



Board Meeting June 7, 2020

Present: Gene Thompson-Grove (chair), Janet Britcher (co-chair), Karla Baehr, Ellen Blaney, Michaela Coady, Dave Demerjian, Steve Pratt-Otto, Charles Sandmel, Bob Williamson

Others: Rev Lisa

Gene Thompson Grove called the virtual meeting via videoconferencing to order at 1:01, Ellen Blaney lit a chalice, and we took turns reading the Board's Covenant.

Gene explained that we will break at 2:00 so that we can recognize from our locations the *Boston Black Memorial for George, Breonna and Ahmaud* organized by the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

Connecting Activity

Gene introduced us to a 10-minute listening protocol, *Connections*, to share what is on the top of our hearts and minds.

Debrief the Annual meeting and its Planning

We shared what we saw as contributing to a virtual annual meeting that, for the most part, worked effectively, including:

- Our advanced preparations contributed to reaching strong consensus on the budget, i.e., Building Blocks, virtual budget conversations in advance that gave opportunity to ask, FAQs, Building Blocks
- We recommended a budget explicitly grounded in our values
- Small group conversations gave members' voice

We identified what we thought might have been better, including

- We did not identify how and why we chose the nominees for Board and Officers
- We should consider bylaw changes that require a consensus voting process
- We did not have an effective way to include participants who joined by phone only
- Need to be open to fact that not everyone has access or is comfortable with Zoom
- We didn't ensure that each breakout room included a member of the Board

We reviewed the compiled notes from the breakout room discussions to discern patterns and trends in concerns that require our attention going forward:

- Concern that we ensure an effective way for youth to engage at First Parish
- Concern that cuts in section leader compensation may do unintended damage
- Concern that we are no longer a UUA Honor Congregation

Minister's Report

Rev Lisa sought Board input and action on several matters.

- The Fall Auction Fundraiser
Rev Lisa asked that we brainstorm additional names for a third co-chair to join Johanna Kobran and Fred Andree with the fall auction; the Board identified people that members will invite to serve as additional leaders of this effort.

- Religious Exploration

The Board reviewed in advance the RE Report from the Annual Report and heard a report from Rev Lisa on steps Laci will take to build RE moving forward. These include:

This July she will seek the hopes our children and youth and all parent have for future RE programming and use August to design responsive programming for the fall, with special attention to ensuring youth voice shapes the response for Challenge and post-Challenge programming

Laci is planning innovations in fall programming, collaborating with area UU congregations and taking advantage of other UUA national and regional resources

Laci is paying particular attention to short-term alternative programming for young people eligible for OWL since the UUA is not recommending that the OWL curriculum only be taught in a face-to-face setting

Board members posed questions about guidance and support available from Rev Lisa, other staff and RE Committee to ensure robust implementation and effective communication systems.

- Rev Lisa's Annual Evaluation

Gene and Janet announced that they will establish next weekend as a deadline for Board members and Committee chairs to provide feedback about Rev Lisa's performance so that they can identify patterns and trends in order to complete an evaluation and meet with Rev Lisa before the church year is over.

- Re-Opening Committee Guidance

- Susan Larrabee, Bob Williamson and Rev Lisa will serve as tri-chairs, each with a different professional expertise; other members, each representing different aspects of FPB operations and life
 - Janet Britcher (Board)
 - Alisa Halliday (Operations)
 - Emily Cherry (Worship)
 - Ray Wellbaum (Deacons)
 - Karla Baehr (Space Rentals)
 - Laci Lee Adams (RE)
 - Mike Luke (Facilities Safety)
 - Ron Wilkinson (Equity and Social Justice)
 - Ben Davis and Ethan Brackett (medical consultants, as needed)
- Board members brainstormed questions and issues they think the group might be thinking about/considering
 - Consult with Insurer to find out what resources they may contribute from their Risk Management division
 - Pay attention to adaptive issues, e.g., what does "belonging" look like at FPB?
 - Pay attention to guidance from MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
 - Is there a way to make the grounds available for play and distance visits, especially for those among us without access to much outdoor space of their own?
- Board members suggested that the process the Board and Space Task Force used to develop the Space Rental Policy might be applicable to this context.



- Board members explored how and why to use the “maximum feasible involvement in decision-making” framework to communicate and ground its decisions about when authority will lie in the hands of the Board and when it will lie in the hands of the Re-opening Committee.

Reflection on Board Goals

Board members shared their perceptions about progress made on 5 of our 11 goals that have not yet been completed. There was overall general consensus that there had been reasonable progress made on the five.

We identified general next steps for each:

Goal #1 Demonstrate the important of engagement and shared responsibility

We did well on this for ourselves, but need now to provide more support for committees and ad hoc groups to build engagement and shared responsibility

Goal #2 Continue our journey toward a Level 6 Multicultural Church

We need to make this goal more specific to identify measurable, attainable goals for the year, and to hold ourselves accountable

Goal #3 Facilitate congregational conversations about money, finances and the endowment

We need more clarity about the purposes of the conversations about money and endowment

Goal #4 Respond to the By-Laws Committee proposal concerning membership

We can't complete this until we've had the “money conversations”

Goal #5 Work productively with Buildings and Grounds on building maintenance and improvement

We need to support development of a well-resourced committee capable of both strategic planning and project implementation to help ensure that an effective collaborative decision-making process is in place for prioritizing needs, making recommendations to the Board, and for making those priorities, decisions and expenditures transparent to the congregation.

Planning Ahead

Old and new members will meet virtually June 29th or 30th using that time to begin to address these questions:

- How will we plan for continued racial/social justice learning as a board?
- How will we on-board new board members - What did we do last year that worked? What do new Board members want? What challenges does physical distancing present?
- Will we have summer Board meetings or gatherings? If so, when?
- When will we have a late summer/early fall retreat? What will we plan to accomplish?

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 with a reading of Leslie Dwight's *What if 2020 isn't Canceled?*

Respectfully submitted,

Karla Baehr
Clerk