

Approved by BOT

November 19, 2013

## **Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church**

### **Board of Trustees**

Minutes

October 15, 2013

#### **Action Items:**

- Proposed Share the Plate Policy will be presented to the BoT in Nov. by the Social Justice Council
- Appoint task force for Social Justice project (church-wide/intergenerational) using part of Blumenthal Fund- Abhi, Heather
- Write a Request for Proposal to solicit proposals from experts on recommendations for updating/improving the HVAC system. Michael Murray to work with Peter Lowenthal to present RFP at Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of BOT officers with Abhi
- Bridge the Gap campaign- consider contribution to church ASAP- BOT
- Form Growth Task Force to develop plan to attract and assimilate new members- Discuss at November BOT meeting
- Develop list of Executive Limitations for Abhi and staff- GTF- Nov BOT Meeting-- Tim and Susannah to inform GTF
- Establish a Task Force to consider multicultural initiative and review UU 8<sup>th</sup> principle for possible adoption at CL- Progress Report to BOT at December Meeting- Ariel
- Blumenthal Futures Fund- recommend additional Task Force Members to BOT (Nov. Meeting) and develop Phase I work plan/budget- April '14- Maryann Dillon and Harvey Lerner.
- Draft amendment to Section III of the By-laws that eliminates requirement for specific dollar amount for CL membership and develop a policy on becoming a new member and for maintaining membership eligibility to vote at congregational meetings. Don and GTF to work with Member Services Committee, Heather and staff to draft - to be approved by BOT so that congregation can vote on By-Law Amendment at the April Annual Meeting
- Congregational Conversations-
  - Finalize chart listing dates, topics and leads- Don- for Exec. Mtg. Nov. 6th
  - Prior to Cong. Conversations, leads review Promotion Plans, including questions listed and discuss tactics with Michael Murray- monthly
- Holiday Party- Respond on Doodle poll regarding attendance ASAP- BOT
- BOT Communications Committee to meet and discuss ways of communicating to the congregation, including using social media. Report to BOT at December meeting.
- Appoint Task Force on Blumenthal Community Outreach Fund. Abhi Report to the BOT at December Meeting

**Attendance:**

Board Members Present: Don Bliss (Chair-Elect), Kate Curtis, Maryann Dillon, Anne Fretz (Secretary), Stew Grubman (Treasurer), Ariel Mora, Michael Murray (Communications), Tim Persons, Lyn Peters, Paul Strella (Asst. Treasurer), Michael Thoryn, Susannah Vesey (Asst. Secretary), John Wing

BOT Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, Rev. Heather Janules, Karen Lee Scrivo, (Interim DRE), Sara Deshler (Church Administrator)

Staff Absent: None

Others Present: Harvey Lerner, Sandy Shaw

**Opening:** The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. with the lighting of the chalice. The Rev. Abhi Janamanchi provided opening words by leading the group in a short, guided and meditative centering experience. Board members read the BOT Covenant together out loud. Board members and visitors responded to a question raised in *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss: **How has this church moved your spirit in the last month?**

**Approval of Consent Agenda:** The Consent Agenda contained the following items:

1. September 17<sup>th</sup> Minutes
2. Senior Minister Report
3. Associate Minister Report
4. Interim DRE Report
5. Church Administrator Report
6. Special Congregational Meeting Minutes
7. Start-up Weekend Notes
8. Progress on Contract Extension
9. Liaison Reports: REC, Worship, Facilities, Endowment, Social Justice (except the SJC proposed "Share the Plate Policy" and 50/50 form), Partner Church, Denominational Affairs

**The Start-Up Weekend Notes were approved as corrected. Anne Fretz moved, and Lyn Peters seconded, the approval of the Consent Agenda; it was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Stew Grubman distributed the Treasurer's Financial Report for October 2013 (**Appendix A**), pointing out that to date the average pledge is \$1,780 and the total amount pledged is \$855,000. The percent of pledges received for FY14 stands at 36%, while the percent expended for this fiscal year is 20% of the budgeted amount. The average Sunday attendance for July, August and September this year was higher than last, as was the amount donated through the collection plate offerings.

Stew noted that expenses for the sound system so far are less than the budgeted amount but that there will be a few additional costs, including electrical bills.

Michael Murray, liaison to Facilities Committee, reported that the church's heating and cooling systems are old and in urgent need of repair. Peter Lowenthal, member of Facilities

Committee, has recommended that the church hire an HVAC consultant to assess the situation. After discussion, it was decided that Peter, with assistance from Michael, should prepare a Request for Proposal to be reviewed at the next Executive Committee meeting on Nov. 6 in preparation for soliciting two or three proposals from independent contractors to evaluate the systems and provide recommendations for improvements. These proposals should be submitted prior to the November BOT meeting so that a decision can be made at that time. Because a consultant is likely to be expensive, the congregation would need to be informed.

Stew reported that the Rummage Sale brought in about \$7,000. Many church members volunteered hours of their time to help organize and carry out the sale. Special appreciation to these individuals was noted: Carolyn Stelle and Laura-Leigh Palmer (Co-chairs), Michael Lentz, Kate Curtis and Kathie Bryant.

The Membership Committee approached Stew requesting that the BOT co-sponsor an RE Family Evening by assisting with the purchase of pizza.

**Stew Grubman moved, and Kate Curtis seconded, that the Board split the cost of the pizza with the Membership Committee.**

During discussion, it was noted that paying for this might be imprudent considering that the church has large upcoming expenses and a tight budget, although the Board has committed to support an increase in membership. Stew amended his motion.

**Stew Grubman moved, and Kate Curtis seconded, that the BOT solicit contributions from individual Board members before using its contingency fund to pay for the rest of its half share of the pizza expenses. The motion passed with twelve members voting in favor and one against the proposal.**

**Stewardship:** Sandy Shaw opened by saying that the Stewardship Committee is working to foster a spirit of generosity in the church. He mentioned a campaign being planned to stimulate one-on-one conversations between members on a variety of topics, not just money. The objective is to become better acquainted on a deeper level. He reported that a June survey found that Board members have pledged \$74,640 for FY14, an average of \$6,219/member. The Stewardship Committee is conducting a similar survey and will ask several other committees to do the same.

During the Close the Loop campaign, the Stewardship Committee contacted 70 members who had not pledged for this year, resulting in additional pledges amounting to \$27,000. The Bridge the Gap campaign will ask members for an additional one-time contribution to the FY14 pledge drive with a goal of raising \$50,000. Board members and others have been asked to contribute prior to taking this campaign to the congregation at large to demonstrate strong support and enthusiasm for raising the money. Thus far, an additional \$16,400 has been pledged. The Bridge the Gap campaign will culminate on Miracle Sunday, November 17. Sandy mentioned that the committee has just begun planning for the 2014-15 pledge drive but anticipates that it will include a 50/50 campaign to recruit 50 families who commit to increasing their contributions by 50% for three years.

**Discussion and approval of the Four-year Budget Plan:** Stew explained that the Four-year Budget Plan (**Appendix B**), which was first presented to the Board at the September meeting, is a broad financial outline for the next four years. In addition, a detailed budget will be developed for each year. During discussion, it was pointed out that challenging work will be required by the Board to grow the membership according to the plan: 25 new households during the current FY and 50 additional new households in each of the succeeding fiscal years. The budget will be subsidized over the next four years with earnings from the Endowment Fund and money from the dissolution of the former Pooled Income Fund and from the Blumenthal Bequest. Beyond the next four years, it is expected that additional pledges from new members and increased pledges from existing members will fund the entire church budget.

**Stew Grubman moved, and Michael Murray seconded, approval of the Four-year Budget Plan; it was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

**Follow-up on Start-up Weekend:** Rev. Abhi Janamanchi urged the Board to take on two of the goals listed during the Start-up weekend discussions:

1. The Board should form a Growth Task Force to work with staff on developing an overarching plan to achieve the goals for new members outlined in the Four-year Budget Plan. He stated it would be essential for the congregation to be supportive of this effort. He also suggested that a church-wide Social Justice project could be part of this undertaking.
2. The Board should develop a list of Executive Limitations outlining parameters in which he and the staff will function. He agreed to provide a sample list of limitations drawn up by other churches as a starting point for Cedar Lane.

Abhi also recommended that the Board be engaged in the multicultural ministry of the church. Ariel Mora agreed to take on the task of developing an outline for this effort, which will include considering the adoption of the proposed UUA 8<sup>th</sup> principle.

**Follow-up on the Blumenthal Bequest:**

**-Charter for the Blumenthal Futures Fund Task Force (Appendix C)-** John Wing explained that the charter is the Board's charge to the committee based on a motion passed at the September 17, 2013 meeting to carry out the Blumenthal Futures initiatives in three phases. He recommended that the BOT appoint these candidates as Task Force co-chairs: Maryann Dillon and Harvey Lerner.

**John Wing moved, and Tim Persons seconded, that the BOT approve the appointment of Maryann Dillon and Harvey Lerner as co-chairs of the Blumenthal Futures Task Force; it was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

John further explained that the Task Force would consist of 5-7 individuals with some expertise in the areas of architecture, finance, facilities, church and operations. The co-chairs have a list of possible candidates and welcome additional suggestions. In discussion, it was recommended that the time for developing a Phase 1 work plan and budget be changed from three months to five months.

**John Wing moved, and Michael Thoryn seconded, that the BOT adopt the Charter for the Blumenthal Futures Task Force as amended; it was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

**-Management of the Blumenthal Fund (Appendix D)-** John explained that this document outlines the policies and management procedures for the Blumenthal Fund. He reported that several committees (Financial Task Force, Executive Committee and the Financial Committee) as well as Abhi worked to develop the plan. He emphasized that the fund will be kept separate from other church money and will be managed by the Endowment Committee. The church administrator will handle all accounting, record keeping and contracts.

**John Wing moved, and Ariel Mora seconded, that the BOT approve Management of the Blumenthal Fund; it was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

**-Intergenerational, Congregation-wide Social Justice Project-** Abhi reported that he, along with the Rev. Heather Janules and Karen Lee Scrivo, Interim RE Director, would work closely with the Social Justice Council to create a task force to plan and carry out an intergenerational, church-wide social justice project. Anne Kasper, a member of the Social Justice Council, has volunteered to serve on the task force.

**Membership Motion to Amend By-laws:** John reported that the Stewardship Committee requested that the BOT pass a motion to delete the requirement of a \$100 minimum contribution to be a member of the church. In drafting the motion, John consulted with the Stewardship Committee, the Financial Task Force, the ministers, Allison Cox and Don Bliss.

**John Wing moved, and Michael Murray seconded, that the Board request the GTF to draft an amendment to Section III of the By-Laws that is consistent with Article V of the Articles of Incorporation, to present to the congregation at the April Annual Meeting, wording that would eliminate the requirement that the Board specify a dollar amount that covers certain costs as a condition of membership but that does require a contribution of record, and further, that would delegate to the Board the authority to set other criteria for membership such as making a financial pledge for the coming year, signing the membership book and meeting with a minister. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.**

During discussion, it was noted that the BOT would need to oversee the development of a policy for becoming a new member and for maintaining membership eligibility to vote at congregational meetings. The Board should approve the policy by the March meeting so that the congregation can vote on the By-Law Amendment at the Annual Meeting in April.

**Communications Strategy:**

**-Follow-through and Tracking Board Decisions-** In order to keep track of key tasks and activities that the Board has committed to, Michael Murray reported that a list of action items resulting from Board meetings would be sent by E-mail soon after the meetings. In addition, these action items would be listed prominently at the beginning of the minutes and reviewed at the start of Board meetings before approving the minutes. Those responsible can note whether the task has been accomplished and what the next steps are. These updates can be incorporated into the minutes and the next list of action items.

**-Board Communication with Congregation-** Michael raised the concern that the Board does not always effectively communicate its decisions and activities to the staff, church committees and congregation; the Board agreed that this is an issue that must be addressed. He then outlined the following goals to strengthen the Board's visibility in the church:

- Improve congregational understanding of the Board's role within the church
- Increase opportunities for the congregation, staff and committees to interact
- Provide greater transparency about Board activities

Michael distributed a document titled Congregational Conversations **(Appendix E)** outlining the steps involved for effectively setting up and carrying out monthly conversations between the Board and the congregation. The document includes a chart listing possible topics for upcoming conversations. During discussion, additional topics suggested included the intergenerational Social Justice Project and the Blumenthal Futures Project.

**-Board Communications Subcommittee-** To assist with Board communications, Michael announced the formation of the Board Communications Subcommittee. Michael Thoryn, Susannah Vesey, Tim Persons and Lyn Peters volunteered to serve on the committee.

Tim distributed an article, "How Social and Digital Media Are Changing #Religion" **(Appendix F)**, about a congregation's use of social media to encourage growth and attract new members. He emphasized that Cedar Lane should take advantage of social media, such as Twitter and Face Book, to connect with current members and with others beyond the church community.

**-Community Outreach Fund-** This project, part of the Blumenthal Fund, will provide communications and programming to reach the wider community. Abhi will appoint a task force to plan and carry out this project.

**Personnel Matter:** Tim Persons reported that he, Maryann Dillon, Stew Grubman and Rev. Abhi Janamanchi met with Karen Lee Scrivo and resolved the personnel issue.

**Closing Words:** Michael Thoryn read words written by his daughter, Claire Feingold Thoryn, a UU minister at Follen Community Church in Lexington, MA. The words were part of a sermon in which she reflected on growing up as a Unitarian Universalist and attending Sunday School at Cedar Lane, especially noting her impressions and memories from her fifth grade Bible class.

**Adjournment:** The meeting concluded at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne J. Fretz  
Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix A- Treasurer's Financial Report for October 2013  
Appendix B- Four-year Budget Plan  
Appendix C- Charter for the Blumenthal Futures Task Force  
Appendix D- Management of the Blumenthal Fund  
Appendix E- Congregational Conversations

## Appendix F- How Social and Digital Media Are Changing #Religion

### **Dates to Remember:**

- October 20, RE Family Lunch, Lower level
- November 2, Kiplinger lecture
- November 8, Afghan Benefit, 6 pm, Sanctuary
- November 9, Pilgrim Trio (Concert Series), 7:30 pm, Sanctuary
- November 19, BOT meeting, Closing words, Anne Fretz
- December 7, Holiday Craft Day
- December 17, BOT meeting
- December 22, Journey women's vespers service, 5 pm, Chapel
- BOT holiday party, TBD, Murrays
- February 2, 2014, BOT Community lunch
- March 8-9, 2014, Rev. Janamanchi's Installation