

Minutes
Cedar Lane Social Justice Council Meeting
Thursday, November 1

Present: Connie Nissley, Karen Lerner, Deborah Vollmer, Sandy Shaw, Pat Karlsen, Annette Scapitta, Kathleen Reedy, Tillman Neuner, Kay Scott, Helen Strang, Mike McKenna, Steven Colgan, Heather Janules, Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Mike Benefiel.

1. Opening

Mike Benefiel opened the meeting.

2. Global Task Force

Annette Scarpitta, the new acting chair of this task force, indicated that they are hoping to recruit new members. They will write up a mission statement for congregational outreach for the lounge and the website. The task force is involved in some new initiatives. After having seen the UUSC DVD on Darfur, the 7th grade RE class, which Annette teaches, has been inspired to take action. They will come back to SJC with ideas about how to address this issue. The Task Force welcomes ideas for youth action welcome.

Annette is hoping the Global Task Force and SJC will be able to support Kakenya Ntaiya, from Kenya, through a project shared with members via email before the meeting. Kakenya is currently in the area and is raising funds to build a school for girls in Enooasaan, a remote Maasai village where girls are entered into arranged marriages when they reach the middle grades. Annette will come back to SJC with more detailed ideas.

3. Mission Statement

Two versions of the mission statement were available for members to read. The sub-committee working on this will handle it outside the meeting.

4. Action in Montgomery (AIM)

The thrust of the big AIM action on Oct 18 was to learn from the County Council and County Executive what they have accomplished in the areas that they had committed to at a previous event.

AIM is focusing on affordable housing through a 3 prong attack:

--Housing initiative fund-The County Executive has committed to quadrupling this fund, now at 30 million, by 2008.

--Legislation for one-on-one replacement for any affordable housing that is taken away.

--Hiring of a senior person by the County Executive to oversee affordable housing agenda.

Ike Leggett has committed to all three strategies, though he said the biggest challenge is to get affordable housing in all neighborhoods as many don't want it.

Only 14 people from Cedar Lane attended the meeting (we had committed 45). Members discussed how to get more people involved in AIM by educating the community about

AIM and trying to manage schedule conflicts (the October 18 AIM event was just before the GreenIN). SJC agreed to support Debbie Trent's efforts to get an adult program on organizing conducted by AIM, scheduled for the spring. The Council committed to do outreach to guarantee *at least* the 8 people the Adult Programs Committee requires to hold a program.

5. Budget

Connie Nissley, Treasurer presented a 2007-08 Working Budget (attached). After some discussion and agreement that the budget is a guide that is not etched in stone, it was approved.

6. Communication

Betsy Devlin-Foltz focused on the "Lounge Lizards" plan to have a regular SJC presence at coffee hour after each service. The task forces representatives were invited to provide a brief write up about their activities that will be available at the table staffed by SJC. Before big events members of the task forces are invited to join, or set up next to, the SJC Lounge Lizards table. Members signed up to staff the table (two lizards per service). It was also noted that we need to pay attention to the scheduling of events to avoid GreenIN/AIM type conflicts. All agreed that more needs to be done to communicate with the congregation. Updating the website is a particularly urgent need.

7. LGBT Task Force

Steven Colgan reported that the LGBT Task Force had a retreat and had developed a mission statement. In order to be in good standing as a Welcoming congregation the task force is working on some programs on this topic. They are working with Equality MD and the Human Rights Campaign to determine what kind of legislative action will be needed in MD and at federal level. Lobby Day in Annapolis Monday is February 11th and the Task Force hopes to get a lot of people there!

8. Green-IN

Mike McKenna received a standing ovation for his outstanding work organizing this event, which engaged 73 volunteers and an estimated 350 people, which was right on target. It was a fun family-oriented event that introduced Cedar Lane to a lot of new people. Cedar Lane will be the lead-off in an article in the Gazette next week on congregations in this area working on environmental sustainability. Mike McKenna recognized Molly Hauck for her efforts and said that he hoped the event could serve as a model for other congregations and help build momentum throughout the area and the country to help people learn how to change their behavior and habits. The information about the exhibitors and entertainers will stay on the website. He also noted that Cedar Lane can be seen as a leader on this issue, if we continue to have a strong and steady presence. Next steps include spreading the word about how to do a Green-IN to other congregations, possible Green Sunday workshops and a "Love Mother Earth" party in the spring when Cedar Lane becomes a Green Congregation. The most important: a call to action to educate everyone on what needs to be done. Fundraising opportunities related to the GreenIN were discussed briefly. Some suggestions included selling recycled utensils, cloth bags etc.

9. Report from the Board of Trustees

Karen Lerner, liaison to the Board of Trustees, indicated that the church ended the year with a surplus.

New equipment includes a copier in the office that will fold, and do envelopes, and the rear screen in the Sanctuary.

Jeanette Wilson has resigned her position working in the office but has agreed to chair the committee on use of church as a polling place.

The 50th anniversary celebration of building will be May 18.

Susan Clark will chair the pledge committee this year.

The facilities committee is taking steps to secure green status for congregation.

Heather Janules noted that she is working on reviving the Denominational Affairs committee and is looking for people to get involved.

She also shared her dream for the Saturday before the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the building would be a day of service during which the congregation would carry out 50 projects, one for every year.

10. Peace Making

Deborah Vollmer noted that there is still low turnout at McCaw meetings. There may not be a meeting in November and traditionally isn't one in December. Peace Action— continues to meet regularly at Cedar Lane. She also shared that she will be funning for Congress.

11. Closing

Heather Janules noted that the committee has some good momentum, despite some frustrations and that the committee continues to attract new serious people. She indicated that she understands it is hard to keep up with all that is going on, but that it is worth the race.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Secretary