

<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	N
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	N
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 Svreck	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Jan Hutslar	Ministerial Intern	Y
Michelle Fortier	Standing Committee member	Y
<b>Guests</b>		
Tony Rodriguez	Immigration Justice Task Force	Y
Abby Buhle	Immigration Justice Task Force	Y
Janet Donovan	Immigration Justice Task Force	Y
Bob Brack	Immigration Justice Task Force	Y
Laura Wagner	UUMassAction	Y

Howard lit our chalice and remarked that FP in Concord is featured favorably in this month’s The World magazine. He read an excerpt from the article. Jan read our Standing Committee covenant.

**Chair’s report**

Kristin thanked the committee for all the work behind this year’s annual meeting, which went very well. Next year’s Standing Committee (SC) calendar is a bit daunting, and the committee’s dual challenges will be to avoid burnout and to keep the congregation engaged. We will be discussing Tom’s stewardship document at our August or September meeting.

**Goal review and Annual meeting reflection**

The SC continues to meet our goals, including sending several delegates to this year’s General Assembly (GA). Lora, John, Peter and Kristin are all delegates to GA, with Kristin attending in person. The SC has also made good progress on SAC initiative.

The committee expressed appreciation for Fifi’s work at the Annual Meeting, and it was surprising but good that there were no questions regarding the budget. That likely means there is good trust and low anxiety in the congregation. Howard expressed gratitude for our moderator’s kindly countenance and efficient running of the meeting. The group thought the Black Lives Matter (BLM) discussion was good and useful.

**Minister's report**

Howard's report was gratefully received. The committee discussed at length the recent Open Table discussion, which Howard held to better understand how much energy are behind which programs at First Parish. Members expressed concern at feelings in the congregation that Open Table's history and place at First Parish is somehow in jeopardy, which is not the case. A discussion about numbers of participants in various programs followed. In general, Howard is trying to open the discussion about programs like Open Table to help First Parish figure out if it would like to be more focused on fewer, select issues or to continue to spread energy widely among various efforts. This is an ongoing discussion.

**Director of Operations report**

Fifi's reports were gratefully received. Fifi reminded the Committee that sound equipment upgrades are an unbudgeted expense. Indications are that it is likely that First Parish will have a good budget surplus this year.

**Sanctuary Level 2 Status**

Members of the Immigration Justice Task Force (IJTF) asked the SC to consider making First Parish in Concord a Sanctuary Level Two Congregation in support of First Parish in Bedford. A vote in favor of this motion would publicly state that our congregation will rally and support the needs of those being housed by First Parish in Bedford. The presentation emphasized the moral imperative for helping those families currently at risk throughout our region and illustrated the current climate with recent stories of deportations and near-deportations. Many members of our congregation, including the SAC board, have already signed up as supporters. Howard sees overwhelming support in liberal clergy for this kind of statement, and Tony reported that the IJTF is willing to take the lead on this effort for FP Concord.

**Black Lives Matter Banner Discussion**

After the congregational advisory vote and discussion at annual meeting, the Standing Committee voted to continue hanging the Black Lives Matter Banner and a companion banner through January 2, 2018. We agreed to solicit input from the Race Conversations group to help come up with the preferred language for the companion banner and decided that both banners should be hung to the left of center to prevent the wind damage that occurs in the right corner. As there was only tepid congregational support for the "Join the Conversation" banner, one member spoke in support of the "Standing on the Side of Love" message as central to our UU values.

It was decided that we will not put up the "Join the Conversation" banner, but will solicit input from the congregation on the wording/content of that second banner. The goal is to complete congregational input and then meet to decide on the wording of the second banner before the church season begins again in the fall.

A motion was made to reauthorize the hanging of the BLM banner and a companion banner until Jan 2, 2018. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Member's reports (What are we hearing)**

- Toby heard some comments about the tone of the postludes: sort of dirge-like, a lot of minor key

pieces.

- Michelle heard a lot of positive comments about the 6th graders lighting of the SAC candle.
- John heard, at the Annual Meeting, a parent state that BLM should be more integrated into the Religious Education (RE) program.

### **Group and liaison reports**

Kristin requested SC members to email her within a week any preferences for liaison assignments, happy or otherwise.

- **Denominational Affairs**: John reported that he doesn't think that group has secured its leadership for next year. Howard suggested that someone who attends GA should be the next chair.
- **SAC**: Lora reported that the group is having trouble lining up leadership for next year. Zach is doing a great job meeting everyone he can. He is really looking at the various groups under SAC to understand if the structure makes sense. Lora suggested he (Zach) choose the next chair, and Howard concurred). An SAC funding work group is also meeting soon.
- **RE Council**: Dave reported this group is doing well. Leslie Pelton is rolling off as chair. Team teaching is a new effort, and summer programming is set up.
- **Membership**: Kate reported that 6 new members signed the book today. 37 new members (so far, this year) were recognized at today's service. The Membership Committee is hoping to get some new members to expand their work.
- **Arts Council**: Kate reported a lot of things are queued up for next year. This group is also looking for new people.
- **Ministerial intern committee**: Howard reported that our new intern will be here mid-August. Current intern Jan Hutslar's last service is next Sunday. Howard and the committee all expressed how much we will miss Jan!
- **Forum**: John reports the committee is doing well. Howard is meeting with new forum chairs about tying forums in thematically to the services.
- **Legacy group**: Tom is looking to do a forum in October, and then in November some kind of program around estate planning in general. There will be an active campaign in the fall to figure out who are the most likely legacy participants. Tom will be chair of this group next year.

### **SC Self-evaluation**

Lora, Mark and Kate presented the results of our self-evaluation using some of our best practices as a template. Overall, the SC is completing the appropriate work in a responsible manner and continues to improve. The group did present five recommendations for next year. They are:

- The Standing Committee should revisit the "Best Practices" list on a regular basis.
- The SC and the Senior Minister should develop a plan for the upcoming 5-year visioning process.
- The SC should begin a member education process so that members understand the meaning and significance of strategic leadership and planning.
- The SC and the Senior Minister should assess the expertise required to execute the strategic visioning process and begin to organize resources for the project.
- The SC should add new leadership development activities under our Leadership goal.

Mark led a short discussion on the idea of a leadership development initiative. Kate will be hosting a

Leadership Task Force meeting on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Kristin reminded the committee that the congregation will be taking up the 7.5% discussion this coming year, and that while there are several strategic parallels between that and leadership development these are both large, complex initiatives. Collectively, we will need to carefully husband our resources and energies.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting ended at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Peter Nobile  
Clerk