

Approved April 21, 2015

To do

Fix “Associate”, Heather document - Tim

Follow procedures for Policy Manual edits – Susannah, Lyn

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Board of Trustees
Minutes
March 17, 2015

Attendance

Board members present: Tim Persons (chair), Kate Simon (asst. secretary), Melissa Reichley, Ariel Mora, Gwen Warman, Dave Hawver, Lyn Peters (chair elect), Paul Strella (treasurer), Jack Rogers (treasurer elect), Susannah Vesey (secretary), Walt Ellis, Michael Thoryn (communications), Maryann Dillon
All Board members were present.

Staff members present: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi (senior minister), Rev. Heather Janules (minister of congregational life and social justice), Sara Deshler (church administrator), Rev. Greg Stewart, Minister of Lifespan Education, Rev. Archene Turner (community minister)

Other visitors: Marge Dimond, Mary Means, David Devlin-Foltz

Chalice Lighting, Centering Rev. Abhi Janamanchi (Senior Minister) provided opening words.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda contained the following items:

Report from the Senior Minister/Head of Staff

January minutes

February minutes

Policy Manual edits from Governance Committee

JPD Assembly delegates, LaFayette Hill, PA, April 10-11, 2015: Michael Benefiel, Dino Drudi, John Gubbings, Mike Harris, Terry Hoffeld, Cathy Knapper

Ministerial Agreement: Rev. Heather Janules, Minister of Congregational Life and Social Justice

Tim Persons noted that there were two typos in the Ministerial Agreement and asked that the Board approve with the proviso that they be fixed.

Lyn Peters moved, and Melissa Reichley seconded, approval of the Consent Agenda. It was approved by voice vote. Ariel Mora said she approved of everything on the Consent Agenda except the Minutes, which she had been unable to read because secretary Susannah Vesey sent them out so late, and abstained.

April 19, 2015 Annual Meeting agenda discussion

Much discussion ensued regarding the expected length of the meeting and whether food would be served. It was agreed that these questions would be left to the Senior Staff.

As to content of the agenda, Rev. Abhi Janamanchi is including for the first time an In Memoriam section to honor former members and friends who have died during the past year.

Maryann Dillon, co-chair of the Blumenthal Futures Fund, noted that she is on the agenda to give a report, which, because of Board scheduling, she would not yet have had a chance to first make to the Board.

Report from the Financial Policy Committee on Mandate from the Board

In February, the Board directed that a professional audit be conducted to ensure proper financial procedures are in place as Rev. Abhi Janamanchi assumes responsibility for money matters under Governance by Policy.

Paul Strella (treasurer) reported that following a “vigorous” meeting, the Financial Policy Committee recommended that the audit review be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1: Engage an independent firm to review Cedar Lane’s financial reporting and assist staff to develop more standardized financial reporting.

Phase 2: Engage an independent firm to perform a preliminary review of Cedar Lane’s financial statements and procedures, assess their accuracy, assess risk areas, and recommend appropriate changes in financial procedures to bring them into best practices.

Phase 3: Engage an independent firm to review whether Cedar Lane’s operations and financial reporting conform to procedures established in phase 1. This review should occur as soon as possible but within one year after the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the review in phase 1.

Discussion of Multicultural Task Force (MCTF) recommendations

Following a professionally-led Board visioning exercise in October, in which Board members voted on their aspirations for Cedar Lane over the next one, three and ten year periods, the MCTF has been meeting to make recommendations to the Board on steps it can take to make the Cedar Lane congregation more welcoming to people of different cultures.

Ariel Mora, MCTF chair, presented the Board with 13 recommendations to consider. A further discussion will be held at the April Board meeting.

MCTF Recommendations:

1. Develop a more welcoming approach to people of other color
2. Include voices of marginalized people in every service
3. Adopt the 8th UU principle at Cedar Lane: “Journeying towards spiritual wholeness by building a diverse multicultural Beloved Community that accountability dismantles racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”
4. Create a standing Multicultural Committee
5. Require Intercultural Competency Training for BOT and other leaders

6. Provide workshops for the congregation on intercultural competency, in addition to anti-bias work
7. Provide two or three worship options, not necessarily on Sundays, for example, traditional, contemporary, humanist
8. Ask all Social Justice groups to articulate how non-majority voices inform their activities
9. Go on field trips to broaden our horizons
10. Offer family trips, such as camping or skiing, for all ages
11. Co-host speakers with other area churches or community groups (2 or 3 per year)
12. Offer free meditation or yoga for single moms, with child care, once a week
13. All Board members be required to take annual training

Discussion followed as to whether the recommendations, under GBP, were related to the Board or to the Ministry. Michael Thoryn (communications) said he would like to see an action list accompany them, along with who would be responsible for implementing what. Too often, he said, people do a lot of work and then nothing gets done. Kate Simon noted there was no mention of people with disabilities. Ariel said the multicultural umbrella would include all people who have been marginalized. Maryann Dillon said the word marginalized should not be used. Melissa Reichley asked how much individual items would cost.

Ariel asked if MCTF could come to the April meeting and recommend Board members approve all 13 recommendations. Tim suggested that Ariel leave the list with the Board to contemplate, then in a couple of weeks “poll” individual members to see how they would like to proceed.

Update from the Blumenthal Social Justice Task Force

The Blumenthal Social Justice Task Force was created in 2014 with a mission to find a long-term social justice project that Cedar Lane members of all ages and interests could contribute to as a community. It was given \$50,000 of seed money from the Blumenthal bequest.

Its chair, David Devlin-Foltz, reported that the project has now been identified: Veirs Mill Elementary School, through the organization Linkages to Learning. Veirs Mill ES has 600 students; is geographically close to Cedar Lane; 61 percent of its students are Hispanic; and 70 percent receive free or reduced meals. Linkages to Learning provides psychological support to children in Montgomery County Public Schools.

David said the task force had been careful to look for a project that was “relational”. Veirs Mill and Linkages to Learning had been careful in outlining the school population’s needs. Needs range from quick and immediate projects to long term. Some examples:

- packing and delivering snacks
- summer camp counselors
- providing a computer workshop (preferably in Spanish)
- art club
- homework club

David said through time the program could build and offer more opportunities. The task force was given \$50,000 from the Blumenthal bequest as seed money. Gwen Warman asked if the Social Justice Task Force's \$50,000 could be put toward an administrator; David said there was nothing to prevent that, although there were no such plans.

David suggested he and Rev. Janamanchi establish a timeline for communicating to the congregation and getting the program going. The program will fall under the Senior Ministry's purview.

Motion of support: Walt Ellis made a motion, and Gwen Warman seconded, that the Board enthusiastically endorse the Veirs Mill social justice project. In a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mission-based Church Mini-Retreat with Rev. Scott Tayler

Members gave positive reviews of Rev. Scott Tayler's presentation at the March 14 Board mini-retreat on mission-based church. In a mission-based church as described by Rev. Tayler, all church programs use their church mission as their guidepost. Ministry teams define their own missions in a way that serves the overall church mission. Organizing this way helps clarify what programs the church should offer, and those it should eliminate. Times have changed, he said. In the past, church members were looking for things "to do". Today they aren't. They're looking for spiritual enrichment.

Rev. Janamanchi (senior minister) said he likes how Rev. Tayler's mission-based manages change by putting theology at its core. Programs that don't fit are either adapted or let go. Rev. Tayler had made a multiple-year commitment to Cedar Lane to help get a mission-based approach going here that could serve as an example to the rest of the denomination.

Tim Persons (chair) said he would like to get the program going here, and that it could make Cedar Lane "a beacon" – a long-term goal articulated by immediate past Board chair Don Bliss. But there would need to be congregational buy-in. Board members liked the simplicity of Rev. Tayler's ideas, it seemed easier to implement than Dan Hotchkiss's Governance by Policy. Some concern was expressed that Cedar Lane's mission might be too all-inclusive, and that following Hotchkiss we may have done some things, such as create Core Values, out of order with the mission-based approach.

Rev. Archene Turner (community minister) and her wife Mary Means, a CL member with more than 30 years of community planning experience, said if the Board decided to adopt Rev. Tayler's mission-based philosophy, they would help implement.

Closing words

Ariel Mora read the poem, "Song of the Builders," by Mary Oliver.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susannah Vesey

Secretary

Upcoming:

Annual Meeting: April 19

Pancake Supper: May 17

June Retreat: June 5 at the Chalice House, June 6 at River Road UU

Congregational Meeting: June 7, 12:45