

**Unity Church Unitarian
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 16th, 2011
Agenda**

I. Opening Reading - Bob

II. Review of Past

- Review of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting on January 8, 2011 was made by Beverly and seconded by Sarah. The motion carried.

- Executive Team Report

Barbara Hubbard reported that 106 pledges have not been renewed, and that those pledges have been followed up with by phone calls and letters.

- Board Business

In recognition of his training and his call, the Board of Trustees of Unity Church Unitarian of St. Paul recommends that the congregation ordain Leon Dunkley to the ministry of religion. This motion was moved by Tim and seconded by Sarah. The motion carried.

The Executive Team will now put together an ordination team headed by Janne; Craig Allen will also serve on that team as a Board representative.

III. Creation of the Future

Andy Currie gave a presentation on his pre-capital campaign feasibility study in which he interviewed 30 major donors. Andy focused on four aspects: confidence in the church, the validity of the need for a capital campaign, the sense of urgency of such a campaign and funding prospects.

Andy reported that not one of his interviews had anything bad to say about Unity. Through his conversations Andy heard a lot of confidence in Unity and great respect and love for the ministers, the staff and the leadership. Members noticed that there is very low turnover of staff at the church, and feel that it's a reflection of the strong leadership of the ministers. As far as the validity of the need, he found members very familiar with the proposed Unity Tomorrow plans and felt that they were all good ideas that would help provide programming in the church for the long term, given the growth of the church and increase in the number of students in RE. However, while members acknowledged the validity of the plans, they did question – given the scale involved –

whether all the proposed Unity Tomorrow plans were really “urgent” in this economic climate and drew a distinction between maintenance, “have-to-have” improvements and “nice-to-have.” Many members were not disposed to investing in a second site and expressed concerns that it may be a risky project that could weaken Unity. Members are also concerned that while the number of people attending Unity has increased, pledging units have not increased over the same time period.

Andy concluded that it would not be possible to raise \$16.5 million and suggested that it would be more realistic to set a goal of \$4 million. He cautioned that while we may be able to raise more, it is dangerous to set a goal that is too high and beyond the ability to reach, particularly with an economy unlike what he has seen in the past forty years. He pointed out that many of the top donors to Unity also support other causes and that they are stretching not just to give to Unity, but other nonprofits they care deeply about.

The Board expressed respect for Andy’s analysis and some disappointment – but also great optimism that significant improvements can be made with \$4 million. The Board agreed that work will need to be done to redefine and re-align the vision with the new budget, including a discussion with the congregation about the new Unity Tomorrow number. Attending congregation members also thanked Andy for his good work and asked that the Board, the ET and the Unity Tomorrow team move forward without delay.

Like the Board, the ET’s response was a mixture of disappointment and bright hope. Rob E-I said the ET intentionally fostered the \$16.5 million number initially so that the congregation would be involved in articulating a vision of a building that would reflect the ministry that they imagine. He wanted to make it very clear that the ET does not experience this study as a vote of no confidence in any way, and thinks that this is an opportunity to broaden and deepen the conversation with people with a wide variety of views about the future of the church. Leon said that a \$4 million prospect is something that any church would be thrilled for which holds lots of possibilities! The ET did invite the lead architect back to discuss what could be done with a \$4-5 million budget and believe that there’s a lot that we can accomplish with that budget, but it will involve prioritizing what is most important to us. Barbara Hubbard agreed that we have a real opportunity to stay with our values and dreams while revising our goal, and worried about providing a clear process and communication.

The Board then discussed the March 20th congregational meeting for a vote on the capital campaign and how to best address the findings of the feasibility study. There was significant debate as to whether or not it would be possible to provide enough information for the congregation to vote on a capital campaign on March 20th, and what level of detail would be necessary for a vote.

Worry was expressed that there would not be enough time to properly engage the congregation around the feasibility study, the revised numbers and a new vision for the Unity Tomorrow project. Some Board members felt that feedback from the congregation as a whole was necessary before voting on a capital campaign, while other Trustees felt that the Unity Tomorrow planning teams had been put in place specifically for this reason. Board members expressed trust that the policies of Unity Church were followed correctly and that the planning teams are representing the congregation and communicating properly. With the agreement of most Board members, the Board decided that it was imperative to move forward with the Unity Tomorrow process and present Unity members with a capital campaign proposal on March 20th, rather than delaying the process.

There was additional debate between the Board and the ET about the specific number to set on the capital campaign. ET members expressed hope and faith in the congregation to surpass Andy's prediction and set a goal of a \$4.5 to \$5 million campaign. Both Rob E-I and Janne thought there may be opportunities for raising more than Andy predicted. Rob Fulton cautioned the ET against allowing the capital campaign number to creep above Andy's proposed \$4 million, even though he understands there is a recommendation to put the figure higher.

The Board asked the ET to come up quickly with a report of what they think the best and highest use of the money will be, and bring it to the Board for comments and encouraged them to think about how we can use the initial money we raise and not indebt the congregation.

The Board of Trustees recommends that the congregation authorize a capital campaign with a minimum goal of \$4 million for infrastructure improvement, bringing our building up to code, and moving forward with the *Unity Tomorrow* vision. Following design development, a phase one plan will be presented to the congregation. We further recommend that the congregation limit debt in the project to the cost of short term construction financing. Craig moved the motion and Laura seconded; the motion carried, 7 to 2.

IV. Board Business

The Board then discussed the report from the Anti-Racism Leadership Team (ARLT). The Board of Trustees adopts the following comments and recommendations:

1. The report was thorough and provided excellent monitoring of Unity's efforts leading to an anti-racist institution;
2. The BOT will provide time at its June meeting to meet with the ARLT to hear an interim report on any concerns or issues related to meeting the Ends and the Means related to racism that have been raised and need to be dealt with prior to the annual ARLT report;

3. The BOT will provide time at its September meeting to hear the preliminary monitoring report from the ARLT and discuss issues identified in the report relating to the BOT prior to the report being sent to the congregation.
4. The BOT asks the ARLT to review Unity's current governing policies and to make recommendations to the Policy Subcommittee of the BOT on possible changes.
5. The BOT will ask the ET in their regular report to the BOT to provide updates on ARLT and antiracism efforts at Unity.
6. The BOT will discuss developing some method of antiracism training for BOT members.

The BOT asked the ARLT to review the current Unity governance policies and to make recommendations to the Policy Subcommittee. The motion was moved by Sue and seconded by Laura. The motion carried.

V. Closing Reading – Sarah

Minutes respectfully submitted by Neely Crane-Smith, Board Secretary.

DRAFT