

USG Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, October 22, 2013

Members present: Craig Miller, Bob Williford, Leni Windle, Marina Patrice Van Gossen, Tom Ott, Andrea Parry, Ann Schoonmaker, Treva Burger

Non-members present: Rev. Kent Matthies, Daniel Gregoire, Gloria Smith, Linda O’Gwynn, Carolyn Cotton, Charles Gabriel, Mark Bernstein

September 24, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Motion: to approve the September 24, 2013 minutes

Motion Approved: 7-0-0 (one member was a few minutes late)

September 28, 2013 Retreat Minutes

Motion: to approve the September 28 Retreat minutes as amended

Motion Approved: 8-0-0

Minister’s Report

We’re coming up on Pumpkin Carving/Day of Dead weekend, encourage your friends to join us. The Racial Justice conference is in 10 days and we are beginning the very busy holiday season. For the Bread Communion we are looking for stories of what people have done for and with the church as way of celebrating memory and tradition of this church. Not included in the written Minister’s report, Joan Javier-Duval is formally requesting to be ordained at USG. Board members excited about this prospect. Rev. Kent Matthies stated there is a process to follow and we don’t know when exactly it could happen, but Joan is hoping before the end of the church year.

President’s Report

New Member ceremony was part of the 9am service this past Sunday and it went very well.

Master Plan Implementation Committee

The Master Plan was approved by the congregation in 2011, it cost \$50,000. Renovation of Austin Youth Lodge apt, the creation of the Stage office and the renovation of the Sullivan Chapel were completed. This was designed as a multi year plan. We are about at the 5 yr point. Next phase would include a new entrance with an elevator.

Building Needs must be linked to mission. The MPIC is a Committee of 9. Four to five members share with one consistent position and the other four 4 share a different consistent position. The group would like direction from the Board as to their exact mandate.

The goals are to increase membership and participation in programs. The difference of opinion stems from half of the committee putting more emphasis on the cost than the mission. They feel it’s not a good time to proceed due to our current financial state. Others felt that decision was up to the Board. Majority feels between 2008 and 2013 there was a small amount of growth and that that was a good sign with recession and RE upheaval, but growth was less than the Master Plan predicted. It seems that we are five years behind in projected growth and that the 2013 Master Plan projected growth is likely to happen in 2018. Part of the difficulty understanding the numbers is that UUA changed the way they ask for the RE counts. The majority opinion in MPIC feels they are planning for 2018. Minority opinion felt that since growth was flat there was no reason to move ahead with the plan. Building needs are agreed on from congregational input and staff interviews. 1. Accessibility, 2. Welcoming Entrance with improved circulation to Sanctuary, 3. Increased classroom and meeting spaces with restrooms and storage. Some current classrooms really don’t work well because of lack of privacy, sound proofing, storage, decoration, etc.

Important to focus on what we need now, we actually have less space than we had in 2008 because we're not using the Austin Youth Lodge anymore.

Options:

1. Do nothing. Cost the least in dollars, but don't know what it would cost us in congregants, etc.
2. Limited accessible elevator to go to all three levels, \$176,000
3. 3 additional classrooms, 2 offices, some storage, no elevator, planned so could be added to easily, \$432,000
4. Option 3 plus elevator, \$555,000
5. 20 year very large option. John Pron trying to show if we do option 3 now, does not interfere with future of master plan
6. Linda shared a site plan that she developed. Uses option 3 plus new entrance and elevator

Projected timeline: would take more than 2 years in the best case scenario. Board would need to decide by May 2014 whether to do a capital campaign. Majority of the group wants to engage a capital development consultant to determine USG's ability to raise money. Minority opinion should not pay for feasibility study or capital campaign consultant because of our financial situation. They feel it is not the right time.

Requests/recommendations:

We need Architect drawings which will cost \$15-20,000

The majority opinion of MPIC is that we should also spend \$15-20,000 for a capital consultant to see how much we can raise

Two in the minority felt that while it may not be time to start a construction project, but it may be time to start the planning project. The minority opinion is not that we shouldn't do it, but that we shouldn't do it now.

One Board member asked: How do we square the fact that we are in the red in terms of pledging with doing a capital campaign? Another wondered: Are congregants ready to spend this money? Some answers were: Fundraising goes beyond our people to outside groups and peripheral people. It's easier to get people to give money for a project they can see. In terms of how we schedule a pledge drive and a capital campaign: A well run capital campaign need not have any impact on a pledge drive.

Rev. Kent: Two things that can get conflated in an unhelpful way is projecting space that Ministries and Programs will need and financial capacity of the congregation. These two things should be kept separate. Basic rule: you will be able to raise 2-4x pledge base. He feels we need a professional. Thinks consultant would tell us \$750K-\$1.2million. The last capital campaign in 1999-2000, \$288K was raised without settled minister or consultant. He encourages us not to wait for financial reasons.

What exactly would the consultant do for \$20,000. We need to find this out.

One MPIC member stated: in support of Kent, UU State College, recently completed a capital campaign for \$900K, Summit Presbyterian for \$400K.

Last MPIC request for this evening: The Committee is made up of professional people and they would like to be able to make some decisions. They would like to choose the Architect and the Consultant. Board will take that under advisement.

Additional thoughts:

One easy way to raise some money, ask if people are willing to forgive their Sullivan Chapel loans.

The Master Plan was not designed to address what some might consider the two things most affecting our ability to build beloved community driveway (potholed, not lit) and front sign.

Linda O'Gwynn was commended for her drawing as being very sensitive to our needs (option 6).

We can start making improvements, but we have to commit to a capital campaign.

Tom Ott requests the all handouts be emailed to Board members. MPIC would like to have decisions in keeping with their timeline. We have a very important decision to make by the end of the November Board meeting.

If we spend \$40K on architectural drawings and a feasibility study, we will have a capital campaign.

We could engage a non-profit which will train a team from USG to raise money for us, but it is also very expensive. We don't have people (after the current Stewardship Team of Leni Windle and Bill Dowdall complete their service) to run stewardship, we need strong leadership development in this area.

Some feel that financial conversations are difficult and it's hard to ask members of beloved community to ask each other for large amounts of money, others think that's exactly who should be asking.

Even with a consultant, we would still need a capital campaign committee with a chair and we are probably still doing the actual asking. To get a consultant to help us figure out what makes sense as a next step, it might also help us get more money than we could get our own.

To what extent do we need the space now? Need more space for youth, need storage space and rooms we can decorate for RE. Need private room for OWL. Need rooms that are somewhat sound proofed so that people in different rooms can hear each other.

Nominating Committee: We need to name two additional members. It was decided that we would ask Kurt Ahrens and Jill Murray.

Photocopying Policy

Motion: to approve the Photocopying Policy with correction of one typo.

Motion Approved: 8-0-0

Daniel Gregoire asked how to propose policies. Board felt should get discussed at the committee level before coming to the Board. Rev. Kent Matthies added that staff can also work together in the creation of policies.

Respectfully submitted,

Treva Burger

Motion to adjourn

Motion approved: 8-0-0

Adjourned at 9:26pm

To: USG Board of Directors

From: Rev. Kent Matthies

Minister's Report, October 2013

I hope this finds you doing well during this gorgeous fall! I start this report by lifting up loving thoughts for members of our congregation who are going through health problems and challenges including: Catherine Chambers, Lori Stupak and Peter Walsh. Thanks much the caring provided by countless folks in our congregation – and the leadership Sarah West and Linda Bernstein share with me in caring ministries.

Since the writing of my last board report I had the honor of officiating two wedding ceremonies for USG couples. Eli Scarce and Ilene Klein were married on September 21st in Lewes, DE. They were married in Delaware because marriage equality exists in that state and not in our beloved commonwealth. Last weekend Bob Williford and Cynthia Bryon were married in our beautiful sanctuary.

Last weekend we had a very successful Men's Retreat at Murray Grove. I was chair of the programs. We had a special guest leader Isaac Garfield, who is a therapist with strong focus on male friendships. 20 men participated in our 48 hour retreat. The feedback was tremendously positive in regards to the quality of programs and personal connections. We used the energy from the weekend to thank Carl Leiby for his three years of service as chair of USG men's group. Mark Tuveson and Carl Slivac are now the new co-chairs.

Our two Sunday morning worship services continue to go quite well. I am very proud of the hard work put in by various teams of people to create excellent, inspiring services. Our attendance for the first six services has an average of 223. This is essentially flat from the attendance at the first six Sundays last church year.

I was strongly in favor of the proposal to move to two services and remain convinced that this is the best course for our congregation in living out our mission. The Second Service Task Force Report arrived at the conclusion that we had a physical bottle-neck for growth with our Sunday attendance. Our sanctuary has comfortable and welcoming seating for 280 people. Studies show that any time 80% or more people attend a worship service the message is given that there is no room for new people in the life of the congregation. 224 is 80% of our seating capacity. Last year we were over 80% of our seating capacity 38% of Sundays. Hence, our decision to move to creating two excellent services was a primary if not the only way to open new avenues for incoming people to our congregation on Sundays. Going forward a primary factor for our success in this endeavor is the quality of the worship services. The staff, worship arts, religious education committee, membership and others are committed to continuing our efforts with this goal. I look forward to more conversation with you about these issues.

Thanks to you for all your good work.

Photocopying

Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Trustees 10.22.13

Policy

Use of the USG office copier will be limited to church activities.

Photocopying jobs requiring more than 50 copies must be approved by the Church Administrator. Users may be required to enter a user code to use the copier.

Some jobs may need to be taken to an outside copying service. The church has accounts with several outside copying services. Information on these are available from the Church Administrator.