Unity Church Unitarian
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 12, 2011
Draft Minutes

Board members present: Craig Allen, Laura Smidzik, Sarah Pradt, Tim Thoreen, Bev Heydinger, Bob Peskin, Sue Babcock, Neely Crane-Smith

ET Present: Barbara Hubbard

Other: Pauline Eichten, Drew

I. Opening Reading and Focus Question - Beverly

II. Review of the Past

A motion to approve the minutes the board meeting on January 16, 2011 as amended was made by Bob and seconded by Beverly. The motion carried.

- Executive Team Report

The Board asked that Pat Haff pick a community outreach team and go into depth on their activities, or perhaps go back to the "Spotlight" method in Board meetings in order to get better acquainted with the work of the community outreach teams. Barbara Hubbard updated the Board on Unity's first audit since 2004, which started with three days of foundational pre-audit work. Barbara reported that it's already been a valuable process to establish a working relationship with a wonderful group of people, and that the audit team is pleased with what they are finding already. While it's a lot of work, Barbara wanted to express her gratitude for this very important step in elevating financial scrutiny and organization. We're happy that Barbara is happy! The Board suggested that the development ministry team be revived to give Barabara additional help.

IV. Creation of the Future

- Unity Tomorrow and the Capital Campaign

With just over a week until the special congregational meeting on March 20th to vote to approve the capital campaign, there was a sense of general confusion among the Board as to the next steps. After the congregational forums on February 23rd and March 6th, most questions are procedural: what is the process that we are being invited into? If the congregation says yes, then what are the next steps?

Bev reminded the Board that the congregation was told that there would be an open process to choose the final architect. Barbara reported that because MD did such excellent work, there was an assumption to open the process and start it all over again didn't make sense. Board members asked that the ET at least explain to the congregation why the process isn't being

opened up and see if comparing other firms could bring the general cost of the project down. The Board then asked Barbara Hubbard for the Executive Team/Unity Tomorrow's vision for the special congregational meeting.

Barbara said that, to her knowledge, the basic structure would be to go through the same PowerPoint from the congregational forums, explain the feasibility study and show the recommendation of the Board. Many Board members expressed dismay that there was not a more concrete process laid out by the ET, especially after having heard some surprising statements out of both Rob and Janne during the congregational forums (making assumptions about where money would be going). There was hope that after the last Board meeting the ET would have bet with the architects and have more information about how far $4 million would go and what the tradeoffs would be. Barbara said that Lorelei W. had an in-depth conversation with one of the main architects and had met with Paul and Chuck from DW to sketch out the process. She reminded the Board that we have to have a "yes" on a capital campaign to do the design work and get a better idea of where that is going.

Board members asked for more detail from Barbara about how much it would take to bring the infrastructure of the building up to code (the sprinkler system, etc). The concern from the Board is that the ET can come back to the congregation and explain how they came to their decision about where the money was spent and say with honesty "there was a lot of conversation about the different tradeoffs and who was involved in the conversation." Board members expressed concern that there was a lot of work to do before next Sunday to feel like as a Board we can step forward and give something to the congregation, as well as concern that the ministers stay within agreed talking points and not give into dreaming out loud.

Barbara acknowledged that there has been fragmentation at the ET level around schedules and that the ET needs to make sure what they say is consistent with what the Board has said and what has happened in our conversations. The Board especially wants the ET to anticipate that there have been several different numbers floating around that the ET needs to be unanimous on this. The Board agreed that having some common talking points would be useful, as well as listing of the infrastructure upgrades from the initial audit we had done several years ago. The conversation ended with hope that a process for the long-range planning for the church and addressing next steps will be clarified.

- BOT's role in meeting the Ends statements around an anti-racist institution

Pauline reported that while the ARLT is excited that there's a commitment from the Board and the ET to bring anti-racism into the church, the relationship between the ARLT and the Board is still undefined. For example, if the ARLT gives the Board a yearly report that's scathing and has direct proposals, there isn't necessarily a way to respond because that has been removed from the Board's responsibility, but the ARLT doesn't have the authority to make any changes. Sarah, a former member of the ARLT, reiterated that the ARLT's position is awkward and necessary to monitor and hold the ET and the Board responsible until such a time as the ARLT can "work itself out of existence."

Board members expressed concern about communications between the ARLT, Board and ET, and the lack of a cohesive vision of what an anti-racist institution would look like when the role of the Board is to monitor the ET against the stated ends of the limitations. Can the Board monitor towards the ARLT commitments without understanding what anti-racism is? Pauline reported that the ARLT has been asked in the past to create half or full day workshop, but has never been given the resources to make that happen, and suggested that anti-racism training is added to the Board policies to occur during Board orientation and training.

Pauline suggested another audit of the church, the previous one having occurred in 2005. The Board agreed that such an audit happens in a year after the Board implements new policies and monitoring to give it time to identify immediate problems. However, several Board members expressed concern that progress on the relationship between the ARLT and the Board has already stalled several times. Laura mentioned that, as a Board member who has also served on the ARLT, the thought that the ARLT is supposed to monitor the Board is confusing. She envisions a consulting, enriching, nourishing, instructive/collaborative process that monitoring, which has not happened in the past. Pauline mentioned that during the planning stages for Unity Tomorrow, the ARLT was not explicitly invited into any conversations about it, nor do any ARLT members serve on any of the Unity Tomorrow teams. Bev acknowledged that the whole concept of anti-racism is vastly better embedded into the life of the congregation than it was a few years ago. While we have more work to do, and our process and structure are murky, muddled and have problems, the Board appreciates the ARLT's continued existence and pressure on this topic.

As for next steps, the Board agreed that the ARLT should move from monitoring to consulting, and monitoring the ends statements around anti-racism should come back to the Board. The Board also encouraged the ET to include anti-racism as part of their regular reports to the Board and think about how these concepts will be incorporated into staff training. The June Board meeting will be dedicated to the relationship between the ARLT, Board and ET, and the policy subcommittee will also meet with the ARLT. Pauline said she found these steps encouraging.

IV. Board Business

- Format for the Special Meeting of the Congregation

V. Closing Reading - Tim

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