

USR Board of Trustees Meeting
April 14, 2021
Minutes

Attendance: : Dawn Walter, Sarah Lenzi, Don Campolo, Robert Markowitz, Kristin Bluemel, Chris Dunnigan, Helen Matusow-Ayres

Start time: 6:37 pm

- I. Check-In
- II. 8th Principle
Carol Lozcalzo, Carolyn Musser, Gabriella and Duncan Chinnock

- Summary

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

- Reviewed the history of the seven principles
 - Adopted in 1985.
- Principles should be reviewed every 5 years
- Grassroots movement led to the Widening the Circle publication
- Eighth principle focuses on working towards the elimination of racism/oppression
- 40-50 congregations have adopted the 8th principle, 5 or 6 in NJ
- There is an 8th principle learning community and there is a lot of interest nationally
- USR has had a commitment to racial justice since our beginnings
 - BLM banner.
- Social Justice team is strongly in favor of adopting the 8th principle.
- The Sunday service that focused on the principle was followed by discussion groups.
 - There were two groups. One group was very enthusiastic and in one there were a lot of questions. But both were positive about the principle.
- Discussion
 - What are the reasons would vote no? What is the controversy?
 - People want to specify other oppressions
 - UUA has done a good job with other oppressed groups but not as good with racial diversity.
 - Racism may be too broad. Does not mean the same thing for each group that is not discriminated against
 - How does this connect to the Widening the Circle and the questioning of the UUA structures?
 - History of racism in the 1960's.
 - Controversy on UUA hiring practices

- Still racism in structures and practices
- Wordsmithing of the principle still needs to be done. It could be a couple of years before it is finalized
- The vote would be towards supporting the eighth principle, in principle, without the exact language being finalized.
- Does supporting it require being in full support of Critical Race Theory?
- We need to work through this before we support this wholeheartedly
- Carolyn- Each congregation responsible will be responsible for developing its own plan of action to embrace the principle and in what ways it plans to be accountable
- Sarah explained that USR won't get to decide what the final principle will be. Voting yes will indicate that we agree with the intention of the principle. We would be indicating a support of a principle that speaks directly to anti-racism or anti-oppression.
- There could also be a complete reworking of all principles
- If the Board approves what would the roll out plan be?
 - Webinar to present to congregational leaders
 - At the end of May invitations will go to the entire congregation for a video about it
- It may result in an accountability statement about black racism
- If GA votes it down what does it mean to us if we vote to support it?
 - Define adoption as support in principle
 - Team sees this as a reaffirmation of our existing commitment
 - Other principles delivered to us-
- How does this principle fit in with other principles- it should
- Anti-oppression resolution to- support a principle
- Printing documents before it is finalized is not a good idea
- The support decision will have to be reviewed when the principle is finalized
- Action
 - The SJT wants the Board's support and for the congregation to vote on a resolution of support at the Annual Meeting. The resolution will provide our GA delegates with a direction for voting at GA
 - The Board is charging the team with using the informational meetings to write a resolution in support of pursuing adoption of the 8th principle to put before the congregation at the Annual Meeting in June
 - Passed unanimously
 - Needs to be put before the congregation by the third week in May

III. Last Month's Action Items

- Completed most items- others will be on the list for next time

IV. Thank You Notes- None right now

V. Thinking of Yous-

- Newer younger families- Sarah will make a list and send it to the Board between the meetings

VI. Policy Review Update

- Summary
 - ◇ Need to get the new policies out by the end of the Church year
 - ◇ We can give the congregation a verbal report with instructions as to where the full details can be found
- Action
 - ◇ Kris Bluemel will review all of the policies and see what else needs to be done
 - ◇ Helen will review the Personnel Manual
 - ◇ Other Board members should also review to see what else needs to be done.

VII. Solar Panels

Rob Willis

- Summary
 - Rob reviewed proposals from 3 vendors with that proposed 4 different configurations
 - The ideal range would be for 34 - 35 Kwh (Kilo watt hours)
 - The estimates are coming in at an approximate price of \$70,000
 - Significantly over the \$10,000 estimate in the capital campaign
 - Rob explained that through the TREC program in NJ we would get approximately \$5,200 per year in rebates plus energy savings each year. If these are combined the payback is in about 7-8 years. The rebate program alone pays for the solar panels in 15 years.
- Rob is getting additional quotes and was looking from the board for a target budget.
- Discussion
 - We discussed using both the \$10,000 budgeted in the capital campaign and some monies from reserves.
- Action
 - ◇ Board consensus to move ahead with the proposal and also that there would be an announcement for Earth Day. We discussed using both the \$10,000 budgeted in the capital campaign and some monies from reserves. This will be figured out with the development of the new budget.

VIII. In-Person Events

- Summary
 - ◇ Dawn spoke with Jessica Kramer about arranging in person gathering and offered that the board would get involved. Dawn and Sarah will discuss. In person gatherings could include:
 - ◆ Clean/organize/work projects
 - ◆ Social events
 - ◆ Worship experiences

IX. Canvas Update

- Summary

- ◇ Revised the income estimate because of one congregants change in their contribution
- ◇ Another large donor retired
- ◇ Broadening of the middle may not make up for the larger donors leaving
- ◇ Total number is somewhat soft, some people won't realize that their pledge increased by 5% until their pledge statement arrives.

X. Treasurer's Report

- Summary

- ◇ Chris had a discussion with the Endowment Committee and they are excited about moving forward next year with the ability to provide money for charitable causes. They did not feel comfortable with both giving \$10,000 to our operating budget and providing \$10,000 to charitable causes this year and asked Chris which one is more important right now. They will provide \$10,000 to the operating budget.
- ◇ Chris mentioned the increasing costs of 10% in health insurance from the UUA and a Rev Sarah mentioned the level of coverage and level of customer service as important factors to consider.
- ◇ Chris will work on the new overall budget or next year and the board will meet to discuss it.

Adjourned at 8:51 pm