

Minutes

Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Church of Oakland

April 22, 2008 – 7:34 to 9:45 p.m.

Trustees Present: Richard Bruehl, Noemi de Guzman, Claire Eustace (Vice President), Dan Goss, Jon Greer, Chris Palm (Secretary), Mark Savage (President), Gail Schulz (Treasurer) and Charles Williams.

Others Present: Eva Bunce, Micky Duxbury, Michelle Favreault, Rick Hecht, Judith Hunt, Chris Long, Charles Masten, Robert Mittman, Beverly Smrha, and Charla Weiss.

1. **Dreaming Team Report** – Rick Hecht and Bev Smrha presented the Board with an update on the Dreaming Team’s current thinking about changes that might occur in the Fall to implement the findings of the Transforming our Learning Community findings and report last November 2007. This effort must be on-going as we serve a growing congregation and necessary changes occur in stages. The religious education program is outgrowing available space and paid staff and dedicated volunteers are extremely stressed. Attendance at the 11:15 a.m. service now exceeds the recommended maximum, and there is a need to better balance attendance at the two services.

The Team contemplates recommending to the Executive Team that the services be moved fifteen minutes to 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., in order to, hopefully, make the earlier service more attractive to families. It is suggested that the second service be more family-oriented and that children will attend that service with their families. The Dreaming Team contemplates holding conversations with the congregation about the contemplated changes before any final recommendations. The Board thanked Rick Hecht and Bev Smrha for the Dreaming Team’s work and time with the Board.

2. **Consent Agenda** – Dan Goss requested that the Executive Team’s report, the Church Manager’s report, and the Asset Management/Building Utilization report be pulled from the Consent Agenda, for discussion. With respect to the remaining items, Jon Greer moved and Claire Eustace seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed unanimously, and accordingly, the Board approved the March 2008 minutes; acknowledged the semi-annual Stewardship Report; approved hosting the Balazs Scholar at Starr King School; and approved Joani Blank, Judith Hunt and Chuck Rosene as delegates to PCD District Assembly.

3. **Vision 2012** – Richard Bruehl presented some questions for reflection concerning whether there were tensions between our implementation of Vision 2012 and other principles we hold dear, and whether our efforts to implement Vision 2012 focused only on some parts of the vision but neglected others.

During the exercise, we learned about some of the resistance to change that has been expressed by some members of the church. It was pointed out that there have been disparaging comments made by some congregants regarding Vision 2012. They range from "Why do we have to change? We're fine as we are." to "People of color are poor and won't be able to financially contribute to church." Another example is this: "I don't see race. Everyone is the same to me and should want to be treated equal" implying that racism doesn't exist in our congregation. We know we have to confront many uncomfortable issues as we move forward. But confronting these problems helps us get closer to our goals.

4. **Spirit Fundraising** – The Prom Night has been scheduled for Saturday, June 7. Chris Palm, Jack Macy and Noemi de Guzman will head this effort.

The Cabaret event will be scheduled in September. Richard Bruehl and Claire Eustace will chair.

An appeal to donate the stimulus refund checks to the church budget will be made by Gail Schultz and Jon Greer. It was decided on a target date of May 10 for the mailing of this appeal.

5. **New Member Canvas** – A total of approximately \$9,040 has been pledged to date by new members. The next in-gathering is in May, and a new member canvass will follow.
6. **Capital Campaign** – The total pledged to date is \$1,818,000. This amount is sufficient to do the necessary structural work on Hamilton Hall. The Executive Team asked that the Board authorize it to proceed even though it is within their authority because it is such a very large project. Jon Greer moved that the Executive Team be authorized to proceed with the Hamilton Hall Renovation. Noemi de Guzman seconded. Approved unanimously.
7. **Correspondence on the Music Program and Policy** – The Board of Trustees received correspondence from twelve congregants regarding the Executive Team's changes to the music program and whether those changes are in alignment with Church policies. The letter asserted that certain of the Executive Team's decisions and actions over the past several months regarding the music program violated Board Policies by allegedly not consulting the Music

Committee; articulated worries that these actions might impair the Church's ability to evolve the music program in accordance with Vision 2012; and requested certain actions by the Board. The Board reviewed the issues and determined that, under Board Policies, the congregants should have submitted their complaint about the Executive Team to the Executive Team first, and if they are dissatisfied with the Executive Team's decision, then they may appeal to the Board of Trustees. Accordingly, Jon Greer moved, and Dan Goss seconded, a motion that the Board of Trustees refer to the Executive Team the twelve congregants' claims that certain decisions violated Board Policies (section 1 of the letter); that the Board include the congregants' views about whether certain identified actions put at risk the Church's ability to develop the music program toward our Vision 2012, as it includes all members' opinions, in the Board's regular review of Board Policies and Limitations and whether any revision is advisable (section 2 of the letter); and that the Board take no action on the congregants' requests for Board action (section 3 of the letter). The motion passed unanimously. The Board President will communicate the Board's action to the twelve congregants, and will refer the matter to the Executive Team in accordance with the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eva Bunce, Scribe