

All Souls Church, Unitarian

Board of Trustees

Thursday, September 24, 2009

Eaton Room

Board Members in Attendance

Goldia Hodgdon
Erika Landberg
Josephine Nieves
Mary Rojas
Fred Samuels
Fred Tipson
Elizabeth “Libby” Turpen

Absent Board Members

Joneis Thomas

Others in Attendance

Kyla Bollens-Lund (Assistant Secretary)
Barbara Corprew (Co-Chair, CAPT)
Jody Feldman (Moderator)
Tom Fox (Co-Chair, CAPT)
Rob Hardies (Senior Minister)
Lynne Heltman (Membership Secretary)
Barry Johnson (Treasurer)
Bob Johnson (20/20 Visioning)
Eliza Klose (Secretary)
Aaron Knight (Co-Chair, Generosity Committee)
Katie Loughary, (Executive Director)
Shana Lynngood (Assistant Minister)
Stephen Marshall (Congregation)

Opening

- Call to Order, Erika Landberg
- Shana Lynngood, Reading, “Fault Line” by Robert Walsh
- Mary Rojas made a motion that Steve Marshall, a former member of the Board of Trustees, complete the remaining three months of Taylor Nuevelle’s tenure on the board. The motion was seconded by Goldia Hodgdon.

Erika explained that it seemed logical to nominate someone who knew the board job and Steve seemed the right person to take the position. He was unanimously elected.

- Fred Tipson made the motion that the following rules should apply to the next three board meetings, September, October and November: Until the end of the year, only board, officers, staff and people on the agenda shall sit at the meeting table and only those called on by the chair should speak Libby seconded the motion. There were six in favor and two abstentions. The motion passed.

Generosity Campaign Aaron Knight, Co-Chair.

Aaron explained that theme would be the same as last year—Grace, Gratitude, Giving. The 2008 campaign was successful even though the goal represented a 20% increase over 2007—1.2 million vs. \$1 million. This was achieved despite the problems in the financial market. The congregation responded so the campaign decided to keep the theme and logo that worked while maintaining the 1.2 million goal. Some members will need to increase their donation to compensate for those who won't be able to maintain theirs. The idea is solidarity: going forward while holding the line.

The strategy is two-fold. Last year the campaign targeted the top third of those pledging, this year the middle level, those giving \$700 to \$1700. They will be invited to take their giving to the next level, especially since the annual cost of running ASC is about \$2,000 per member. The campaign will use the same brochure and some of same talking points. (See new brochure draft.) Mark Ewert did the reports and Barry Johnson the pie charts. Jody Feldman noted that this is the first time the charts have broken down the expenses by ministries, a good change.. Barry explained that the “Community Within” included expenses related specifically to the Church, such as maintenance and fundraising.

The house parties will be held on October 6, October 12 and October 17. The campaign would like a trustee at every gathering. Libby, Fred Tipson and Erika volunteered. A special gathering for people making higher level pledges will be held at Phyllis Caldwell's on October 8. People there will be asked to hold the line--a different conversation.

The formal Kick Off will be on Sunday, October 3. Generosity Sunday will be held October 25 complete with a Parade of Pledge Cards. Aaron will give the pulpit testimonial on October 3, Erika on the 25th. Aaron will sign people up for phone calls after Generosity Sunday. Board members are often asked to do follow up calls. Church is still looking for a co-chair, ideally someone who could go on to serve as leading co-chair the next year.

Mary Rojas asked whether Meredith Higgins-Hargrave will be working to ask people to put the church in their wills. It was explained that the effort is ongoing, not a part of the Generosity Campaign.

Aaron passed out pledge forms to all present and asked everyone in the leadership to fill out forms and give them to him before he left since leadership example is very important.

Capital Assets Planning Team Barbara Corprew and Tom Fox, Co-Chairs, CAPT

Tom and Barbara explained that the specific charge for CAPT is to prepare the Church for a capital campaign, to define what is essential to the continuation of the mission of ASC and what it will cost. If we find we can't raise all of the money to cover the CAPT's proposed plan, it will be up to the team to choose priorities and drop something off the list. This CAPT preparation phase will be an 18-month process. The whole committee has met twice. Katie Loughary is the staff liaison.

The first step was to collect information about the building. The two meetings focused on this, one before the summer break, the other after. The information was found in a variety of places, in archives and other files. Bill Bridges, the office manager, pulled it all together, inventoried and indexed the history of the building from 1967-2009. He did a great job,

which included a list of projects for CAPT to consider. A lot of architectural drawings were found. Now the committee is awaiting the findings and questions of the 20/20 Visioning project. The question arose as to whether the group had looked at the 7th Principle Committee's report on the building. The answer was "Yes."

As part of its process, the CAPT team took a tour of the building, beginning outside. They walked completely around it, inside and out, front and back. The process was eye-opening, sobering, and revealed a number of problems. The team became aware of what's missing, for instance, the fact that the staff is spread out throughout the building, and there is standing water and bare wire in some spots. The group still has to study the basement and second floors.

The group will need some professional help to examine the building and will develop an RFP (request for proposal) from architectural/engineering firms in the area. It must consider a whole range of questions: bricks and mortar, aesthetic, environmental and ministry-related. The Committee is trying hard not to start thinking about eventual costs so as not to limit itself. There isn't money in this year's budget to pay anyone so first steps will be taken in early 2010.

Tom mentioned that the committee is very strong, including folks experienced in building issues like Jim Heltman and Brendan Schwartz. The ASC CAPT group is committed to insuring its process represents the whole congregation; there will be multiple methods to tap the concerns and dreams of the congregation.

The question arose, what money is required for outreach and visioning? Some of the process will cost money. Hiring an architectural firm, offering architectural trainees a stipend, and written materials might come to as much as \$40,000 over the 18-month period. The CAPT needs to know where to turn for this money.

Mark Flood, head of the Investment Committee, joined the conversation. He said that the Investment Committee can respond to a request from the Board, but not directly from the CAPT team. The cemetery plots in Washington National Cemetery in Suitland, MD, for instance, were left to the Church and are part of its endowment. [Katie and Mary are going to look at the cemetery plots on Wednesday, September 30.] The Shively Fund instructions indicate that building expenses should preferably be a loan. The investment committee will need a comprehensive cost estimate of what needs to be done before a capital campaign and may put a cap on planning funds. The more specific CAPT can be the better. The board's CAPT liaison Libby Turpen will work with the committee on these issues.

Others spoke about some other possibilities. Is there a UU fund for historical buildings? AMEX has a grant for historic buildings that has been available for some churches. We need to find out about this. Rob Hardies mentioned that there is substantial money in the Beckner Fund and, as a historical note, the Fund had approved a grant of \$20,000 for capital campaign preparation just before he arrived at ASC. Others noted that there had been controversy around using Beckner funds for building needs. The CAPT team hopes to release its RFP in February so the Church needs to decide about where the money should come from before then. The Board is supportive of the effort and wants to help.

Steve Marshall noted that we might offer tours to the congregation. It appears that some people have never been downstairs. Fred Tipson noted that the Visioning findings will be presented in an all-day meeting on Saturday, October 17. He also said that water has dripped through the roof and hurt the organ. The Seventh Principle Committee is eager to be involved in the building discussion in connection with its environmental concerns. Another person raised the question whether we want to keep growing as a congregation or maintain our same size. The answer to that question will affect building discussions.

Rob thanked the whole team. He said it will be important to translate bricks and mortar questions into Church values such as accessibility, environmental concerns and safety. He asked the team to keep talking about such issues, holding them up.

Barbara and Tom asked how often the Board wants reports on the CAPT process. The answer: Quarterly, unless something urgent arises.

Reports

- Executive Team, Katie Loughary (See Report)
Rob noted that many people had attended service on the first two Sundays after the break. Homecoming Sunday, September 13, was 13% bigger than last year. Also RE is growing by leaps and bounds just as Gabrielle is going on sabbatical. ASC will add RE space at early service. Libby noted that despite the program growth it still costs only \$25 per child. Shouldn't we change that expectation? Perhaps parents should be asked to make a further contribution. Rise in fees will happen next year.

ASC staff is planning to collect more membership data, such as individual and family photos, birthdates, interests and skills, ethnicity and race, etc. This information will allow us to improve our outreach to and retention of members as well as offer photo directories and send out birthday greetings. Amy Mulry Wesolek will collect more membership information through her introduction sessions and look at ways to survey current members for this information.

We will invite Amy to join us for the November BOT meeting for an update and may discuss the issues around collecting demographic information on ethnicity and race. Officers and Trustees asked that staff consider adding another Introduction class in this fall and winter to handle the increased membership interest and continue to offer alternatives to Sunday sessions.

- Treasurer's report, Barry Johnson
Barry reviewed the financials and approves of them. The Church is still 2% ahead of where we would expect to be at this point in terms of pledge revenue.
- Moderator's Report, Jody Feldman
Jody reported that the Council meeting is now set for November 7, 9 am to 1 pm, instead of October 3. The Agenda will probably focus on leadership.

- 20/20 Visioning Report, Goldia Hodgdon
Goldia asked a question re Children's Choir. Rob reported that we are formulating a new program. The effort has been impacted because the permanent director we hired could not come in the end. We won't do anything until our plans for the project are clear and we have support for it. Our goal is next September.

On the Visioning project, Goldia reported that approximately 125 people have been reached out to and the process will go on through Oct. 11. There will be a summit on October 17. Goldia passed around a sign up sheet for facilitating and recording for the 17th. What people say will lead to vision statements.

Goldia also passed around a set of documents for each board member and the council officers listing sample documents from the Board Source and the Governance Committee. These are tool kits. Perhaps ASC should become a member of Board Source. Jody talked about the need for a leadership focus. Suggested the board and officers have some kind of training every time the board turns over. We should request some money for this next year.

- Audit committee—Mary Rojas
Mary reported that the Church has decided to have a formal audit every 3 to 5 years and an internal review every year, done by a church committee. The terms of reference will need revising to reflect this change in the current pattern. Proposed new members of the committee include Steven Newburg-Rinn, Salma Bakht and Mandy Wimmer. Barry Johnson, Treasurer; Andrew Miller, Assistant Treasurer; and Mary Rojas, Board liaison are already members.

Mary Rojas made a motion that the board approve committee membership for Steven Newburg-Rinn and Salma Bakht, as they have been introduced. The board approved them unanimously. As soon as the committee has met and okayed Mandy Wimmer, the board will be asked to approve her as well.

Consent Agenda

Fred Samuels made a motion that the board approve the minutes of the August 27, 2009, BOT Meeting. Josephine Nieves seconded it. The minutes were approved with eight Ayes. Steve Marshall abstained since he is new to the board.

Announcements

It seems as if the Board is being asked to sign up for many meetings, but leadership involves more than just monthly Board meetings.

Cultural Tourism will be including ASC in its tour of Adams Morgan. Could the church open its doors on that day? Mary will talk to Katie about the date.

Erika noted that we haven't had a chance to provide feedback on many previous meetings. Does anyone have comments to make? Fred Tipson said he felt there had not been much discussion or exchange of ideas. Perhaps this is because there have been so many reports. Josephine asked whether we should cull out specific issues for discussion. Erika asked if it would help to get reports out earlier.

Lynne said we might focus more on things that need discussion. Perhaps each person could highlight issues of particular importance or say that they wanted more response on certain questions. Jody said it would be helpful to be able to anticipate staff changes. Would it be possible to have more notice of planned changes, such as the new interim Membership ideas, but we seem to be getting there.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm and was followed by an Executive Session of Trustees and the Executive Team.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eliza Klose, Secretary

Attachments:
September 24 Meeting Agenda
September Staff Report
Generosity Campaign materials