

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	Y
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	N
Kristin Haddad	Chair	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Patty Popov	Standing Committee member	Y
Zach Roe	Social Action Coordinator	N
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
Jo VonRue	Minister in Residence	Y
Guests		
Eric Moore		

Howard read Jeanne Murray Walker’s piece entitled “*Election*”; Tom lit our chalice, and Dave read our Standing Committee covenant.

Minutes from our October meeting were approved unanimously.

Chair’s Report

Kristin shared details from a hand-written letter to the SC from Priscilla Parrott to the SC objecting to the Black Lives Matter banner. Kristin has also been approached by the Beloved Conversations group, which is sponsoring an anti-racism curriculum developed at Meadville-Lombard for the UUA. The group is interested in starting a Beloved Conversations process at First Parish, and Jo provided clarifications about the proposed process that is being developed in partnership with First Parish in Lexington. Kristin will invite the group to our next SC meeting for a brief presentation.

Goal Status Review

The group reviewed our SC Goals and Measurements. Dave asked how reasonable it is for the entire SC to meet with another church’s full governing board – the suggestion was made to send small delegations to several fellow churches. We continue to follow through and make good progress on several of our goals.

Minister’s Report

Howard's report was received, noting that the attendance numbers usually included will be provided next month. There were questions about how Howard chooses to include information in his report to support his goals. There was a request that the work cited be reflective of his efforts, rather than parish led initiatives. It was noted that Howard has done some notable work not included in the report, including

two funerals for Concord teenagers, but that there was also information in the report on activities that he did not contribute to, nor participate in.

In light of Howard's unobjectionable request to take a sabbatical at the end of 2018, the governance subcommittee will be reviewing the Senior Minister sabbatical policy in the coming months to make sure we are all following correct procedures.

Director of Operations' Report

Fifi reported on our disbursement of hurricane relief funds, the timing of next year's Auction (currently scheduled for October 27th, 2018), and then provided a brief overview regarding this year's staff bonuses. Fifi also explained how we are helping Open Table out a bit this year by only charging for half of the sexton's time to cover Open Table's Thursday events. Open Table's pantry function is now held in Maynard, not at First Parish.

Semiannual Staff Compensation Report

Fifi answered several questions about the report. Kristin reported that 2018 UUA Fair Share guidelines will propose an across the board 4% raise in all positions.

Member's reports

- Dave reported great feedback from the remembrance service. Kristin reported that a few people stayed away because of anticipated difficulty with the subject matter; however, the lesson is that it is a good thing to publicize these events so that congregants can make the decision to go or not.
- Toby reported people thanked her today for her role in bringing Howard to First Parish. Jeff was grateful for Howard's cranberry-themed children's message today.
- Lora reported that people of color that she knows are thankful for and feel supported by the Black Lives Matter banner.
- Kristin reported hearing gratitude for the Deep Denial discussion.

Nominating Committee

Patty and Kate nominated Jen Izzo to serve on the Nominating Committee, to fill a recent vacancy for the remainder of that three-year term. The SC approved the motion unanimously.

Chair Review

Dave reported very positive and supportive comments on Kristin's leadership and work. Jo commented that she has never worked with a more thoughtful Board chair. Suggestions for better supporting the Chair in the future included the use of a Consent Agenda and a more streamlined policy review process. Howard and Kristin both mentioned the value of their monthly meeting. Kristin expressed gratitude for the SC's ability to follow through on our commitments.

Year for Reflection and Visioning (YfRaV) update, ideals and goals

Lora and Kate updated the Committee on recent activities after the recent Leadership Workshop. There was a total of 3 follow up sessions scheduled with participants from the workshop. The discussions in these sessions covered topics including what leaders have experienced, how they would change and

improve the process, and what they thought we should be asking. The evaluation team of Lora, Kate and Tom have also asked several workshop participants to help with the year's activities, such as facilitation of the congregational conversations happening in January, help in creating February's survey, or planning/participation in the all congregation retreat. Dates will be sent to SC members, as they are expected to be scribes (but not facilitators) at the sessions as well as active participants in the year's activities. SC members were asked to join the Evaluation committee, and John and Toby joined that team.

There is an SC meeting scheduled on Nov 20 to make a few more decisions about the ideal content for these conversations as well as to provide an opportunity for the wider SC to share ideas and feedback on the plans being considered by the YfRaV subgroup. The Committee agreed that messaging around this effort is critical, that it will be important to emphasize the process is a symptom of health. Toby will be helping with communications, and Rebecca Curzon will be our facilitator training person. Lora, Kate and Tom are currently meeting Fridays at 10AM and would welcome further SC participation.

The Committee discussed Howard's participation and public endorsement. The evaluation team has heard several concerns that the reflection & visioning is being done because Howard is leaving First Parish, which is not the case! The SC voiced a need for Howard to speak about the year's activities from the pulpit, normalizing the events, describing this 5-year review of the church and its programs as customary, and encouraging everyone's participation, which Howard agreed were all good ideas. The Committee also discussed the idea of the evaluation team attending a staff meeting to discuss what staff would like to know about how they would like to be involved in this process so that we can deliberately and effectively partner, without overburdening, nor excluding. Howard agreed to have the evaluation team attend an upcoming staff meeting.

The group discussed how best to think about discussing mission and purpose. How "messy" are we willing to let the process get, given that we gleaned from Gil Rendle's teaching that leadership's role is to ask the messy questions and to create a safe space for those questions to be addressed?

The Committee discussed staff participation in this process and the various boundaries (e.g. between work duties and congregational issues) that people need to be aware of.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, was seconded and unanimously approved, and the meeting ended at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Nobile
Clerk