

**Minutes**  
**Social Justice Council Monthly Meeting**  
**Thursday, July 3, 2008**

Present: Mike Benefiel, Connie Nissley, Kay Scott, Tillman Neuner, Karen Lerner, Karen Goozner, Nancy Janssen, Nancy Derr, Sandy Shaw, Helen Strang, Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Debbie Trent (for the Maurer Scholarship discussion).

Michael Benefiel opened the meeting with words from Dag Hammarskjöld and asked Karen Lerner to introduce Nancy Derr who will be the new liaison SJC from the Board. Karen will continue to join the committee as she can because of her involvement with various social justice issues and will work with Nancy to get 50% of the board to the Empowerment Workshop in January.

Member introductions included a request that we share what keeps us coming back.

Colorful quotes:

“I keep coming to these meetings because the world’s not fixed yet!” Sandy Shaw  
“I have the same kind of drive to be here that I have when I look in my sock drawer. I want to figure out where everything goes, match up money and activities and put them where everyone can see them.” Karen Goozner

➤ AIM testimony to Park & Planning

Karen Goozner will be giving testimony on Thursday, July 10 at 3:30 at the final hearing for the Planning Board on whether to redevelop the North Parcel of the Falkland Chase Apartments (corner of 16th and East-West Hwy in Silver Spring.) The hearing is **Thursday July 10 at 3:30. Prep session at 3:15 at 8787 Georgia Ave (at SE corner of Spring St.) in Downtown Silver Spring. Entrance is at the back of the building,** not facing the street. The redevelopment proposal includes a significant number of affordable housing units, as well as retail space and historic parcels to commemorate some of the first multi-unit affordable housing in the Nation. AIM supports the redevelopment and Karen will testify to the need for affordable housing for, among others, teachers and other school employees, many of whom commute from as far away as West Virginia. A number of SJC members will be attending the hearing as well.

➤ Financial Report

Connie Nissley, Treasurer, shared a summary of the year’s expenditures. We currently have \$163.30 left though we have not yet been billed for copies and are unsure about whether there is a balance from the \$500 allocated to the Day of Service (information we need to get from Heather when she returns from leave.) Connie has emailed Sarah to let her know of SJC’s decision to designate any leftover funds for the SJ Endowment.

The Finance Committee has allocated \$23,000 to SJC for next year (up from \$21,675 last year.) We had submitted a request for \$23,125 and a \$24,930

Connie presented a proposed budget based on the funds we will be receiving. One line item that was lowered a bit was the UUSJ contribution of \$3500. UUSJ requests \$5 per member, which at Cedar Lane means \$4250. However, individual pledges can count toward our congregation's contribution.

The budget was approved unanimously with the understanding that we may revisit it if we receive more money from the board or as priorities change.

Sarah Deschler has asked for information about who would be writing a cover letter to accompany the check to Manna Food Center from the June 50/50 collection. It was unclear how much this collection generated. Connie will be in touch with Mary Farrar who was the contact on the RE Council that suggested this organization.

➤ 50:50 Split Offering Discussion

SJC discussed recommendations to the Cedar Lane Board regarding the 50/50 collection that, piloted this year after a successful collection for the Capital Area Food Bank at the Christmas service. Mike will write up a memo to the board highlighting the main points and recommendations:

- There was consensus that this is an important program and we should do it, but make sure we do it well.
- There were differences of opinion about how often to recommend doing the collection given the variation in the amounts collected during the pilot months:
  - Feb \$922 for Owl Out
  - March \$832 for Kakenya's Dream
  - April \$298 for UU Ministry for Earth
  - May \$248 for SMYAL (sexual minority youth organization)
  - June \$??? for Manna Food

Suggestions ranged from monthly to every other month to four times per year.

- There was consensus that SJC wants to be involved in the process and Sandy Shaw volunteered to chair a 50/50 task force. Karen Goozner and Kay Scott offered to be on the task force.
- It was also suggested that representatives from other groups and committees at the church might be on the task force, and that children and youth be involved in some way.
- There was a discussion about the importance of announcements being made from the pulpit in order to encourage people to donate and a suggestion that the ministers need to be involved in the conversations about the next phase of the project to get their input as we move forward.
- The suggestion was made that we have the conversation about how to manage this project within the broader context of how CLUUC receives and gives gifts.
- Some also mentioned that it is important to make sure people are encouraged to be involved in other social justice work, in addition to giving money.

➤ Planning for the Social Justice Empowerment Workshop

Helen Strang shared that she has been at the Lounge Lizards table for the past two weeks with the flyer outlining the questions on which we are seeking input and that there is a box at the back of the church where members of the congregation can put their responses. (She noted that in conversations with people about what Cedar Lane is known for two people said we are known for giving memorial services for people who have no other place to go.)

She asked for SJC members' help in getting the assessment questions to members of the congregation. Members of the council were asked to each think of five people they would like to have attend the workshop and that they would be willing to contact personally (at coffee, via email, by phone...). The goal of these conversations would be to inform them about the workshop and get answers to the assessment questions. It was also suggested that dinner discussion groups might be a good way to do outreach and gather assessment information. SJC members were encouraged to email Helen with the names of the people they would be willing to contact so we can begin generating a list. Betsy Devlin-Foltz agreed to help Helen with this process. (After the meeting we discussed creating a form on which people could write their own of another person's answers to the questions...stay tuned for more info.)

➤ Judi Maurer Scholarship

Debbie Trent, former SJC chair, joined the meeting to discuss developments related to the awarding of this scholarship. It was created in memory of Judi Maurer, a young woman who attended Cedar Lane and died tragically while she was in college. Applicants are seniors recommended by the guidance office at Rockville High School who are planning to attend Montgomery College. Celina Gutierrez was chosen in April after interviews by a committee of Cedar Laners and members of the Rockville Chamber of Commerce. (The Chamber also offer scholarships and Cedar Laner Kent Mason is involved in that selection process as well.) Celina Gutierrez informed us that she has been offered a full scholarship from Montgomery College! Summer schedules have made it difficult to determine quickly whether the other nominees, who were ranked by the interviewers, are still in need of scholarship support to attend Montgomery College. Debbie, Mike, Archene, and Kent will to work this out once more information is available.

➤ Humanitarian Relief for Recent Disasters

After beginning a discussion by email and then at the last meeting about how to respond to the effects of Tropical Cyclone Nargis in the Irawaddy Delta in Burma and the earthquake in China, SJC had tabled decisions about how to move forward.

Betsy offered to gather information from SJC members, specifically the Global Task Force, and share it with the congregation to remind them that there is still a need and suggest some organizations to which they might wish to donate individually. SJC would

not be collecting the money. Possible ways to get the information out: insert in the Order of Service, newsletter, ebulletin, Lounge Lizards table...

The following organizations were mentioned:

- Unicef
- Care
- Save the Children
- Doctors without Borders
- Red Cross
- UUSC

Betsy will check with Annette Scarpitta, chair of the Global Task Force, about these and other groups she might know and get the information out.

➤ Other Business

Karen Goozner recommended that we consider finding a way to address the on-going tragedies in Africa, perhaps through an African Task Force. Cedar Lane has had two programs in the past year related to Africa: "Kakenya's Dream" at which this young woman spoke and the congregation raised funds for a school for girls in her community in Kenya, and Janice Brunson's presentation on UU congregations in Africa. There is clearly more to do.

➤ Calendar Notes:

- Next meeting: SJC retreat on September 6 from 9-2 in the Chalice House.
- Regular meeting date: Thursdays seem to work well, though the first week of the month is busy for some on other days. Betsy will check with Heather to find out whether the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month would work for her, as she is only able to make the current meetings for part of the time.
- Please hold the following dates which we have suggested to the UUA as possible dates for the Empowerment Workshop--January 9/10, 16/17, 30/31

➤ Nancy Janssen was thanked and commended for her excellent time keeping.

➤ After the meeting, Mike Benefiel shared some inspiring materials from General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Secretary