

All Souls Church, Unitarian

Board of Trustees

Thursday, October 22, 2009

Eaton Room

Board Members in Attendance

Goldia Hodgdon
Erika Landberg
Stephen Marshall
Josephine Nieves
Mary Rojas
Fred Samuels
Joneis Thomas
Fred Tipson

Absent Board Members

Elizabeth “Libby” Turpen

Others in Attendance

Kyla Bollens-Lund (Assistant Secretary)
Taquienna Boston (MRMC)
Matt Cohen (Green Souls)
Katherine Dann (Green Souls)
Jody Feldman (Moderator)
Rob Hardies (Senior Minister)
Lynne Heltman (Membership Secretary)
Bob Johnsen (MRMC)
Barry Johnson (Treasurer)
Eliza Klose (Secretary)
Katie Loughary, (Executive Director)
Andrew Miller (Ass’t Treasurer & Green Souls)
Gary Mummert (Green Souls)
Lina Parikh (Green Souls)
Pamela Sparr (Green Souls)
Paul Steinkoenig (Green Souls)
Dirk Van Ziegert (Green Souls Friend)
Sylvia Van Ziegert (Green Souls Friend)
Amy Mulry Wesolek (Membership)

Opening

- Call to Order, Erika Landberg
- Lina Parikh lit the chalice and Paul Steinkoenig read from the poem “The Invitation” by Oriah Mountain Dreamer.

Green Souls Presentation

Lina Parikh introduced the Green Souls members present and described the agenda, telling how the group would use its 30 minutes. The main focus is to inform the Board of a few highlights from the Environmental and Justice Audit from a few years ago (distributed electronically prior to the Board meeting). Green Souls would speak to 3 main issues – our energy use at church, toxins in the building, and office supplies. She asked members to listen

for these points, what our environmental impact is, and also “Why It Matters” from a social justice perspective – what effect do we have and how can we make a difference to our neighbors and larger world?

The first activity was an energizer led by Matt Cohen, which asked the group to line up according to its answers to some relevant environmental questions.

The group’s mission, Lina then explained, is to transform ASC into a beacon for the environment and justice and mentioned that the group is involved in 15 activities in 4 areas (see attached). One of these four program areas is aimed at Green Sanctuary accreditation. She spoke about their efforts to attain UUA Green Sanctuary accreditation for ASC, explaining that it consists of two major pieces: A green audit plus a 12-point action plan (See attached). All Souls had to create all new items in 4 UUA categories - worship and celebration, religious education, environmental justice, and sustainable living. To do so, we created 25 events over the last 3 years. She said that this board briefing was the last action item after which All Souls will be able to fill out the application. She offered kudos and thanks to all in the room for their involvement.

Andrew Miller talked about ASC energy usage. The energy audit, which was supported by the Beckner Fund, showed that our building is in the bottom percentile of UU churches. 75% are more efficient than ours and as a result \$90,000 from our budget goes to utilities. ASC energy consumption was down 18% in 2009 thanks to Green Souls inspired changes. Any savings we make now will protect the church from energy spikes in the future. He mentioned that the majority of electricity PEPCO provides comes from coal, which has serious health impacts. Over 24,000 people a year die prematurely because of coal, not to mention the environmental harm caused by mountain top removal. He mentioned that nuclear energy is another problematic source.

Pam Sparr talked about the lead, mold and asbestos in our old building that were found during the professional audit of toxins in the Church and introduced Gary Mummert, who dramatized the problem with ASC cleaning materials. Wearing protective clothing, he spoke about the lack of proper labels on most of them, much less ones written in Spanish for our largely Hispanic cleaning staff. He pointed out that several of the containers he found contained toxic materials including straight phosphoric acid and noted the toxins in the nine different containers he had found for animal control. He said we needed to look at what we have and why.

Paul Steinkoenig talked about the supplies and paper products used by the Church, saying we should buy only those that are earth and people friendly. He said ASC should be a model for others. We need to think about what trees our paper comes from and the way paper is generally made, emitting waste so that it combines chlorine with wood chips and becomes dioxin, one of the most poisonous compounds humans have created, with terrible impacts on the Earth but also on other people. We must think about the source of all the materials the Church uses. We should reuse and recycle whenever we can.

In light of the environmental and social justice impacts of these three issues, Green Souls has initiated a task force to address what can be done in advance of any Capital Campaign. That way the Church can move forward in its environmental and social justice mission in the short

term. Along with someone from Green Souls, Katie Loughary will represent the staff on the task force and Mary Rojas said she'd serve from the board. The task force will make a list of proposed activities and report back to the board next year.

Question: What is the turnaround time for certification and how do we maintain it?

Answer: The application entails writing a summary of activities and evaluating the program – which we have done internally in Green Souls and through interviews with key lay leaders, Staff, and Board. Once it has been submitted, it will take a month or two for UUA response. There is no official follow-on. ASC will have to make sure that its policies, programs and practices are environmentally conscious. The UUA will check to see that green churches maintain their activities. Once ASC has been recognized as a Green Sanctuary, it will be honored at GA.

Question: How does the Certification process compare with LEED?

Answer: It differs from LEED in that the GREEN SANCTUARY certification process is provided through the UUA and is more about how the congregation instills environmental principles in all aspects - in worship, in religious education, in our actions and with an eye on social justice. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is about buildings. It is a certification system provided by the Green Building Council and is the international gold standard for buildings that are environmentally responsible. Gary and Paul are both knowledgeable about building issues and are on the CAPT committee. At the very least, ASC can inform itself on what it means to be a LEED building. If we can meet even some of the LEED-related standards, we will really accomplish something. The UUA encourages congregations to look at LEED and has grant money available for this. There may be other donors willing to give big money for LEED.

Question: What about the Church grounds?

Answer: There are many things we can do related to composting, groundwater, etc. Lots of scope for improvement. Take a look at the models from the Green Visioning session. Rain barrels and other ideas are reflected there.

Mary, environmental liaison to Green Souls, made the following motion:

“The Board of Trustees supports and endorses the creation of a Green Souls task force to consider eco-friendly policies and initiatives for the church. We congratulate the Green Souls for their work on behalf of All Souls.” Fred Tipson seconded the motion.

Josephine Nieves and Rob Hardies both noted the importance of the presentation, speaking of its verve and spirit. Erika said the group had set the gold standard for information and time.

The motion to endorse the Task Force and congratulate Green Souls passed unanimously.

MRMC report

Rob Hardies introduced the congregational members of the MRMC Committee: Taquienna Boston, Mark Hicks, who was out of town, and Bob Johnsen. The ministerial staff is also part of MRMC. Rob then handed out the first page of the nine-page workplan, the part that focuses on goals and metrics. The workplan has two goals:

- the first is demographic diversity of the ASC community

- the second is a spiritual goal to form “border” identities and foster “border” encounters within the ASC community.

Rob asked for comments:

The report is supposed to be about culture as well as race, but there is no mention of culture in the metrics section. Shouldn't cultural statistics be gathered as well?

Answer: Yes, culture should be included.

Terms like race and culture become more and more nuanced. How do we allow for people to self identify so they're not put in boxes? Young adults have allowed people to name themselves, but culture is even more nuanced than race. One can be aware of differences in culture but try to merge with the existing culture. How does one keep them separate?

When we worked on end statements, people had to self-identify. Is it okay to let people self-identify for the MRMC program?

What do you plan to do about sexual orientation issues and economic issues? Are they part of your analysis?

What about keeping it simple for the first time? Collect information on, say, five issues: age, sex, race, ethnicity and gender orientation. You can do a great deal with a small amount of information. Once you have decided on the questions you want to ask, you can ask them and sort the information you receive.

How do we ask these questions? Who do we include? Everybody or only members, i.e. those who have contributed? Should people self report through ASC or respond by some other method.

Answer: The survey will be administered to the whole Church. We will ask them about their skills and talents as well as about race and culture. We hope to get baseline data on the whole congregation and then ask new people when they sign the book. The biggest job will be developing information on the whole congregation. It should be easier after that.

How do we capture the qualities in our service, the music, singing songs from different cultures, in different languages.

Answer: This is basic data, typical questions for liberal religious congregations. The UUA is interested in how multi-cultural a church is?

While we're collecting data on race, maybe we should ask about sexual id. That's an important metric to ensure that you are MRMC.

Answer: If your vision is to become more of something, you have to understand where you are now in order to understand where you are going. The board needs to help us focus. It can set goals and end statements. Then it can develop strategies to get us there

We don't have measurements for each aspect of our service. Right now it seems as if the only goal is to increase our numbers. Is that the only goal or is it to increase our programs and improve the atmosphere for everyone, for people with disabilities, for instance.

Is our only goal demographics? I don't want just metrics.

Answer: The whole program is much more extensive. The full workplan is about 8 pages long. Today we wanted to focus on measuring our success so we focused our conversation tonight on metrics. Let me resend the whole program to everyone.

We need to keep our eye on increasing our racial diversity. If we try to be too expansive, we will lose focus and impact. We come back and back to this year after year. We've got to achieve it. Our priority really is to add to the number of African-Americans who attend ASC, to get back closer to where we once were.

What are next steps and when will they begin? We need to start measuring because we have been doing things for the last several years and haven't seen specific results. The outcome is not easy to control. You can make efforts in a number of ways, then you need to try something else. We have done a great deal, but we need to do more.

You can do outreach but you don't know who is going to respond. Middle Collegiate wanted to bring in more Hispanics, but brought in more Asians.

Is there analysis as to why things are happening? Internal things? Broader trends?

Answer: The goal is to establish a baseline now and then apply what we learn to what comes next so we will have data against which to measure change. We are creating a survey and developing questions. We are also doing other things we think will be helpful. As we do those things, if they are not having impact, we need to think of other things.

The MRMC presentation came to an end and Erika thanked Rob.

Reports

Senior Minister: Rob reported what he had included in his report—now submitted as part of a whole staff report distributed by Katie. He also passed around copies of his co-authored article on Marriage Equality from the Sunday Washington Post.

Associate Minister Shana Lynngood was absent due to illness, but her report is included in Katie's staff report.

Executive Director Katie Loughary reported on her trip with Mary to the National Cemetery in Suitland, MD, to check on the 24 gravesites bequeathed to ASC. Demand for gravesites seems to have fallen off. Katie and Mary recommended the gravesites be sold when the economy has recovered. Steve Marshall asked that we set a timeframe on the effort as it has been on hold for a long time. The board decided to check on the situation again in fall 2010.

There was no Treasurer's report as there were no financials to comment on.

Mary reported on the Audit Committee. She noted that the board had approved new members Steven Newburg-Rinn and Salma Bakht and made the motion that we approve an additional new member and also chair, Mandy Wimmer. Josephine seconded the motion.

Discussion. Does Mandy have accountant experience to qualify her for the Chair of the committee? She is objective, enthusiastic and has come up with a plan for the future. The next meeting will be Nov. 15 and will give the Committee a chance to look at its role in reviewing the Church's financial condition, focusing on the risks.

The motion was approved unanimously. Perhaps we could highlight the Committee, with its three new members and a chair, in the next copy of Spirit after its November meeting.

Barry Johnson reported for Mark Flood on the Investment Committee. He distributed Mark's report and noted that Mark's term is up and he faces a term limit. We discussed potential candidates.

Item 2: the Mason and Holmwood Funds are in short-term accounts and need to be placed elsewhere in order to achieve higher income.

Item 3: the Board must approve the basis on which ASC endowment income is determined. The Investment Committee recommends that the 5% distribution be based on a 13 quarter average, the so-called Harvard system. This way the amount will reflect a longer period. In good economic years, it will lessen the draw, but in bad years like the present, it will provide more. The budget is based on the revised system but the board should approve it.

Fred Tipson made a motion to approve the revised system. Steve Marshall seconded it. There was no further discussion and the board voted unanimously to approve it.

Church Moderator, Jody Feldman provided a verbal report. She noted that the Council is working hard to find nominating committee members for 2010. She asked that the board forward recommendations to her. She reminded the group that the Council meeting to set priorities for the rest of the year will occur on Saturday, November 7.

Fred Tipson and Goldia Hodgdon reported on the Visioning 20/20 meeting on October 17. Fred commended Erika and Goldia for moving the process along despite all distractions. He mentioned the success of the meeting, saying how powerful it had been to hear the remarks written out on blue cards by the congregation. Listening to them reminded the 40 or so people who attended how much the congregation depends on the Church and the community it provides. Part of the Visioning process must be to protect, not lose, the precious thing ASC has already.

Participants worked hard to derive concepts and came up with three major formulations to take forward as vision statements for the Church. It will be important to give context to other members, to let them know the kind of feelings and effort people have put in.

Discussion: How did the group take the results of individual meetings and cards and match those concepts with the goals the Church is trying to attain? That process was designed by Karen King, a mathematics professor, who boiled the ideas down into three categories: the

individual, the community, the wider web of life. After Saturday's exercise, the job will be to refine the Visioning statements with the goal of publishing the statements in early November. They should be finalized by mid-November and sent out to the congregation by the Council secretary two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

We'll have to do a lot of work on measurables to prove we are working toward these goals. Do we vote on all three together or one at a time?

Rob and Shana were at the October 17 meeting. There were about 500 responses. How can we share them with others? Rob said he will do so from the pulpit and some at the meeting suggested that some of the powerful ones be included on the ASC website.

Barry Johnson reported on the Governance Review: The committee has only met once and then only 6 of the 9 members were present. Maybe we need a co-chair since Janet Randolph's husband Herb Lowery is ill. Erika will follow up with Janet.

Review of 2010 Budget

Katie distributed a draft copy of the budget, which she has been working on over the last couple of weeks. The major issues she noted are that the draft Budget:

- does not include the \$25,000 costs for the Children's Choir
- provides no support for CAPT
- requires additional fundraising revenue

She also noted the following big picture items and explained that there will be a more detailed review of the budget at the November meeting.

- Income is down 3%
- Expenses are flat but do not include all requested new projects
- Net income of \$30,000-\$40,000 (or 2% of expenses) is to balance the budget

The group asked a number of questions such as

- How do we present program, rental and legal fees?
- How will the cost of environmental cleaning and supplies affect the budget?
- How will we know the preliminary costs of CAPT? Answer: Barbara Corprew and Tom Fox, CAPT co-chairs, will present a proposal.
- What is the process for approving staff salaries? Answer: the board and congregation approve the budget in general. The staff has discretion to work out the details.
- How can we find out if ASC salaries are appropriate or whether we underpay? Answer: By checking with the UUA.
- What is the process for approving a merit raise for Rob? Answer: Bylaws say the board should review this every 3 years. We haven't done so, should do it next year.

Consent Agenda

Josephine made a motion that the minutes of the September 24, 2009, meeting be approved. Goldia seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with the abstention of Joneis, who was absent last meeting.

Announcements

Goldia raised the question of whether the board should buy some of the Board Source publications as to the responsibilities and expectations of board members.

Mary mentioned that the Columbia Heights Heritage Trail, which includes All Souls Church, will be inaugurated on Saturday, October 24, from 2-4, and suggested that some ASC members might want to be at the Church.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eliza Klose, Secretary

Attachments: Meeting Agenda
Staff Report
Investment Committee Report,
Green Souls brochure & Green Souls report to board
Draft first page of the MRMC workplan