

Prudential Committee Meeting Minutes

January 10, 2024

6:30 - 9:00pm by Zoom only

Attending:

Hillary Salmons, President
Karen Silva, President-Elect
Joan Richards, Past President
Kate Niles, Clerk
John Dooley, Treasurer
Chris Campanile, Deputy Treasurer
Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison (absent)
Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison
Katy Killilea, Community Life Liaison
Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison
Peter Laarman, Strategic Planning
Dana Borrelli-Murray, Personnel Liaison
Ex-Officio - Liz Lerner Maclay, Senior Minister

Guests:

Erica Baron, UUA Consultant
Diane Baxter, Commitment Drive
Tim Burns, Commitment Drive
Louise Sloan, Mosaic Team

Staff:

Mandy Neff, interim DRE
Nancy Forsstrom, Director of Operations

6:35 – Welcome

Approval of December minutes: Karen made a motion, Joan seconded. Unanimous with amendments by Liz regarding the spelling of her name and Erica Baron's.

Budget update: Nancy and Chris reviewed the budget modifications made so that we come within \$12,000 of our needs with a 15% Commitment Drive ask this

year. Priorities set to accomplish this include all programmatic asks, as these were reasonable, well-thought-out, and in keeping with the Strategic Plan; cost of living adjustments for staff with 3.5% for higher paid staff and 6% for lower paid staff; and an increase in professional expense reimbursement for staff. We also have to pay a steep insurance premium (double last year) so that is non-negotiable. Diane and Tim were briefed at the Finance Committee meeting about this.

Financial Report: John reports that revenue is on time with income way ahead of last year. Expenditures lower than usual so “we’re fine.”

Commitment Drive: Diane and Tim updated us on their plans for the Drive this year. “Stepping Up” is the theme, to go with the Strategic Plan’s motto of “Rising Up.” They will have a Fellowship Dinner on Saturday March 2nd, and a Big Givers Reception on Monday, February 12th. “Big Givers” are the top 20% of givers, which is about \$2500 or above. PruComm, Management Staff, Deacons, are all invited. There will be a training for Visiting Stewards on this year’s budget priorities and how to do a “hard ask” of congregants. This will be February 1st at 7 pm on Zoom.

Diane and Tim will meet with Mark Ewert, consultant, next week on how to strategize messaging with the Big Givers. Diane also asked for a bullet point letter fleshing out the programming asks a bit more. Peter and Lisa will lead on this after getting program proposals from Nancy with a two-week deadline from today.

Art Proposal from Mosaic Team: The question to be voted on is where to hold the art exhibit submitted in a full proposal by the Mosaic team – in the Meeting House as proposed or in the parlor? Because there is not a policy or precedent for hanging an exhibit in the Meeting House, the PruComm needs to vote on the location of the exhibit. A Motion was made to endorse the proposal as submitted to be held in the Meeting House by Peter and seconded by Kate. The art is by a Black artist who will be leading a service and potluck discussion (See attached proposal submitted in advance of the meeting).

Discussion: Liz thinks this is an exciting project but the ADA proposals regarding altering the meeting house for those requiring it has already been a source of “repeated concern” and she does not want people’s protectiveness of the Meeting House to undermine the antiracism exhibit here. There was back and forth discussion about art in the Meeting House at all, with some loving the idea

and others adamantly opposed. It was argued by several that the parlors will stimulate more discussion and access of it by both UU members and the City. Louise, primary author of the proposal, clarified that she had wanted to make more of a statement by having it in the Meeting House rather than an exhibit (in parlors). If it is to be in the parlors, Louise felt we should use the exhibit to reconsider not hanging the old portraits and use the art as a catalyst to really change things out there.

Action: Erica suggested an amendment to the motion that PruComm endorse the project in the Parlor with a commitment to not going back to rehang current art in the Parlor once this art project was over, and making an effort to be thoughtful and deliberate about what the Parlors will look like after the exhibit. This was unanimously approved.

Erica: She commended us first for doing a “great job” focusing on policy regarding the Art Project, not the project design or procedure per se. Her topic tonight was on decision trees and how business gets funneled. How do we let congregants know who to talk to about a project et al, and what in that process is relevant to PruComm? The latter comes down to 1) Policy issues (see Mosaic example, above) and 2) appropriation of monies. Based on our discussion Erica surmised that “some form of collecting information as the basis for further conversation” was desired. A form that people fill out that is neither too short (lacking enough info to funnel it to appropriate parties) or too long (too much of a barrier for people) was suggested. Then PruComm channels it to the right person, often Management Staff (Nancy). Nancy then decides the next step. Erica asked then what the role of liaisons should be in this scenario. Historically people asking for money to do something go through their liaison to get it on the agenda for PruComm to consider. It was recommended that we develop a form for channeling projects through Nancy using the model that John developed with staff in the recent past and that once we finalize the form we get into the habit of making referrals and using it. If we can agree on a form it was recommended we also put it on the web page for easy access along with an explanation of the steps to take when launching or proposing a new idea.

Strategic Plan: Peter reports that everyone is living up to the plan. We honed in on the 4 aspirations. We agreed “Joy” (aspiration #1) is happening with more to come. Radical Welcoming (#2) is in the works via the hearing-impaired improvements with the new AV system; the ADA workup for the meeting house;

the Mosaic Art Project; multigenerational services, and other interactions. Rise up for Justice (#3) is almost too much of a good thing, with many committees under Lisa's purview that overlap and sometimes needing whittling away from "social justice" designation (e.g. the knitting group). That said we also need new recruits for the new Antiracism Team, etc. It was suggested that on our February 11th congregational update on the Plan that we ask for recruits. Mandy also suggested that Spiritual Pathways would love to integrate here. Finally, the 4th Aspiration regarding growing capacity will involve capital campaigns for the Meeting House, parlor/kitchen, and organ. Demographic growth of the church is the core premise of the entire Plan, so that we modernize and remain appealing in an era when church participation overall is in decline.

Liaison/Staff Reports: Mandy said the DRE position has been posted and she has been "pleasantly surprised" that several well-qualified colleagues of hers are interested. She encouraged us to attend the youth Taco Supper on the last Saturday of January.

Katy reported that a lot of community events were coming up here with only a few slots still open to possibly fill with activities. Lisa said she would connect with Katy to see about maybe filling those. She also said someone had approached her about doing work with Amnesty International but needed to touch base with Nancy about this as there is some history to this that needs understanding first. Alison did not have much to report though the MLK Breakfast was brought up. We have a table with \$50/seat as the charge. (Venue may be in question however as it is currently flooded.)

Deacons: Hillary and Roger have asked the Deacons to look at the Strategic Plan and consider how they might contribute. They will come to Roger with ideas and Hillary will check in then.

Capitol Campaign: Two consultants are free and interested but work very differently and charge very different fees (\$120k vs \$30k!). A 4-week feasibility study in May is desired at this point to make recommendations by June if possible. They need a sense of a budget prior to such a study, however. An amount three times the pledge drive goal is typical, so for us that is about 1.5 million. Five times is "possible" so perhaps we shoot for four?

There is a question too of whether we develop a First U Team first to engage in this work or hire the consultant first. It was decided that we needed an interview team and to meet with the two consultants in February so as to select a consultant in March. Hillary suggested this team include Liz, Nancy, Karen Chris, John and Andy.

Finally, Peter asked us to consider outside funding from foundations etc. He did not want us to sign up a consultant who did not have an eye on this, where we were responsible for generating all income alone and without outside support.

Other: Liz was asked by Bethel AME if we could use our erstwhile Sanctuary space for a Venezuelan family of six in urgent need of a place to live. Nancy had unofficially told a member they could use that space for storing donations to the Dream Center for refugees but had not heard back from anyone about that yet. We did vote in the past to be a Sanctuary church and Liz does not want to dismiss this plea outright. But it was a lay initiative in the first place and those people need to be recontacted for more information about our current space and what they thought. Nancy pointed out that our insurance demands 24/7 volunteer presence for sanctuary families, which creates another problem. In the meantime the family has been directed to Dorcas International.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12.

Attachments on file:

- December Minutes
- Financial report through Dec 2023
- Strategic Plan Timeline for Input
- Staff Reports
- Mosaic Art Exhibit proposal