

Providence First Unitarian
Prudential Committee Meeting
March 13, 2024
6:30 to 8:45 pm

Hillary Salmons, President
Karen Silva, President-Elect (absent)
Joan Richards, Past President (absent)
Kate Niles, Clerk
John Dooley, Treasurer (absent)
Chris Campanile, Assistant Treasurer (Zoom)
Peter Laarman, Strategic Plan Coordinator
Dana Borrelli-Murray, HR Liaison
Alison Green, Spiritual Pathways Liaison
Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison (Zoom)
Katy Killilea, Community Liaison (absent)
Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison (absent)
Liz Lerner Maclay, Ex-Officio

Staff:

Nancy Forsstrom, Director of Operations
Mandy Neff, Interim RE Director

Guest:

Erica Baron, UUA Consultant
Peter Van Erp, Kitchen Committee

1.) **6:40 Chalice Lighting & Review of February Minutes** – Alison Green moves, Peter and Dana seconded. Unanimous approval.

2.) **Erica Baron** - Liaisons roles. If staff is in charge of programmatic committees, this begs the question of what role the liaisons currently on PruComm should have. Alison, as Spiritual Pathways Liaison, feels she has fewer resources than staff, despite having staff support. Social justice (Lisa Voutes, Liaison) e.g., is a huge umbrella for a variety of programs, some of them inappropriate. Garnering leadership is an issue. Ongoing Teams, e.g. Worship Committee, are under staff. But there are a lot of “rogue” groups too. Hillary suggests we need to map groups to the Strategic Plan, shifting old platforms into new. Budget requests in December and what they get out of PruComm recommendations later in the year are the two touchpoints between liaisons and their groups. So it seems there is still a role for Liaisons in PruComm in this regard. Erica suggests that PruComm work on a policy as to what constitutes a group under the First U auspices. Liaisons and staff will also meet more regularly to coordinate committee/group activity.

Shifting gears, Nancy presented a case study regarding an outside group who has used the Meeting House for a long time. They often miss deadlines for

communication regarding building usage which makes Nancy default to no use. Then they try to schedule at the last minute and when Nancy says 'No' they try bullying their way in. They do not honor contracts regarding arrival and departure time. They have a history of not respecting staff. They went around Nancy to ask other staff for what they wanted. This has happened repeatedly. The latest incident was the weekend of March 2nd right before the Commitment Drive Dinner. They then turned around and blamed Nancy for communication snafus. Many members of our congregation are involved with the group but Nancy is at the end of her rope. Nancy needs to know if PruComm is behind her. She has her authority to say no but wants PruComm's back up.

Dana wondered if we could make stricter MOUs with them or charge them twice as much. Is just saying no the only solution? Erica points out that Nancy has tried a good many alternatives and since this is about buildings and programs it is her call. How do we answer the congregation regarding kicking out this group? What "auto-reply" do we give? "We support in this case the staff decision, which on based repeated violations of the contract under building policies."

3.) **Kitchen Committee Report** – Peter Van Erp, guest. He is an architect and does a lot of work with restaurants. He is starting to consolidate "scattered pieces" on this project. He will meet with a consultant from Johson and Wales, and then do a Scope of Work (aka a SOW!) for the kitchen. What needs to be done for the Health Department to sign off on the kitchen? We need cleanable floors and walls, and probably a new hood. Do we make it a workable kitchen, or just a work area that we cannot actually cook in? These are two different levels with big cost differences. We can refurbish our Garland stove (as they last forever), but refrigerators probably need to be replaced by commercial grade refrigerators. The dishwasher loading area can be cut down. Pot sink needs to have 3 basins, not 2, to meet standards. There is also no mop sink either. Based on the Strategic Plan, the PruComm survey revealed that 10 out of 10 people wanted a real renovation of the kitchen, not just a prep area. Range and hood upgrades are the biggest differences between two budgets/visions for kitchen. We will get some budget estimates by the end of April from Peter. Also we need to involve the Green Team to remain as environmentally sustainable as possible. This will be a motivating point for any capital campaign to raise money for the kitchen renovation.

4.) **Capital Campaign Consultants** – Recommendations to hire Jim Klote. The Capital Campaign Committee feels a full-time person here to back up Campaign will benefit us greatly. They are more expensive than the other consultant candidate but the benefits outweigh the costs and it pays for itself. The cost difference is about 100,000\$ but the business model is very different. The committee report recommends that we secure Klote for the full amount of \$120,000 for up to 16 weeks at \$7,500 per week.

Kate moves, Peter seconds the motion to hire Klote. Unanimous approval.

5.) **Childcare policy** – Approval of. Some of the language is not clear regarding ratios of minor caregivers to adults in a room. Mandy will send a draft to Lisa, who brought up this confusion, first, before sending out a modified policy for an email vote.

6.) **Strategic Plan** - how are the work committees doing? Social Justice gathering occurred with Lisa and Peter. Both food groups, Antiracism, Green Team, Legislative Committee, and LGBTQ+ all met. Kate McGovern suggested a Justice League! They will meet 4x a year and check in at least once a month in conjunction with Coffee Hour. People left quite inspired.

6.) **Financial Update** – Nancy. 67% of the year and 78% of income in and 64% of expenses done. We are good!

7.) **Building & Grounds** - survey results & next steps – Nancy. (handout). 10 answers. Parlor, Atrium, Meeting House, Auditorium, and Kitchen all are being advocated for more comprehensive church and outside events. Based on the majority wanting the facilities used more, there are deferred maintenance issues. Nancy has 2022 quotes for various repairs from E.F. O'Donnell. This includes plaster repair, painting, and refinishing floors in the Parish House (First floor 179,872\$ -- all three parlors, stairs, auditorium. Second floor 197,575\$). The Atrium needs some new carpet and commercial broadloom carpet installed. Nancy and John and Jenn are not sure we need to paint as much here, but the whole building needs air conditioning. Only the first floor has A/C. It also needs dehumidification. John and Nancy think that the two things we can do soon is the carpeting and A/C. The painting may wait in the Parish House. We are waiting on carpet and A/C estimates and we need Green Team input here too.

8.) **Commitment Drive Update** – Nancy. Chugging along doing pretty well. 80 pledges as of this afternoon. 220,000\$ right now. 15 have not downsized; 11 have decreased but for relatively small amounts; 52 have increased with average of 19.46%. Yesterday we got a pledge for a 400% increase! Our highest pledge is now 15K, which is a 50% jump. Highest pledge was 11K last year. Superb results.

9.) **Staff reports** – Liz has one modification and some additions:

Staff are still sick! Not getting over it as she had written. Their heroism is on record.

Sabbath Month, slated for January 2025, is going to happen with the First Unitarian Universalist Society in San Francisco as a partner. Sabbath Month will be a discreet month where there will be experiential programs and wholly different experiences of renewal, creativity, and spirituality.

We need to schedule the Leadership retreat.

Bethel AME will be coming this Sunday. We need extra help with greeting and parking as Howard says some are nervous about parking on College Hill. Peter, Kate and Hillary have volunteered here. We can designate Hope Club for our guests after ascertaining availability. We will go to Bethel AME on April 28th.

Adjourn at 8:48 pm.