

First Unitarian Church of Providence
Prudential Committee Meeting Notes
June 12, 2019

ATTENDING

Prudential Committee

John Simmonds, President
Jay Glasson, Past-President
Cheryl Bartholomew, President-Elect
David House, Treasurer
Roberta Groch, Assistant Treasurer
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk *absent*
Caroline Mailloux, Strategic Planning
Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison
Kate Bowden, Personnel Liaison
Sam Cole, Community Life Liaison
Nancy Weiss Fried, Social Justice Liaison
Cynthia Roberts, Spiritual Development Liaison

New Prudential Committee members, 2019-2020

Michael Cappelli, President-Elect
David Francis, Assistant Treasurer
Eddie Warren, Personnel Liaison
Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison
Dave Spremulli, Spiritual Development Liaison

Church Staff Attending

Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Minister
Cathy Seggel, DRE
Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

Guests attending

Max Pounder

OPENING

6:45 PM Check-in; Opening Words, Nancy W-F., reading poem about birds in honor of the current art show in the Atrium by Amy Webb; Chalice Lighting; Call to Order

CONSENT AGENDA

Meeting minutes for May were approved.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Minister (Liz) –**
 - Submitted her annual report, which she prepared for the June 2 Annual Meeting. It would be impossible to highlight all the great things which happened in the last year; it is safe to say that it was a very active and productive year.
 - Is leaving Friday for the Partner Church trip to Transylvania, after which she will take vacation / study time and be back at the office the 3rd week of August.

- **DRE (Cathy) –**
 - Offered to answer any questions about her submitted report; has been very busy closing out this year and getting ready for the next. Will be attending GA next week, and will help lead a program at Star Island later in the summer.
 - Is working on the Resource Book, which is very close to being done (as far as text is concerned...).

- **Church Administrator (Nancy) –**
 - Offered to answer any questions about her submitted report.
 - Thursday June 13 begins the installation of the new phone and internet service, which will hopefully go smoothly and will greatly enhance our capabilities in the office.

- **Treasurer (David / Roberta) –** We are still on track to finish the year with a surplus; there are still income and expense items coming and going and we will know exact figures by mid-August.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Giving Assessment** – at the calendar meeting, the Giving Assessment was scheduled for February 21-23. John is expecting the contract to arrive soon to be signed.
- **Fred's sabbatical** – John has signed letters of agreement with Beth Armstrong, sabbatical music director, and Jay MacCubbins, sabbatical accompanist, to cover Fred's sabbatical, September 8 – December 29.
- **David Smith** – John has signed an MOU with David Smith, outlining his part in the music program to be held at First U October 17 – 20. It will be on file when Mr. Smith returns his signed copy.
- **Coordinating Team** – the team coordinating the Facilitated Conversations consists of John, Caroline Mailloux (strategic planning), and Wendy Oliver. They met with Joe Sullivan, of the UUA region staff, to discuss our needs. Joe will decide which UUA representatives to send to our conversations. There will be 3 – a Saturday morning, a Sunday afternoon, and a weeknight – and members will be encouraged to attend one.
- **Parking Lot** – Jay reported that the lot has received its final layer, and the new striping will happen soon. In addition to space markings, there will be directional arrows to help keep traffic going in an orderly way. Almost all of the lighting fixtures are on the premises; as soon as the last element arrives, the electrician is ready to install.
- **GA 2020 update** – Cheryl reported that there is not much new information; it is still not clear whether or not there is a local coordinator. We have asked the Women's Alliance if they would be willing to post members at the airport to greet and give out information. Our History committee will provide tours. (Note: it was discovered late in the evening that there is a local arrangements person – more info to follow.)

MINISTRIES, PERSONNEL, STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Personnel (Kate)** – No report other than items for Executive Session. Kate will meet with new liaison, Edie Warren, and will sit on the committee while Edie is oriented.
- **Strategic Planning (Caroline)** – no update.
- **Community Life (Sam)** – The committee to commemorate the 300th anniversary is getting organized. The May Parish House Pot Luck, featuring a program by Atwater Donnelly, was a success. The Monday calendaring meeting helped some conversations happen which settled some date and event questions for the future.
- **Social Justice (Nancy)** – The Community Collections decisions have been made for 2019-2020 and the applicants have been informed of the decisions. The schedule was also listed in the PruComm packet.
- **Spiritual Development (Cynthia)** – is thinking that Soul Circles might be a place for some of the ideas she has had for the ministry, and she is leading a group. She will also meet with Dave to orient him to the ministry.
- **Stewardship (Tiffany)** – no update.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Info – Community Collection opportunity** – The worship team has let us know that they have invited Bruce Knotts of the UUA United Nations Office to fill the pulpit one Sunday in the next program year when Liz is away. They have begun to negotiate dates with Bruce, who requested that the church receive a special offering the day he is here to benefit the UU-UNO. Since the Community Collections decisions have already been made, there are several options. 1) remove one organization already awarded a Community Collection and replace it with the UU-UNO. 2) add another special collection to the schedule (much as we did with One Gun Gone this spring). A discussion was held about the organization and whether it was worth supporting – Liz stated that it is well-known, Bruce works very hard, and the efforts are well-respected. She also noted that the special collection for One Gun Gone was approved after the timing was examined to see that there was no impact on the organizations already on the schedule. It was agreed not to take a collection away from an organization which was already informed that they would be receiving one, and it was thought that, with careful timing, an additional collection could be added when we know the date of Bruce’s visit.

It was moved (Jay Glasson) and seconded (David House) that we set aside one Sunday during our next fiscal year to receive a special collection to benefit UU-UNO, corresponding with the date Bruce Knotts fills the pulpit. The motion was carried.

- **Buildings and Grounds - Landscaping:** Max Pounder is the newly appointed Chair of the Buildings and Grounds committee; the other member so far is Jay Glasson. Max passed out drawings with proposals for landscaping the Benefit St. yard, now that construction is complete. Estimates for grass and flowering shrubs range from \$10,000 to \$20,000, depending on the type of plantings and whether we use volunteers or pros to do the work. The proposal also includes an irrigation system. In the current budget, and with a couple gifts, we have about \$5500 to use to start, and we have to decide what to do. A long discussion followed, with questions such as: How do we want the church to look for GA 2020 and our 300th anniversary? Do we want to spend money on an irrigation system? Does it make sense to spend the money on the project and leave the watering to staff, for whom it would not be their first priority? What do we do with a lawn relative to weeding, trimming, and fertilizing? Is there a way to put our values to work in using our Green Sanctuary committee? Do we use ground cover or grass, and what will work best knowing that the lawn gets a lot of foot traffic? What is the impact on the community? Can we do planting in phases, and who will take care of new plantings? What will \$5500 buy us, and is

it enough to start? Shouldn't we set an example by putting our values to work and doing something ecologically sound?

It became clear that a complete plan would not emerge from the discussion at this meeting. It was decided that Max will consult the Green Sanctuary people and keep looking into options which will be responsible, utilitarian, and attractive.

- **Pastor's Fund:** There has been a continuing discussion about the Pastor's Fund, which was established years ago through a gift from Edith Ehrlenmeyer. A percentage (currently 3%) is to be used each year to help members of the church community, or those known to the church community, meet urgent needs of food or shelter. The question has been, If the entire amount allocated is not used, through lack of need, what should happen to the surplus money? Liz presented the argument that the money should be distributed to an organization like the United Way to assist people in our state who have an urgent need. Jay presented the argument that, since it is money which was given for a particular purpose, and the purpose is perceived to be to help people in the *church* community, the extra money should be re-invested to grow the principle and generate more income. A discussion ensued... It was suggested that we define the Pastor's fund in a way which is more clear. However there is always a danger of not using money from a custodial account in the way it was intended. We have an oral history to help us determine the intent of the gift. It was also suggested that perhaps people in the church are not fully aware of the availability of the money, and we should be sure to communicate the opportunity – several members were confident that we could find people within the church community who could benefit.

It was moved (Roberta) and seconded (David) to approve Jay's written proposal (in the PruComm packet) to roll over surplus funds back in to the principle (see attached text of the proposal). Motion was carried.

- **Cheryl – Next Year in PruComm:** Cheryl made some general announcements about some PruComm logistics for next year. Executive Committee meetings will continue on the first Wednesday of the month, with PruComm meetings on the second Wednesday, at 6:45. There will be some exceptions for holidays.

Inside the Large Congregation. Cheryl passed out books to each member of the 2019-2020 PruComm. The book was recommended by David Pyle and will form the basis of the PruComm retreat in September. Please read it!!!

NEW BUSINESS

- None

Executive Session

- Members retired to Executive Session, with John thanking visitors, guests, and new PruComm members for their participation.

Continued Business

Members returned from Executive session.

It was moved (Roberta) and seconded (Jay) that, going forward in perpetuity, First Unitarian Church will close December 25 – January 1, to be considered holiday time without requiring staff to use vacation time. The Personnel Committee and PruComm will also, in the next program year, look at summer shut-down and other vacation elements and create a comprehensive vacation policy.

The motion was carried.

CLOSE

- John thanked members of PruComm for all their work during a very busy year. He enjoyed working with everyone as President. He thanked Jay, David House, Nancy Weiss-Fried, Cynthia Roberts, and Kate Bowden, for their service to the church.
- Nancy Weiss-Fried read closing words, from Franklin D. Roosevelt: "I think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird, and not enough the bad luck of the early worm."
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The meeting adjourned.

SUBMITTED by
Nancy Forsstrom