

Eliot Unitarian Chapel
MINUTES
Annual Congregation Meeting
May 21, 2017 - 12:30 pm

- I. Meeting opened at 12:41 pm – Cindy Lau, introduced professional parliamentarian.
- II. Invocation – Rev. Barbara Gadon
- III. Reading of Congregational Covenant – Todd Stark
- IV. Statement of Quorum – Cindy Lau
- V. Adopt Meeting Rules*-- Cindy Lau David moved/seconded, accepted
- VI. Approval of Minutes of 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting* Lemon moved /Denson seconded, accepted
- VII. Approve proposed update to Eliot Chapel Bylaws which was just a typographical error in a bylaw change approved last year. -- David moved/seconded, approved by show of flags.
- VIII. Treasurer's 2016-17 Report—Dave Salivar

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT: 1st year as Treasurer with exceptional help from Charlie Lewis. Funds balances are doing well at 7% rate of return as of April 30, 2017. Contributions are doing better than anticipated for this fiscal year. Pledges have been meeting expectations as of 4/30/17.

- IX. 2017-18 Budget—Rev Barbara Gadon, Charles Lewis

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT: Charlie worked with Barbara to develop the budget approved by the board. Anticipating hitting \$650k, 95% of budget is \$615 to develop budget. Mini-canvass and additional fund-raiser will happen in Fall. \$76k is the goal. Contributions are steadily increasing, rentals/weddings are down. Other Sources (endowment earnings released from restriction) have been approved by Board to allocate money to further help next year's income to reduce fund raising needs.

Item of note: Personnel, Myron Simms to be promoted to oversee facilities and we are looking for a replacement for Charlie.

Sikitch relationship reestablished due to Charlie's departure, to ensure financial processes are ok. Restoring RE/Music/UUA to last year's levels. We had to cut this year.

Showing 222 Mortgage just for reporting, but it is not coming out of our annual expenses next year since it is being covered by donations.

- X. Lead Minister Statement – Rev. Barbara Gadon

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT: It was a big year, bought property next door. November election results were shocking, energizing, we sent a group to Washington for the March. Eliot Social Justice doubled/tripled and we looked for ways to accommodate more people and figure out what to do. We had a surge of attendance post-election but went back to typical numbers. Studies show that when a church is 80% full then folks think there is no place for them. Gained 45 new members this year, larger than past.

Started Bergfried conversations in January to make a long term decision with the process team & the Bergfried stewardship team. Culmination of a 5 year project. Pleased with the proposal and feels it represents the spirit of collaboration & cooperation. Personally witnessed courageous conversations speaking their truth kindly and with respect. Guided by our Covenant we did really well even when things got heated. We still found it difficult to talk to one another about differences, would talk to the board, to folks who agreed with them, but not to each other. Speak whatever is on your heart today. Mindful of what your truth is and what the others hold dear.

Decided to “End Racism” in January. Took on Living the Pledge which is a multidimensional, long term, ambitious project.

In April, we find we have a Canvass Shortfall. Net result is a flat canvass, not unusual in the years we have a capital campaign. Asked to grow, find new ways to look at money and generate revenues. How are all these things connected? Important to look at this...connection between Bergfried and 222...can it be creative tension? Connection between 222 and crowded sanctuary...desire to grow but we need money to grow. How? Hard for communities to do talk about money. Unity and mission fill the spaces in between. How are our programs related to our mission? What are we doing to advance our mission? We are not “ONE” Chapel yet.

Strategic Plan next year will look at all these things that are interesting challenges to us as well as the connections and we will need volunteers.

XI. Statement of Outgoing Board Chair – Cindy Lau

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT: Cindy asks attendees to review the Board Report and Ends Interpretation from Barbara in packet. The board got to work with the Barbara and the congregation on Mission, Vision, Values, Ends Development and Bergfried decision. We are in the beginning of a period of transformation. We cannot completely be who we used to be, yet, we don't know who we are going to become. This kind of transformation happens all the time in our lives (graduations, birth, death, divorce), or it can happen suddenly. We don't know what we need to be yet. We are changing from an inward focused congregation to a more outward focused one to enrich our lives on solidarity with oppressed and working to meet the needs of our community. Emphasizing our own needs a little less. Inspires us to move from exceptionalism to inclusivity, working with other groups that have new ideas. We may struggle to reach these groups of people. Maybe we will develop new outreach, but as we journey, it will be necessary to ask what is our relevance, why do we exist, what difference do our actions & our use of resources make, in whose lives and how many? Define ourselves and change easily if new ideas are developing.

Words from West Point: Risk more than others think is necessary, Care more than others think is wise, Dream more than others think is practical, Expect more than others think is possible.

- XII. Elect nominees for Board and Nominating Committee* – Jordi Prats - presented nominees and read their profiles.
- Asked for nominees from the floor. None were offered.
- David Cox moves that we accept all nominees. Passed.
- XIII. Transfer of the gavel to the new Board Chair – Cindy Lau/David Cox & the congregation Read the Passing of the Gavel document
- XIV. Statement of Incoming Board Chair – David Cox - David thanked Cindy and Bruce and presented them with gifts from us.
- XV. Bergfried Motion and Discussion* David read motion, Jim seconded.

Motion

I hereby move that we authorize the Lead Minister or any officer of the Board of Trustees that the Board of Trustees may select to execute such documents and take such further action as shall be necessary to effect the sale of the property commonly known as Bergfried but only that part that lies east of Coles Creek Road including negotiating and executing any listing, offer for sale, contract for purchase and further including any terms or conditions the Board of Trustees deems reasonable as required by a lender, buyer or any public authority to complete the transaction at closing.

Summary of comments:

Rich Heuerman: Bergfried proposal is to stabilize fund to be able to be operated without impacting core Chapel finances, to be self-sustaining: however, there's no mention in the motion to give the funds to Bergfried. Proposed an amendment relative to all net proceeds and future income be added to the Bergfried corpus fund.

After conferring with Parliamentarian, Cindy Lau indicates we are a church under policy governance, we have a policy that already covers how the money will be used. Board does have a statement in recommendation indicating money will go to Bergfried. Not acceptable to make a motion to change Board Policies.

Rich H indicates that Roberts Rules permits an amendment to motion, not in disagreement with policy. Says the policy does not have anything stating that the minister/board can remove money from the Bergfried fund.

David Cox clarifies that the motion is to give the board and minister authority they wouldn't have under our bylaws. The use and distribution of income is already stated in our policies. We cannot sell property without approval from the congregation. The motion is tailored narrowly to address the sale of Bergfried. We have already committed to putting those funds into the Bergfried fund. It doesn't make sense to muddy the waters of this carefully drafted motion. It is inappropriate for the congregation to dictate to the board how to spend funds already designated. Bylaws delegate from congregation authority on finances to Board/Minister.

Rich H argues that Bylaws do not mention governance. Polity resides in the congregation, and it's a violation of congregational polity to not be able to have input into how it's operations should be conducted. Shouldn't have an objection since it's going to "happen anyway". Only recalls seeing in writing only that a significant portion would go to the fund, not the entire

proceeds.

Tim Gardner: Roberts Rules allow amendment to be offered and it's a valid motion.

Cindy Lau responds that Bylaws supercede Roberts Rules (and reads the passage). This would be in opposition of our bylaws.

After conferring with Parliamentarian, the amendment is declared "not in order".

Q: Gene Hutchins -point of order regarding budget

A: Cindy Lau responds that since we have a motion on the floor we will have to discuss budget issues at the end of the meeting.

Q: Steve Mennerick - Served on Stewardship Team and Board. Some people previously felt like Bergfried had become an end unto itself which was the basis for this larger conversation. There are some problems with programs becoming ends. There could be new ideas that come forward that better connect our congregants in nature but are stymied by BF. Great things happening bringing BF into the larger mission of the Chapel. But disappointed to see those ideas coming back. Comments about silo-ing money is an example of BF being an end rather than serving the larger mission of the Chapel. What is the guarantee that there will be accountability of Bergfried to the mission of our church.

A: Rev. Barbara - point is a good one, over this process we did ask mostly in terms of mission, but folks do really value BF and supports the first & fifth end. But we can do better. We can do more of that. Have a group working on Environmental Justice through Bergfried. Just saying Bergfried is environmental justice is not enough. In our strategic planning process, Jim Hershey will be helpful in seeing Bergfried as a whole part of the Chapel and bringing that back to BF team.

Q: Jane Edman - if this passes, and we put the parcel on the market, we wait and it doesn't sell, where are we so we don't have to keep going through the angst of this. Could have been left, admire Barbara for bringing this to the front.

A: David Cox - has the motion written the way it is for the authority to conduct that transaction does not expire. Has been a healing process - but we don't want to go through it again. Nothing more...that would require a different process.

Comment: Lynne Murphy - Earth Based Spirituality. The church has it's own forest and the 7th principle is helpful to us to develop programming for Bergfried.

Comment: Anne Cummings - See a lot of white faces. Teach in a predominantly African-American school and kids experience racism. Mark Nissen has taken 30 black kids camping for the first time. State Parks are not safe for them, they get to experience freedom at BF. LGBTQ groups who feel safe there. Using BF for Social Justice already. Husband is not here, Shawn's words: This has been an incredibly deliberate and thoughtful and we have been given the opportunity to listen and be listened to. We support this because it represents that process.

Motion to extend for 10 minutes approved at 1:54.

Comment: Jim Hershey - thank you to Barbara for leading process, thanks to discernment team and board to take the charge to push closer to the finish line. Speak for a number of us were not in agreement with the original proposal, but we can support the modified proposal, delivered economic, community and spiritual development. But as we look forward...what can it continue to do? Great potential. Sale of 70 acres will help make that possible. Increase finances so BF does not become a drain on the Chapel. I support motion.

Q: Beth Griffin - Part of question was answered. What happens if we vote the motion down? What are repercussions?

A: David Cox - Status Quo prevails and Strategic Plan would have something to say about this and we'd have to revisit this decision in the future.

Comment: Julie Triplet - Great supporter of Bergfried. Rise in support of this motion. Very much in favor, process has given us a wonderful solution.

Comment: William Lemon - Was on board when we decided to move this down to this board. I support the motion. Opportunity costs: how much can we not do given what we are doing the things we are doing.. Wakes everyone up to say we really need to look at these Opportunity Costs. Great way to keep a lot of BF there, but think through what needs to happen for future.

Comment: Tim Gardner - Chair of board 35 years ago. Eliot has continually tried to balance annual budget on back of BF. Need Supplemental Fundraising, we as a congregation do not contribute enough funds to support the Chapel. That's why we sometimes need to use BF funds to prop up the chapel to meet our operating needs. Not BF's fault, it's our fault for not raising enough funds. Disappointed to hear that if we vote this down, we have resolved nothing. If we vote this down, we are saying we don't want to take this action. Need to consider this going forward. Continue to deplete BF or step up to support our operations.

General Q: Jim Lyons - How many people have been to BF (many hands). How many have stepped foot beyond Cole's Creek Road (1 or 2 hands).

Comment: Mark Nissen - we don't use this, it's not accessible easily, not many people have been there. To sacrifice a piece to save the greater whole to make the rest financially stable, I support this motion.

Not enough voted to extend.

XVI. Vote on the Board's Recommendation for Sale of Property

Paper ballots filled out, collected and counted: 154 for, 6 against Motion Passed.

XVII. Comments/Questions from the Floor

Request: Rich Heuermann - Cannot assess financial stability by looking at Treasurer's Report. Incomplete information is provided. Merging together makes it difficult to assess. Request that the statement of assets and liabilities, itemized statements of other income, balance and activity of all funds be made available for this year be provided and included in future. Reported fund

by fund.

Barbara responded - \$50,000 other things we underestimated in income and overestimated in expenses and it balances.

Comment: Kate Magrath - bothers me that there is a lack of Absentee Voting. Privilege to vote on things that matter to the congregation. Would like to see absentee voting.

Response: Cindy, can't speak for David, would be a By-Laws change that the board will discuss.

Comment: Beth Griffin - I think it would do a great deal for my understanding of Eliot's financial position to see a statement of assets and liabilities. To see complete reporting. Normally non-profits have them and we would like to see them.

Comment: Gail Rock - love the process that has been going on it has been much more open having discussions. Was not always crazy about Policy Governance, was frustrated but over time, but over this process with BF, the input and I felt heard, I understand PG in a new way. Recommend to Board: Have a class in PG in relationship to Polity. Do not feel that it takes it away from us, it changes the dynamics.

Comment: Nancy Hutchins - I was here at Eliot M,T,W and looked up Financial Stewardship & Balance Statement. Other churches communicate budget information monthly, quarterly. In some ways the purchase of 222 has put us in financial peril and we need to be more transparent and we can build bridges. Trust Reverend Barbara and we can build bridges.

XVIII. Closing hymn

XIX. Closing Words—Rev. Barbara Gadon:

Take courage friends, the way is often hard and the path is never clear, the stakes are very high, take courage for deep down there is another truth, you are not alone.

XX. **Adjourned**