

Minutes of the 2016 Annual USG Membership Meeting

Sunday, May 22, 2016

Agenda

Welcome & Opening Words - Tom Ott, President of the Board, and Rev. Kent Matthies

Presentation of Congregational Awards

- Lifetime Achievement Awards
 - Carol Ceglowski - The Lifetime Achievement award will be given to Carol at a later time, as she could not be present.
 - Marny Walsh - Award given by Ann Schoonmaker
- Congregational Awards
 - To Susan Bockius, presented by Susan Smith
 - To Gale Gibbons, presented by Margaret Kinnevy
 - To Bill Dowdall, presented by Tom Ott

Acknowledgement of Board of Trustees

Tom Ott, President of the Board, expressed thanks to Vice President Scott Wolkenberg, Secretary Ann Schoonmaker and Board members Linda Brunn, Margaret Kinnevy, Craig Miller, Bill Morrow, Susan Smith, and Bob Williford for their excellent work during the past year. He also acknowledged the work of Craig Miller, Ann Schoonmaker, and Bob Williford, who will be rotating off the Board.

Call to Order & Election of Annual Meeting Chair (Alan Windle) and **Secretary** (Carolyn Scott). The motion was made to elect them and seconded.

Approval of Minutes from 2015 Annual Meeting.

Motion was made to approve the minutes and then seconded. The 2015 Annual Meeting minutes had been made available on the website, in two emails, and in print.

MET Report given by Rev. Kent Matthies

Summary of main points below. For full report, please see attachment.

- Unitarianism has a history of innovation. Continuing in that tradition was USG's offering of two different services for the past three years. UU theology & practice have responded to meet people's needs. Special thanks to all who helped, especially to Debbie Ward, chair of Worship Arts for those three years.
- Another positive: USG has increased Social Justice activity, particularly with the appointment of Social Justice co-chairs, Anne Gwynn and Mel Streib. We have been addressing the needs of public schools and prison reform, anti-racism work (our Ending Racism committee), and we create a vibrant and well-attended MLK Day.
- The MET team works hard and meets weekly. Rev. Kent Matthies, chair of MET, expressed thanks to the team: Gloria Guldager (Church Administrator), Bill Dowdall, Linda Bernstein, and Jenn Leiby.
- The FY2016 Stewardship team, chaired by Christine Ginsburg, raised pledges totaling \$342,000.

- Rev. Daniel Gregoire will be leaving USG at the end of June, 2016 after an excellent three years of ministry.
- USG already has appointed a Search Committee to look for a new Director of Spiritual Development, whose job will be focused on Religious Education, rather than Ministry. That search is well underway.
- Coming on board in the fall of 2016 will be our new Intern Minister Constance Simon, who will remain for two years.

Covenant of Right Relations Presentation and Vote. This covenant was made available in print and on the overhead screen. The motion to accept it was made by Bill Morrow and seconded by Tom Ott.

Capital Campaign Presentation and Vote

- Linda Bernstein presented the background and information for a Capital Campaign to raise money for 1) an elevator and 2) an improved driveway into the parking lot from Johnson Street. A print handout was available summarizing the reasoning and the costs. Architectural drawings from Brawer Hauptman were shown on the overhead projector, with Carolyn Cotton explaining.
- Two Task Forces will be needed:
 - 1) Assessing the type of elevator needed & overseeing
 - 2) Capital Fund Raising

Questions and comments from membership:

- How would people access the elevator from outside? from the courtyard? from inside the building?
- Would the outside entrance have a walkway to it? Would it be covered by a porch? Would the elevator and the entrance to the elevator be inside?
- Would the elevator interfere with other components of the Master Plan?
- Would the steps currently leading from the hall up to Sullivan Chapel really need to be changed?
- It was pointed out that an elevator was NOT the last piece of Phase 1, that other pieces had yet to be implemented: enlarging the passage into the Dining Room, taking out pews in the Sanctuary & replacing them with chairs.
- Was the cost estimate of \$375,000 including a walkway leading to the elevator from the back parking lot?
- Which project will start first?
- If the money will come in over a three-year period (as described), will the projects take three years to complete?

Comments:

- Linda Bernstein responded that there will be chances later for people to give input and suggestions.
- The point was made that the driveway must be maintained, that currently it is not. It should start to be maintained now.

- It is time for us to be a welcoming congregation to all, including those with accessibility issues. We need this elevator.
- The initiative for this project was really a grass roots one.
- Ed Hagley made the point that when he worked at a senior facility, the elevator was used all the time to transport larger items (tables, chairs, etc.). The wisdom of putting in a larger elevator was echoed by a few other members.
- Helena Showell asked if the elevator would have applications for visually and hearing impaired people.
- The Elevator tower will be five feet taller than the present building.

Gerry Whelan motioned to approve the Capital Campaign. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Presentation of the Approved FY17 Budget by Bill Dowdall

- The itemized list for the FY2017 Budget was presented on the overhead screen. (If there was a print copy, I did not see it.) The budget is based on a projected weekly single worship service, taking into account our present membership of 302, and a new Director of Spiritual Development by July or August.
- In 2014-2015, USG had a \$48,000 deficit. Last year, the Board directed MET to reduce the deficit by 10% each year. As of now (5.2016), we are down to a deficit of \$25,053.
- Our biggest expense comes from Building and Grounds, no surprise given that it is an old building. It is also often used with a lot of rentals, which bring in money but cause more wear and tear.

Questions raised:

- Could we see a comparison year by year of the budget? Yes, it is online.
- Question from Christine Ginsburg on the endowment. Answer was that we have two streams of money flowing from the endowment. Michael Campbell added that they are all CIF funds.
- Rudy Sprinkle asked if we have a report on the Sullivan Fund, money for the needy. The answer was No.
- Question raised by various people: Why doesn't the membership vote on the budget? Rudy Sprinkle said that a year ago the Board said this would be considered, but apparently it was forgotten.
- Eric Foster asked why there was a larger contingency fund for the capital campaign projects than there was for the FY17 budget. Charles Gabriel replied that budgetary items are more predictable year to year than construction projects.
- \$25,00 for improving the wall leading up into the courtyard will come out of the Edna Jones endowment.

Election of 2016-2017 Board Members. Unsigned ballots were collected in double, unsealed envelopes.

Questions & Issues

Susan Bockius made a motion on behalf of the Membership to request the Board to consider a congregational vote to approve the Annual Budget and to present to the congregation a wording for such a ByLaw change for the congregation to vote upon. The motion was seconded and voted upon. Results:

- 28 approved
- 9 opposed
- 5 abstained

Barbara Dowdall made the point that at the time USG became a Welcoming Congregation, Transgender and Trans-sexual- identifying persons were not included, just the LGB community. She suggested that we develop a process to add the Transgender community to our language and through an education process.

Adjournment

submitted by Carolyn Scott, 5.23.2016