

Minutes of Eliot Unitarian Chapel Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Via Zoom

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Brian Krippner, called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.

The Chair noted that this was our second Zoom Annual Meeting and made opening remarks about the special challenge this church year has represented. He thanked staff members Camille Novak, Director of Finance and Operations; Debby Lovell, Communications Specialist; and Christie Lee, Assistant Director of Religious Education; and Rev. Barbara Gadon for their help in planning the meeting. He also thanked the 2020-2021 Board of Trustees for their monitoring and discernment efforts this year: Cathy Converse, Ken Denson, Paula Fulks, Barbara Gadon, Steve Harvey, Jordi Prats, Toni Saunders and Claire Wyneken.

The Chair covered several housekeeping items and reminded the group about what to do in the event of technical difficulties on Zoom.

The Chair announced that David Cox would serve as Parliamentarian for this meeting.

Review of the Congregational Covenant

Board Chair-Elect Steve Harvey read our congregational covenant.

Statement of Quorum

Board Member Paula Fulks reminded the membership of the quorum requirement in the bylaws. As 489 people are members of Eliot Chapel, a minimum of 49 must be present, or 10% of the membership. She reported an attendance of 74 participants in today's meeting, sufficient to establish a quorum.

Virtual Meeting Instructions

David Cox read the virtual meeting rules, based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, specifically the Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings, Scenario C.

Adoption of Meeting Rules

After asking participants to practice raising and lowering their virtual hand in the Zoom software, the Chair asked if there were any questions about the meeting rules. There were none.

The Chair asked if there were any objections to the adoption of the meeting rules. As there were none, the meeting rules were adopted by unanimous consent.

Adoption of the Consent Agenda

The Chair explained the use of the consent agenda tool and listed the eight items on it (which were also included in the pre-meeting packet):

- A) Approval of Agenda
- B) Approval of Minutes of 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting
- C) Election of Sara Fleming as Treasurer - 3-year term beginning July 1, 2021
- D) Election of Kalen Ponche to Board of Trustees - 3-year term beginning July 1, 2021
- E) Election of Charles "Chuck" Schuder to Board of Trustees - 3-year term beginning July 1, 2021
- F) Election of Steven "Steve" Swift to Board of Trustees - 3-year term beginning July 1, 2021
- G) Election of Claire Wyneken to Board of Trustees - 2-year term beginning July 1, 2021
- H) Election of David Rowan to Nominations Committee - 1 year term beginning July 1, 2021

The Chair asked if any members objected to any item being included in the consent agenda. Hearing no objections, the consent agenda was adopted.

The Chair paused to recognize those just elected and thanked them for their service to Eliot Chapel.

The Chair informed those assembled that the Board approved its appointments to the Nominations Committee at its April 2021 meeting. Brian Krippner will serve a one-year term and Cathy Converse will serve a two-year term, both beginning in July 2021.

Board Chair's Statement

Brian offered remarks on his second year as Board Chair. Eliot is poised for a reopening when it is safe to do so. He thanked the Eliot staff and volunteers for their work in keeping the Chapel virtual. The Board kept to its normal monitoring activities, but also conducted the Congregational Survey. Members told the Board that the Chapel was making progress toward its Ends and that they were also fatigued by the pandemic. Early in 2021, the Board embarked on Project Renew to listen to members' dreams for Eliot's future. He thanked the 60+ members who participated and the facilitators. The Board conducted a retreat to review all inputs and the Chair summarized the points he heard. He offered his thoughts on generosity and the need for engagement for the long-term at Eliot.

He left the membership with five questions to ponder at the time of Eliot's reopening:

- 1) *Are you ready to come back to church?*
- 2) *What kind of church do you want to come back to?*
- 3) *Does our community and the world need Unitarian Universalism more than it did before the pandemic, or less?*
- 4) *Do you have friends and family who would find their spiritual home here at Eliot Chapel?*
- 5) *What's YOUR reengagement plan?*

Lead Minister's Statement

The Chair gave the floor to Rev. Barbara Gadon, Lead Minister.

She spoke of resilience and repeated the theme that it was a tough year. She thanked her team for all they did and the many hats they wore, including two new staff who began during the lockdown. Krista Taves provided good counsel and leadership. Our Social Justice Team was recognized nationally for UU The Vote, a program that made a positive difference, even as we were apart. Mary Meihaus and the Canvass team did great work -- thanks also to all who pledged. Gary Gray and Jeanne Olson worked with Rev Barbara and Camille Novak as an Executive Team in running the church. Thanks to the Covenant Group leaders, as well. A big thank you to the Board, especially Brian Krippner who has served *two years* and provided steady leadership during this time. And while not customary to thank someone before they take office, she expressed appreciation for Steve Harvey quietly stepping up as the Chapel was grieving the sudden loss of Chair-Elect Nancy Rubin.

Like a lot of churches, Eliot Chapel is feeling the stress of the pandemic. Pledges are down, as is attendance at virtual services. She called this the third leg of the race. Attendees at the Annual Meeting tend to be our strongest members, so she asked the assembly to find ways to engage further.

She discussed the goal of reopening in the Fall of 2021 and the fact that Eliot has a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated people. She hopes we will think of this time as a period of adaptability and thanked everyone for allowing her to be their minister.

Old Business

The Chair noted that the agenda contained no Old Business.

Finances

The Chair turned the floor over to Ken Denson, Treasurer, and Rev Barbara for a discussion on Eliot's finances.

While Ken and Camille Novak had held a detailed budget presentation a few days earlier, he pointed out that he would be showing a high-level overview of the budget for this group.

He reflected on the 2020-2021 budget which was not approved in the Spring of 2020, but instead, the 2019-2020 budget was extended to September 2020 due to the uncertainties of the pandemic. At this point in time, we are in good shape due to a second PPP loan. He thanked Camille for completing the needed application with the bank.

Ken shared two versions of the 2021-2022 projected budget. One reflected a "normal" church year and the other depicted our situation if we did not have a "normal" year. A normal year would involve returning to physical operations and incurring more expense. Both models draw down our days of cash. The budget makes assumptions about the percentage of pledge commitments which will materialize.

Rev Barbara thanked Ken for the explanation and added that this budget allows staff pay to be raised and for two part-time staff to be hired: an administrative assistant and an audio-visual tech. We will be

creating a Stewardship Team and will be looking at the cost of reopening. The cost of audio-visual for live streaming is not as high as once thought, and evidence shows we are reaching people.

Rev Barbara opened the floor to questions about the budget.

Member Nathan Suter asked if there was one or two rounds of PPP loans. Rev Barbara responded that there had been two.

Rev Barbara commented on lower script sales which typically occur during coffee hour.

New Business

No New Business, other than passing the gavel to Steve Harvey.

Chair Brian Krippner offered his thoughts on chapel governance as a spiritual practice. He asked incoming Board Chair Steve Harvey to pledge to the congregation that he will steward well the office of Board Chair and ensure that the Board validates its trusteeship of the Chapel. Steve made that pledge and read a statement to that effect.

On the Congregation's behalf, Brian Krippner read a statement of support of Steve in his new role as Board Chair and ceremonially and virtually transferred the gavel.

Comments/Questions from Attendees

The Chair reminded everyone of the ground rules for this part of the meeting.

Member Barbara Harris asked what the physical space looks like after the fire and has anything been decided on the lot next door. Rev Barbara noted the slow speed of the fire recovery progress. Regarding 222, we are still in the same place. While no new conversations have occurred with the Congregation, some ideas emerged during the Project Renew process. We demolished the building and put down the sod, but it will be a while before we can use that space for anything.

Member Nancy Hutchins asked when a directory would be published and what are the consequences if one does not follow the (pandemic) rules of engagement on meetings. Rev Barbara shares her frustration in looking people up in Realm and recognizes that we need a more user-friendly tool. The rules of engagement are covenantal and designed to keep people safe.

Member Mary Meihaus shared some pledge figures. Forty-five (45) members who pledged this year (2020-2021) have not yet pledged for 2021-2022. [Secretary's note: Mary's internet connection froze at this time, so the Chair recognized other members in the interim.] More significantly, 114 households have not pledged for two years or more. Out of our 489 members, 272 commonly pledge during the drive. Money not pledged cannot be budgeted. Contributions are helpful but cannot be counted on.

Member Lynn Murphy commented that escript donation percentages from Schnucks have dropped and were in the order of as little as 1%. In addition, individual contributors are not reported.

Member Janet Solecki asked whether there were costs associated with the PPP loans and what our repayment terms are. Rev Barbara said we are not expected to repay the loans. The first one was forgiven and the qualifications for forgiveness on the second loan have not changed. There were no additional costs.

Member Carole Glauser said that Schnucks is doing away with the escript program. There is a new reward program where one can take the credit for themselves or nominate a charity to receive the money.

Member Nancy Hutchins offered to lead a committee if the Chapel proceeds with a directory.

Member Pat Walters asked if there is an option to print a paper copy of the directory from Realm at home. Rev Barbara did not know the answer but added that a drawback is that users have the option for their contact information to remain private.

Member Nathan Suter was curious if kids could use the playground in the summer. Rev Barbara said they were open to have people submit the form and suggest ideas.

Member Flo Reeves said it had been 10 years since we've had a photo directory, but she would be willing to help if we proceed.

Adjourn

The Chair thanked everyone for their patience.

The Chair assumed a motion to adjourn is on the floor. There was no objection so by unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 1:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordi Prats

Board Secretary 2020-2021