

<b>Regular Attendees</b>		<b>Present</b>
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	N
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Standing Committee member	Y
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	Y
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	Y
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
<b>Guests</b>		
Eric Moore	Nominating Committee	
Eric Van Loon	Jericho Road	
Halley McIlwaine	Jericho Road	
CC King	Jericho Road	
Sue St. Croix	Beloved Conversations	
Margie King Saphier	Beloved Conversations	
Susan See	Beloved Conversations	

Howard opened our meeting with a reading by Lynn Domina entitled “*Leaves*”; Fifi lit our chalice, and Kate read our Standing Committee (SC) covenant.

Minutes from our November meeting were approved unanimously.

**Goal Status Review**

The group reviewed our SC Goals and Measurements. John reported some progress on policy-review Goals in Governance. Jo reported Beloved Conversations group working with Lexington; Kate reported on Year for Reflection and Visioning (YfRaV) facilitator training session held today (12/10/17). Peter and Dave are working on making board-to-board connections with other UU churches, and Michelle reported a good connection with the treasurer at First Parish (FP) in Lexington.

**Jericho Road update**

Eric, Halley and CC updated the group on the decision that has been made to not dissolve the Jericho Road organization, but to bring it back to its roots (or “back to the studs”) and to build bridges between First Parish and the communities that Jericho Road serves. A new Board has been formed, with Zach as the FP liaison, several First Parishioners as members, and three community members from Lowell. The

intent is to hire a part-time staff member ASAP in Lowell, possibly with a part-time person in Concord. There is strong evidence of both interest and need for Jericho Road in Lowell. SC members discussed this new initiative, including responsibilities, boundaries and so on. The Committee fully supports Jericho Road's efforts, and will consider a formal vote of support during our January 2018 meeting.

Kristin will share Eric's full Jericho Road update report with the SC via email for review.

### **Black Lives Matter (BLM) Banner update**

CC updated the SC on activities over the past several months, including the decision to not replace the 2<sup>nd</sup> ("Join the Conversation") banner after it came down. There has been good FP attendance at several race-awareness rallies and events including David Billings' "Deep Denial" event in November. Several folks saw Brian Stevenson (who gave the 2017 UU General Assembly Ware Lecture) speak in Boston. There have been visits with the new Concord Carlisle school superintendent, and members of FP will be making a push this coming Spring to increase participation in the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. All this work centers on changing the narrative about racism and white supremacy.

The group discussed the existing BLM banner at length. Margie suggested that First Parish develop a resolution about our commitment to hanging the BLM banner, with language tied into our faith tradition. The agreement with the Concord Historic District Commission is that we will review the banner's status every 6 months, and while few FP members object to the banner Howard emphasized the good sense of this 6-month check-in.

A motion was made to extend the hanging of the banner to June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Beloved Conversations update**

Sue St. Croix briefed the group on the Beloved Conversations curriculum, developed at Meadville Lombard and already completed by several UU congregations in New England. FP members will be completing this curriculum in collaboration with FP Lexington, with a total of 64 participants, beginning with a workshop on February 2-3, 2018 and weekly follow-up subgroup meetings. The group discussed our work together at First Parish on racism and white supremacy and how the Beloved Conversations curriculum fits into that work.

### **Chair's Report**

Kristin reported on her response to Priscilla Parrot's concerns about the BLM banner. The Large UU Board conference call will take place this coming Tuesday evening at 7:30 p.m. and Jo, John, Dave and Tom will join Kristin. Tom volunteered to craft a message of support for Jericho Road.

### **Minister's Report**

Howard's report was received. The group discussed attendance numbers, and how best to clarify who and how to count – depending on approach, the numbers can be somewhat deceiving – and importantly Howard does not perceive a drop off in attendance. Three new members signed the membership book today. Lora reported on a good conversation with Howard and Kate about how best to give Howard feedback. Howard suggested that members save short questions for our SC meetings, but that more

lengthy questions might be sent to him before each meeting to that he can prepare a thoughtful response.

**Director of Operations’ Report**

In addition to the report that was distributed by email, Fifi highlighted two issues. First, we have gone from leasing two to one photocopier, which should save us about \$550 per year. Second, pledge income was higher than normal in October, possibly because the financial market is doing well or simply due to good feelings about First Parish in the community at large.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Michelle reported that the Finance Committee is meeting with a local accountant on taking next steps for performing a financial review in 2018. Some research is being done on moving some of our savings in to a product with a possible higher return on investment. Research is being done on how to schedule and afford renovations to the church’s spire. The Finance Committee is also discussing if/how upcoming Federal tax reform may or may not affect First Parish operations or income.

**Ministerial Housing Allowance**

The committee reviewed, and a motion was made to approve ministerial housing allowances in the following amounts:

Rev. Jo VonRue	\$17,700 (2017)
	\$17,700 (2018)
Rev. Howard Dana	\$47,837
Rev. Amy Freedman	\$47,328
Rev. Marion Visel	\$36,200

The motion was approved unanimously.

**Q&A from Liaison Document**

Kristin read the Religious Education (RE) Goals from Dave’s liaison report. Kristin also recommended that the SC read the Denominational Affairs report before our next meeting.

**Member’s reports**

- Dave reported that there were about 130 kids at this year’s Craft Workshop.
- Lora heard from Jan Hustlar that she very much appreciated Howard’s support during her appearance before the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

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

Kate reported good feedback on today’s Facilitator training session with Rebecca Curzon. The SC listening session is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. next Sunday, 12/17. At Howard’s invitation, Lora and Kate will be attending the church staff meeting this coming week. Scribing and facilitation logistics were discussed, and SC members were encouraged to sign up for scribing slots as soon as possible. Lora, Kate, Toby and Tom continue to meet as a team every Friday at 10:00 a.m. and all are welcome.

**Sabbatical Policy/Governance update**

The current minister's sabbatical policy, as redeveloped by Kristin and John, was reviewed and discussed. The sabbatical policy will come up for a vote at next month's SC meeting, as well as a formal vote on Howard's request for sabbatical.

The Governance subcommittee plans to present some policy to review each month; the next portion up for review is SC Operations, which we will begin to review in January 2018.

Kristin read our current Strategic Ends, last revised in September of 2012. Jo commented on language about "welcoming all," given the nuances about how "all" might realistically fit with our UU values.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, was seconded and unanimously approved, and the meeting ended at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Peter Nobile  
Clerk