

<b>Regular Attendees</b>		<b>Present</b>
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. 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	N
Mark Russell Prior	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Treasurer	Y
Kate Svreck	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
<b>Guests</b>		
Jan Goddard-Taylor	Nominating Committee	Y
Wendy Holt	SAC board	Y
Leslie Fischer	SAC board	Y
Tricia Haut	SAC board	Y
Philip vanderWilden	Trustees of Parish Donations	Y
Fred Van Deusen	Trustees of Parish Donations	Y

Howard opened the meeting with words from Reinhold Niebuhr, and after a moment of silence Kristin read our Standing Committee (SC) covenant.

Minutes from December’s meeting had already been revised and approved via electronic vote.

**Chair’s Report**

Kristin reported on the Concord Historic Districts (HDC)’s current response to First Parish’s latest letter to them regarding the Black Lives Matter banner. For additional perspective Kristin has spoken with the UUA, Rev. John Gibbons (the minister at Bedford’s UU church) and Patty Popov. Kristin is recommending that she and Patty meet with the HDC Chair (Terry Gregory) and the Concord Town Manager (Chris Whelan) to discuss the matter face-to-face. The Committee encouraged Kristin to proceed with the meeting.

The next SC retreat is scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and will likely be held at the church.

Kristin would like to discuss with a small group of SC members what kind of information we would like to see in Howard’s future monthly reports. Several committee members volunteered to help with the discussion.

Work on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) banner warrant article for this year’s Annual Meeting needs to begin soon. The BLM warrant article is intended to reaffirm the congregation's support for the Black Lives Matter movement. The decision about the banner is the responsibility of the Standing Committee.

**Minister's Report**

In addition to the notes Howard shared with the Committee in his written report via email, Lora asked for clarification about the Social Action Council (SAC) staff position job description regarding supervisory versus task roles. Howard thinks the word “coordinator” is appropriate given both the status of the pilot project and the lack of clarity as to who the supervisor of this staff member will be. The possibility of working with community organizer Evan Seitz, along with his connection to UU Mass Action, could take advantage of a pooling of resources with other UU churches. In any event, according to our governance policies Howard will be the supervisor of the social action coordinator.

Howard reported on the first meeting of the 2017 Annual Pledge Campaign team, which was held earlier this week. The theme for this year will be “The Fire of Our Commitment”. Jane Barnes has volunteered to be the project manager, and Virginia Taylor has agreed to be one of the leaders of the campaign. Tom noted that several campaign events will occur along the way, and that the campaign will be shorter this year ending in early April, about 5 weeks after Celebration Sunday. The Finance Committee will make a FY 2018 budget prediction based in part on the pledges at that point.

A 2017 housing allowance of \$47,328 for Rev. Amy Freedman’s was proposed. A motion was made to approve this amount, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Director of Operations' Report**

Fifi’s October 2016 report was sent to the committee by email, and that full report is available to members of First Parish from Fifi upon request. The following items were discussed during today’s meeting:

- John asked about whether Fifi was comfortable with current cash management practices. The answer was yes, and given both typical seasonal cash needs and current market interest rates Fifi has seen no reason to change vehicles.
- The main stair railing renovation project is proceeding but moving slowly due to the workload of the specialized railing fabricator.

**Treasurer's Report**

Tom reported that the Compensation Study will be made available for review before our next (February) meeting. Tom also mentioned a more general income study that is underway to inform our annual pledge campaigns. The goal of that study is to learn about more about our financial capacity, our efficiency as an organization, and long term financial sustainability issues. Tom will report later in this meeting on the proposed Legacy Giving Program.

John noted that there are numerous alternative ways to run pledge campaigns, including making them much shorter (e.g. 2 weeks maximum).

**Member's Reports**

Kristin heard that this year’s Christmas service was the best this person had ever attended. Kate noted that this year there was an interesting swing in numbers (fewer people at the 3PM service). Mark thought the staff was very well represented at the services.

Kate reported several comments reflecting a great deal of enthusiasm for Howard’s sermon today, as well as very positive feelings about Kenneth Griffith’s first session as Choir Director.

There is apparently a large amount of support for the BLM banner, as many people signed the back of the banner during today’s coffee hour.

**Group and Liaison Reports**

Evaluation subgroup – Kristin encouraged this group to begin thinking about the evaluation process given both the upcoming 5-year evaluation with Howard and the church-wide evaluation of our collective “ends.” Next month’s SC meeting will include a round table discussion on evaluations. Dave will forward evaluation materials from this weekend’s Jericho Road not-for-profit board workshop that he and Peter attended.

Nominating subgroup – Patty reported that the committee is looking to nominate two people for the Nominating Committee, and that the search for members to replace both Mark Russell Prior and the Treasurer on the SC is underway.

Denominational Affairs liaison– John reported that the Denominational Affairs committee will be meeting in February.

Religious Education (RE) Council liaison – Dave reported that the Council is doing very well. There are about 173 children registered in RE programs this year, and there were several successful and well attended activities through the holidays. There is good registration in both Our Whole Lives (OWL) and Coming of Age (COA) programs. John encouraged the idea of joint projects between RE and SAC groups. There are ongoing efforts to try to grow the Youth Group.

Forum liaison – John repeated the offer from the Forum Committee to use forum time slots this coming spring for Standing or Finance Committee programs.

Membership liaison – Kate reported that three people (two households) signed the membership book today, bringing this year’s new member total up to about 18 so far.

Ministerial Internship liaison – Jeff and Howard reported that the search for an intern is still on.

SAC liaison – Lora discussed on possible connections between SAC efforts and those of other groups, especially the idea of a possible subcommittee focusing on connections between SAC and RE. There are several new members on the SAC, and that group would like a closer connection to the SC. Jeff observed that there is real energy in the SAC and a willingness to explore big issues and ask tough questions. There is a need to fill the role of SAC chair as soon as possible.

**Treasurer’s Report on Legacy Giving Program**

Tom gave a short history of legacy giving at First Parish. About 75 people, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, have given gifts to First Parish that make up the bulk of our approximately \$3m endowment (now referred to as our Legacy Investment Fund). Tom distributed a draft brochure explaining the basics of the program, some of which is based on existing UUA legacy giving guidelines. Tom’s group, which includes Philip vanderWilden and Fred Van Deusen, has developed mechanisms and policies that will both protect First Parish and guide a Legacy Giving Committee that can make specific recommendations regarding gifts and donations to the Standing Committee. Tom noted that about 4% of our Legacy Investment Fund is contributed annually to our budget.

There will be a Forum on February 12th as well as some coffee hour discussions to roll out the Legacy Giving Program to the wider congregation. Tom agreed to follow up with the Forum Committee on scheduling dates for the finance presentations.

John asked about the complexities regarding designated or “named” gifts.

The SC will review the proposed Legacy Giving Program policies and will vote on them at the next

meeting. Per best SC practices, any comments and feedback from the committee will be given to the Legacy Giving Committee at least 1 week before the next SC meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Review of Proposed Governance Charter**

Mark reviewed a proposed Governance Charter, as developed with John and reviewed with Kristin. The SC will vote on this Charter at our February meeting.

**Miscellaneous SC Business**

Kate reported that an SC field trip visit to the UUA's new home, on Farnsworth Street in Boston, for a meeting with Regional President Sue Phillips is planned for Wednesday February 8<sup>th</sup> from 11AM to 1PM. The meeting will be followed by lunch, and further details will be forthcoming.

Kate requested that the SC discuss how best to support Howard in organizing and executing his annual Leadership Development workshop. Kate, Peter and Patty will meet to discuss logistics and possible dates to share with Howard.

The group briefly discussed upcoming meeting agenda items, and the public portion of the meeting ended at 8:49 PM. There was no Executive Session, and the meeting formally adjourned at 8:50 PM.

/pn