

UUC Congregational Meeting Held on Zoom June 6, 2021 Minutes

Presiding: Wayne Neu – UUC President 2020-2021 (referred to as Wayne in minutes)

Quorum established: Each member signed in with name for self, and when appropriate as proxy for other member as requested to establish quorum. We currently have 220 members, and quorum requires over 50% of membership. A quorum was established with 121 members present in person or by proxy.

Retiring board members were acknowledged with appreciation: Wayne Neu (president), Nancy Bodenhorn (secretary), David Hundley (member-at-large). Additional acknowledgements with gratitude were expressed for continuing board members and individuals who are supporting the process of the annual meeting, including Jack Call. Jack Call is a non-member who is serving as our parliamentarian for the meeting.

Wayne read the UUC covenant, and explained the process for the zoom meeting. All members are muted as default. Chat is set up for business protocol whereby the chat comments are seen only by the co-hosts who are managing the meeting. Chat is reserved for requests to speak on an issue or to second a motion. If a member wishes to speak, they enter the request in chat to the Teller (Isabel Berney), indicating if they are speaking for or against the issue, or if they have a question. Wayne asks member to unmute to speak when the Teller points out their turn. No person will be recognized twice until all those wishing to speak have done so. Voting also takes place via chat – write in vote (yes, no, or abstain) with name of voting person/proxy and send to Host.

Items presented for discussion and vote:

Meeting agenda approved unanimously.

1. Slate of Board Candidates

Motion: That the UUC accept the slate of board candidates as presented: Nancy Bodenhorn (President-elect), Stephen Henninger (secretary), Gene Gardner (member-at-large).

Seconded by James Bohland. No discussion.

With no discussion or opposition, moved to adopt by general consent (often called by affirmation).
Approved.

2. 2021-2022 Budget

Motion: That the UUC accept the FY 2021-2022 budget as presented.

Seconded by Stephen Henninger.

With no discussion or opposition, moved to adopt by general consent. Approved.

3. Bylaws change: add DLFD to Board as non-voting member

Motion: That the UUC amend Article VI.E.1. to read as follows (change in red):

The Executive Board shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer and three At-Large Members. The Minister and Director of Lifespan Faith Development shall be non-voting members of the Executive Board.

Seconded by Stephen Henninger.

With no discussion or opposition, moved to adopt by general consent. Approved.

4. Bylaws change: joining from a distance

Motion: That the UUC amend Article IV.B.1. to read as follows (change in red):

A person who is at least 16 years of age is welcomed into membership by signing the Membership Book either at a regular meeting of the Congregation or in the presence of the Minister or the President. In the case that a person wishing to become a member is unable to travel to Blacksburg in a timely manner, that person may become a member by submitting a signed letter of intention to join to the Minister or President.

Seconded by Karen Holstein.

With no discussion or opposition, moved to adopt by general consent. Approved.

5. Solar Panel proposal

Baseline Solar company proposes to partner with UUC. [Here is the proposal.](#)

Motion: That the UUC accept Baseline Solar's proposal by which they will install and operate solar panels on our building roof if we enter into a 25-year power purchase agreement.

Seconded by Walt Pirie.

Rick Ashley supports the motion and points out that this could not have been proposed prior to a recent change in Virginia law. Jamie McReynolds asked for clarification about the possibility of a buy-out after 10 years. This is part of the proposal and briefly described. Dick Baumann asked about the placement on the roof and need to re-roof eventually. Re-roofing will need to occur in about 8 years. Recommended to not re-roof prior to installation since the remaining life of the roof has more value than the cost to remove and replace the panels. Bill Baker asked about a 26% federal tax incentive. We (UUC) are not eligible for that incentive, as a non-profit since we do not pay taxes. Baseline Solar will receive that tax incentive. Tim Pickering asked if at the 10-year buyout period, we could make a decision to remove them. We could remove them only if we exercise the purchase option. Walt Pirie pointed out that the cost is very low for the potential of living our values and goals. Angela Parish asked whether the buyout clause allows for a fluctuation in energy cost, or whether that will remain fixed. Patrick Feucht (member

and owner of Baseline Solar) responded that fluctuation was not taken into account. Dick Baumann asked if waiting would make sense in lieu of the rapid technology changes. Patrick responded that the pace of advancement is not that quick and recommends taking the action now. Jamie McReynolds asked about the 25 year requirement when the payback rate seems to be 15 years. Patrick indicated that as a business decision, this is what made sense in terms of the cost for them to provide the material up front. Alison Galway asked what happens if the system fails or becomes damaged. The contract defines that Baseline maintains insurance on the system. Sharon Crane asked if we could pay off earlier. The contract does not provide for that option. Ashley Dugan indicated her support for the motion based on the benefit of being able to have the material provided up front by Baseline, as well as the support of environmental justice. Kimberley Homer supported the motion and has solar panels on her house that generate electricity. Karen Holstein asked if the solar panels provide any protection or insulation to the roof. Patrick indicated that the panels probably provide a small amount both. Anticipated placement is on the southwest part of the roof, overlooking the memorial garden.

Stephen Henniger called the question (formally known as a motion to end debate and vote immediately). Vote on that motion requires a 2/3 affirmative vote to pass. Ashley Dugan seconded. Motion to close debate on solar panel approved with 115 Yes votes, 7 no votes, and 1 Abstain vote.

The vote on the main motion was then taken. The motion was approved with 116 Yes votes, 1 No votes, and 1 Abstain vote.

6. Adoption of the 8th Principle

Motion: That the UUC adopt the 8th Principle: “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.”

Seconded by: Stephen Henninger

Pam provided some context as was also shared at the Informational meeting. All principles and sources are being assessed and potentially revised in 2023, as required by UUA every 15 years. UUA anticipates that the values promoted by the 8th Principle will be folded into the principles and sources. In the meantime (now), individual congregations are being asked to consider adopting the principle as a statement of support for dismantling oppressions in our communities.

Tim Pickering spoke about concern of wording in the principle. The support for social justice is not in question. He would like to be able to change the wording if this is only for our congregation, but this has not been allowed in the congregational process as the words were initiated by a formal group. Also, he advocates for the congregation to wait for the UUA process of principles and sources revision. Stephen Henninger indicated that support allows our congregation to live our values more fully. Dick Bauman indicated while all are opposed to racism, he believes that the ideas are already covered in the current principles. He would rather see a plan of action to implement the current principles. He also added that the proposed principle is narrow in scope. Jill Kiecolt indicated that this principle is a call to action for development and evolution of our faith. Bill Baker asked about the inability to change the verbiage of the principle. The 8th Principle is a statement that comes from a group associated with UUA, so the

statement has been advocated and brought to the congregation for a vote as it was originated. Karen Holstein is concerned about the wording in that it does not fit with other principles and seems to have Christian undertones and original sin language. KC Arcenau recognized that the language originates from the black and brown leaders in UUA, and that we should let our privilege go and step back. Frank DuPont is concerned about the inability to change the language, being a run-one sentence and non-conforming to the others. The wording would be changed at UUA anyway. He would be comfortable with a statement of conscience. Barbara Taylor commented that the wording issues are not as important as the support that we are potentially providing. She emphasized that voting for is providing support. Devon Fralin asked why the concern of language seemed to be an issue for the previous speakers, with specific words and previous comments itemized. Wayne suggested questioning other speakers was not in order.

Alison Galway indicated that the whole issue is different from the other principles because the white population does not experience the world in a similar way that people of color do. She wants to take her lead for the support from the people of color. Walt Pirie expressed agreement with the idea and purpose, but does not believe it should be a principle. George Lally indicated that the principle is seen as not an issue of words, that it is not a principle but an important affirmation. The language throughout the history of our country has included implicitly biased language. Rick Ashley expressed awareness of grammar, and recognizes that pointing out language concerns to people who create it is usually seen as a statement of rejection. Sharon Crane expressed that people of color being identified as the only identified group is her concern, and that there are multiple other groups who are oppressed that are not being singled out. Arthur Snoke related the discussion to "all lives matter" vs "black lives matter" and that we should be expressing the concern for the groups that deserve pointing out. He also asked how would supporting this make a difference in our actions as UUC? Pam responded that we would be using a lens and focus to evaluate our processes, governance, etc. Ashley Dugan indicated that if African-American UU's feel the need to have this statement, we need to honor that. She indicated that grammar rules are derived in a racist and classist background. Katherine Allen indicated that the original principles use color blind language. Jennifer Thomas expressed that affirming the 8th Principle is validating the initial seven.

Rachel Craine moved to end debate and vote immediately. Seconded by Liz Craine. No further speakers were remaining to speak, however, so that motion was not necessary. The vote on the main motion proceeded.

Motion was approved with 105 Yes votes: 24 No votes: and 2 Abstain votes.

7. Motion to adjourn at 1:38 approved by general consent.

Gratitude was expressed to Wayne Neu for his presidency and leading the annual meeting.

Minutes submitted by Nancy Bodenhorn, Secretary