

Board of Trustees Special Follow-up Cusp Meeting for 11-28-2022 on Zoom..

In Attendance: Greg Heyl, Danielle Jeanloz, Tracy Johnson, Ed Mangiafico, Jon Nye, Naomi Turner, Liz Van Wye, and Joe Zahka, plus guest - Dave Van Wye.

4:05 pm Tracy started with our affirmation

Ed announced a change in the agenda as follows: Tracy described concerns that she had shared with Ed about the last Board of Trustee meeting regarding policy and donations. This announcement was a surprise for some board members and appeared to confuse the direction regarding the Worship Committee Chair, resulting in a discussion of bylaws and the scope of the Board of Trustee authority. Specific information from the bylaws was not readily available to further inform the discussion. Focus eventually returned the main topic on the future direction of the church.

Ed mentioned that he had reviewed the bylaws and has been thinking about some of the realities regarding our attrition rate. There could be major changes to UUMH in the future, for example, with the consideration of a lay-led congregation. What will we look like in 2 years? He mentioned that there are programmatic issues and that in his opinion we had “crossed that line” in our last meeting.

Jon had reviewed the bylaws and especially as it relates to the 5th principle, and mentioned that our process is a concern. While this is not a huge roadblock, we need to be respectful.

Tracy explained that the 5th principle discussion is about - Are we using our democratic process well? There is a split in direction among the UUA board brewing. We might want to explore this at a different time.

The group explored if we would want to have a minister, be lay led, or have a program manager in the future.

Greg would like a minister at whatever level we can afford, at least part time, is not interested in having a lay person organization to conduct the Sunday services, wants a minister. A merger is something to consider but not his first choice.

Naomi described the Cusp focus on growing our membership, a need to grow the church, and mentioned that we have some immediate concerns that have to be dealt with first.

Tracy mentioned that the Cusp group has done a lot of work and wants to understand the will of the congregation.

Dave suggested that outreach is important by understanding other congregations. Do we look at 2 scenarios based on projections of our future size? What if we have 60 members, 30 active, and possibly \$80k in pledges?

Joe would like to have a part time minister, have a building and enhanced programing – but we need more people to volunteer. Plan B – merge with Brewster.

Naomi agrees, but we need to move forward with some kind of faith that we will be successful.

Greg wonders how we will survive and support a part time minister and building.

Liz would like a minister and a building. A fallback would be to merge with Brewster. Membership is not producing enough new members and we are aging.

Dave mentioned that we need to see the realities. Naomi reminded everyone that the pandemic has likely influenced the numbers. Liz noted that membership numbers were continuing to decline.

Jon asked if having a part time minister is a goal, do we need to start a search? Realistically how much is that going to cost? What is the target? While he is hopeful that we will have one, if we don't have a minister, would he still attend?

Danielle mentioned a part time minister is her first choice. If not, have a program manager. Either way, keeping the building is a priority. Her concern is that, organizationally, we have too many layers and committees which are getting in the way of moving forward as quickly as we need to for a church our size and with our immediate needs.

Ed believes a minister would be ideal and that we need a minister, especially a leader in times of crisis. He agrees that organizationally we have a structure that should probably be redefined.

Jon asked how do we move forward and how do we bring the Program Council in?

Ed explained that Sue Bauer was concerned that the board made decisions that should have been left to the Program Council. She feels strongly that the Program Council should remain separate from the board. She would like to be part of that discussion.

Jon pointed out that the Program Council Chair is expected to attend board meetings and the Board is to have liaison to the Council.

The board agreed that Sue/Program Council should be attending our board meetings regularly and work closely with the board of trustees. There were concerns that Worship Services had not had a committee chair since July 1.

Dave summarized the discussion:

Keep the building, have a minister, have more volunteers and members. That could be our goal. Evaluate it. Make it more specific. Is it attainable? If so, how do we make it happen?

We need the Program Council to resolve Worship Service Committee.

How do we want to proceed? What direction do we want to go?

We need to VET the plans that we develop.

Tracy suggested that we also explore the cost of having a minister, especially since the cost is increasing. We should review the costs in fully (including all benefits).

Ed agreed that we need to vet the goals and make sure they are viable.

Dave reminded the group that we also need to think of backup plans.

Joe mentioned that 5 years ago we met with Brewster to explore a cooperative effort. Joe suggested developing a relationship with Brewster to explore cooperative efforts. Liz agreed that collaborative efforts could potentially increase our options. They both agreed to meet with leaders at Brewster Parish.

Naomi offered to talk to Scott Taylor (from Soul Matters), who “yokes” churches as a consultant.

Tracy and Naomi will meet with the Worship Service Committee and then attend the Program Council Meeting.

Liz will look into a timeline needed for a search committee to find a future minister.

Meeting Ended 5:40 pm.

Next Board of Trustee meeting Dec. 16

Minutes submitted by Danielle Jeanloz