

Regular Attendees		Present
Fifi Ball	Director of Operations	Y
Jeff Brainerd	Standing Committee member	
Rev. Howard Dana	Senior Minister	Y
Dave Elwood	Chair	Y
Michelle Fortier	Treasurer	Y
Laurel Gray	Ministerial Intern	Y
Kristin Haddad	Standing Committee member	Y
John Lowe	Standing Committee member	Y
Peter Nobile	Clerk	Y
Toby Smith Ropeik	Standing Committee member	Y
Kate Svrcek	Standing Committee member	Y
Valerie Vallancourt	Standing Committee member	
Lora Venesy	Standing Committee member	Y
Marion Visel	Minister for Pastoral Care	
Tom Wilson	Standing Committee member	
Guests	Representing	
Melissa Perdue Gallo	Increasing Growth and Diversity action group	
Jan Power	Strengthening Bonds action group	
Eric Moore	Strengthening Bonds action group	

Toby lit our chalice, Howard opened our meeting with a reading by Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, formerly of Lincoln, MA and currently of Ann Arbor MI, and we held a moment of silence together.

I. Time for Action reports:

1. Increasing Growth and Diversity – Melissa gave an update on the group’s activities to date. Several task force members attended a webinar on diversity called Exploring the Margins. Two subgroups have formed including marketing, working on a brochure and coordinating with the Welcoming Walls effort. A second group is focusing more broadly on diversity, looking at actionable and implementable things we might do as a congregation. Actions could include increasing attendees to future Beloved Conversations courses, the creation of “safe spaces” that could be offered as part of our commitment to diversity, and perhaps an outreach audit of the congregation to explore existing connections to other organizations. Discussion has also focused on the UUA’s draft 8th principle, and what might move our community forward in terms of welcoming. The group will not meet regularly but the subgroups are currently focusing on their work.

2. Strengthening Bonds within our Community – Jan, who is co-chairing this group with Eric, reported that this group has experienced its own microcosm in terms of clarity of communication. The group is focusing on four different sub-task forces, using face-to-face meetings and a Google group to move things forward.

There were no reports from the other task forces.

A motion was made to accept the February Standing Committee (SC) meeting minutes as amended into the record; the motion passed unanimously, and the minutes will be posted to the First Parish web site.

Director of Operations' Report

Fifi reported a “quiet” month in January. Howard updated the group about the pledge campaign, noting that as usual we are starting in the hole with several large pledgers having reduced their pledges and a more significant upcoming reduction in pledges due to people passing away. Howard encouraged the SC to be enthusiastically involved in the campaign, in any number of ways including participating as Stewards, writing thank-you notes, and so on. Howard suggested we need a multi-pronged approach that will cultivate new donors, including the need for at least two “big” donors who would pledge around \$50,000 per year, to focus on how to generally increase member pledges, and to better recognize people’s non-financial efforts. An increasing number of members are making pledges as part of their estate planning.

Minister's Report

We are happy to have Howard back! Howard discussed aspects of his sabbatical report, and he expressed thanks for how genuine the welcome back felt – and how that is a sign of how FP has changed since he first arrived several years ago. Howard discussed next steps on the selection of the next Social Action coordinator, with the SAC Board starting work by developing a job description for what they hope will be a full-time staff person, whose salary would be in addition to money set aside for charitable giving. Howard saw some truly horrifying behavior from FP members toward Zach, and even with his challenges as an employee the way Zach was treated has significantly set back the church in terms of its treatment of employees. Howard reminded us that our UUA dues are still well below what we should be giving as a large church.

Treasurer's Report

Michelle discussed the results of the recent audit, and how we might best follow up on some of the recommendations in terms of risk mitigation including updated valuations, insurance, security and other policies and procedures. Michelle also noted that the Finance Committee needs at least two new members, including a new Treasurer, and we discussed how that committee could work better to support Fifi and the SC.

Governance subcommittee

The group reviewed a proposed Nominating Committee charter, and minor modifications were discussed. The charter will be voted on at our next SC meeting, and Kristin will send a version with final edits, including some by Toby, to Dave in preparation for our next meeting.

Standing Committee Miscellaneous Business

Dave discussed how to talk about the selection of SC Chair for next year, which will be taken up during an Executive Session. Dave will not be in attendance at our April SC meeting, so Kristin will be stepping in as chair *Pro Tem*. Dave and Kristin discussed how to prepare for Annual Meeting as the warrant needs to be posted at least 8 days before the meeting in June. Peter mentioned that the Environmental Team is

considering a warrant article regarding the Green New Deal, and Dave will be communicating to all FP committee chairs through the Meeting House News, Sunday insert and other vehicles. Alternatives to Sunday afternoon Annual Meeting time were discussed.

A motion was made at 8:40PM to adjourn the main meeting, and the group entered into Executive Session. The committee recommended that Dave continue as SC chair for the coming year, which Dave graciously accepted. The SC also approved a series of staff bonuses and gifts, which will be more fully described at the next SC meeting. The Executive Session was closed at 9:35, and the meeting was closed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter Nobile
Clerk