming our budget is a demonstration of our social justice priorities.

Tom recounted the compensation review effort done a few years ago, and offered the expertise of the Finance Committee in any upcoming work around compensation issues. Howard reminded us that these UUA guidelines have made an extraordinary difference in the lives of ministers and religious staff, given how poorly people were compensated prior to the implementation of the guidelines. Howard does not think that we currently have any difficulty recruiting or retaining staff.

Treasurer's Report

Tom shared notes from the congregational conversations held in October. Discussions included the need for maintenance or capital expenditures and whether there should be a formal building maintenance fund. Topics also included the difficulty in predicting budget numbers, the duration of the pledge campaign, and the idea of establishing a Sustainer commitment level of pledging. The groups asked about and discussed the continuing formation of a Legacy Giving program, as well as the creation of a sustainable financial condition for the Parish.

A committee member pointed out that "what do we want our budget to be" could be thought of to mean "what do we want our level of staffing to be?"

Member's Reports

Several members expressed gratitude for today's sermon. There were 310 adults at the service, and 10 new members joined afterward.

A member left today's service comforted by the reality that it is entirely possible to have a conversation between two vastly different world views.

A member expressed concern about what we say about the current political situation around children – they are listening, and in some cases mimicking back to us our own unhappy views.

Group and Liaison Reports

- Governance – Mark Russell Prior and John Lowe met to review First Parish governance policies. The day-to-day operations of First Parish are delegated to the Senior Minister/Head of Staff. Mark and John identified three major types of work for which the Standing Committee is responsible: Developing a long-term vision for First Parish; developing policies to support Senior

Minister/Head of Staff management of programs and operations; and providing supervision and support of the Senior Minister/Head of Staff. A governance subgroup charter was also discussed.

- Denominational Affairs – John Lowe reported that the Denominational Affairs Committee is currently in transition. Darien Smith has been serving as point person for the committee. John is working to arrange a meeting to discuss First Parish's place in the larger denomination and other topics of interest.
- Religious Education – Dave Elwood reported a general need for RE teachers, and that there are now about 100 children attending each service.
- Membership – Kate Svrcek mentioned the pairing of new families with existing members is going well.

Social Justice Discussion

Lora led us in an overview of the Social Action Community (SAC). The SAC board is made up of 6 active people, some of whom are new and some who are very tired but who feel responsible for the group's cohesion. Toby reported that about half of the current SAC board would like to step away from their current role. Leslie Fisher has been doing much of the SAC administrative work, including web site, communications and calendar work. The SAC board is actively seeking new members, and Bob reported that the SAC Board needs administrative support to function effectively. Bob also asked that the relationships between the SC and SAC Board and between the Senior Minister and the SAC Board be clarified.

At a SAC Board meeting on Friday, as part of its 2-year pilot program work the SAC board described the need for two part-time positions: first, a primarily administrative/coordinator position like what Bethany Lowe did, at about 30 hours per week. The second position would be for a Community Organizer to help advance initiatives with the Environmental Leadership Team (ELT), like Evan Seitz who is currently working with the Bedford UU church, at about 10 hours per week. In any case, it is ultimately Howard's responsibility to select any new staff members.

Howard briefly discussed the process of evaluation and hiring for either of the proposed positions. A member asked whether the SAC Board's administrative burden is more an issue of burnout or if there is a deeper structural challenge. There was a lengthy discussion about the needs and requirements of an administrator versus a community organizer. Howard mentioned the process that the Harrisburg PA church went through as an example of a situation that benefited from revisiting old assumptions and trying something new.

Standing Committee Goal Formation

The SC is developing 2-year goals to guide us through 2018, and as a reminder our three goal areas are:

- 1) Governance
- 2) Leadership
- 3) Supporting Social Justice

With minor modifications, the Governance goals were approved unanimously this evening. The SC is still working on two other goals in the areas of Leadership and Supporting Social Justice, both of which will be finalized at our December meeting.

The public portion of the meeting ended at 9:34 PM. There was an Executive Session, and the meeting formally adjourned at 10:00PM

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