

Unity of Fairfax Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes February 25, 2020

<b>Board Members Present</b>	<b>Others Present</b>	<b>Board Members Absent</b>
Russell Heiland, Senior Minister	Steve Cerny	
John Kell, Chair	Mary Brown	
Anthony Flournoy, Second Chair		
Nancy Schneider, Secretary		
John Dickman, Treasurer		
Gail Hughes, Keeper of the Flame		
Mara Sandvik, Member at Large		

**Quorum present? Y**

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

**Sacred Intention:** In the stillness of this moment, I am peace; One with divine mind, I realize infinite potential.

**MOTION: Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** The minutes from the January 2020 Board Meeting were approved unanimously.

Executive Session: began at 7:15 p.m. and ended at 7:39 p.m.

**Minister's Report: Russell** Attached as Appendix 1.

Steve Cerny and Mary Brown presented the proposal from the Social Justice team to provide postcards that church members who live in Fairfax County and support increased affordable housing can sign. We would distribute them to Supervisors' offices. The post cards would thank the supervisors for the Affordable Housing Fund and ask for the increase to 2 cents. For more details, see the Minister's report in Appendix 1, Addendum 1.

**Motion:** Russell made a motion, and Gail seconded, that out of our undesignated tithes for February 2020 (to be paid in March), Unity of Fairfax make a \$100 tithe to the Unitarian-Universalist Association. Their website provides a vast amount of useful information that I use and which proved valuable to the Finance Team sub-committee as well. The motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:** Russell moved, and Nancy seconded, that Ron Karstetter and Jody Ruth be approved as voting delegates representing Unity of Fairfax at the 2020 Unity People's Convention. Both will be there, and all ordained ministers are automatically voting delegates. The motion passed unanimously.

**Reports:**

Gail provided a status report on Space/Design Retrofit and Rental and Revenue teams.

Comms team: John Kell met with the Comms team - the next Sacred Service council meeting will be important for making the connection between all ministries and the comms team to help all ministries be the ambassadors for increasing membership.

Board Ambassadors: During Russell's sabbatical, trustees will take turns being available to congregants during both services.

Minister Annual Review: Gail reviewed the Minister review process to be due at the beginning of June.

**Old Business:**

- Cash Management Policy - Tabled until the March BOT meeting

**Motion:** John K. moved that this topic be postponed until the next board meeting. Nancy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

**Motion:** John Kell moved, and Gail seconded, that the Board of Trustees elect Mara Sandvik as Secretary. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:**

There was not a January 2020 financial report available at this time, however John Dickman indicated there was an approximate \$20,000 loss in January.

Pinnacle is behind in their 2020 rent payments. Peter Lunt is facilitating conversations, and we have issued invoices with the late penalties.

**Writer of the next Governance page for bulletin Due Mar. 10:**

**Closing, Pray-Out and Adjournment:**

**Upcoming Dates:**

Next BOT meeting: Wed. March 25

## APPENDIX 1

Minister's Report \* February 25, 2020

### Strategic Initiatives Updates

1. Primary initiatives addressed in Executive Session

### Action Items

1. The Social Justice team requested via email on February 12 that Unity of Fairfax actively lobby the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to increase the amount designated from real estate taxes to affordable housing from ½ cent to 2 cents. See attached. Does the Board approve this action, have a different suggestion, or some other response?
2. I move that out of our undesignated tithes for February 2020 (to be paid in March), Unity of Fairfax make a \$100 tithe to the Unitarian-Universalist Association. Their website provides a vast amount of useful information that I use and which proved valuable to the Finance Team sub-committee as well.
3. I move that Ron Karstetter and Jody Ruth be approved as voting delegates representing Unity of Fairfax at the 2020 Unity People's Convention. Both will be there, and all ordained ministers are automatically voting delegates.

### Information Items

As a cost saving action, staff will be doing an experiment in the month of March with producing a weekly bulletin, rather than the monthly. Preliminary guess-ti-mates indicate a savings of \$2,200 per year if we choose to go this route.

I am planning to distribute to the congregation a card with the affirmative prayer for Unity of Fairfax that was shared on Sunday, February 16. Target date: March 1.

I am planning to launch a version of the "Surprise Abundance" program either in March or April. My planning has taken a back seat to other projects, but I wanted the Trustees to know this is in the works.

I will be away from Unity of Fairfax on Sunday, March 15 emceeding the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of my sponsoring minister in Wilmington, NC. Ron Karstetter will be giving the message that day.

I will be at Unity Village for progress interviews of ministerial candidates on Monday and Tuesday, March 23 and 24. I will be back for the Trustees' meeting on March 25. All expenses related to this trip are considered tithes to UWM as this is ministry team work supporting the development of credentialed Unity leaders. Ron Karstetter will be attending as part of his

ministerial training. His expenses are also tithes to UWM as his costs are paying for the education of a Unity minister who could serve in any capacity in the Unity movement.

I reached out to the Lilly Endowment with a request to receive an application for a clergy renewal (sabbatical) grant. I was turned down; however, Lilly referred me to Christian Theological Seminary, but in reviewing their materials, it seems unlikely they would fund a New Thought minister or congregation as their focus is very traditionally Christian.

#### ADDENDUM 1

February 12, 2020

Hi, Rev. Russ

The Social Justice team would like to run our plans for affordable housing outreach by you.

Currently, Fairfax County allocates the equivalent of half a cent from its real estate tax rate to the Affordable Housing Fund to provide for preserving and promoting the development of affordable housing.

As the Board of Supervisors prepare the FY 2021 budget, some supervisors have suggested increasing the fund to one and half cent. Others (including Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn) advocates an increase to 2 cents.

We would like to provide postcards that church members who live in Fairfax County and support increased affordable housing can sign. We would distribute them to Supervisors' offices.

The post cards would thank the supervisors for the Affordable Housing Fund and ask for the increase to 2 cents.

We'd like to know if (1) is it OK for us to do this and (2) might the Board of Trustees approve this position and allow us to put Unity of Fairfax on the cards, or should we leave them blank.

We plan to invite members to our March meeting to provide affordable housing information (examples below) and the post cards. We'd also be available stand in the Atrium to provide information on other Sundays before the budget hearings in mid-April.

Thank you,

Steve Cerny and Mary Brown

From The Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development and the Fairfax County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan:

In a county of approximately 1.2 million people, thousands and thousands of households are living paycheck-to-paycheck due in large part to severe lack of price-appropriate housing.

Wage growth is not keeping pace with the cost of and demand for housing and families, particularly those that would be considered low- or moderate-income, are falling further and further behind. . . . the lack of a range of price-appropriate housing in the county hinders the full implementation of the county's One Fairfax policy, which calls for equitable access to communities of high-opportunity.

National research bears out the correlations – having homes that are affordable correlates to better mental health, less stress for our children, more economic mobility; just to name a few examples. One connection that is particularly important in Fairfax County is the one between housing and the ability to ensure equitable access to communities of opportunity.

As a community, we can agree that where a person lives – and the associated opportunities and services present in that neighborhood – should not be a leading determinant in the health of their family. In fact, a person's ZIP code is a stronger predictor of his or her overall health than other factors, including race and genetics. And it's not just life expectancy – access to care, access to health information, and quality of life are all affected by where one lives. Fairfax County policymakers, as well as affordable housing developers, have an opportunity to create a comprehensive and thoughtful approach to the planning for new housing that can play a role in driving socioeconomic integration, reversing racial disparity trends, eliminating institutional or structural racism, and ensuring that outcomes and opportunities for all people in our community are no longer predicted by where a person lives.

In addition to those households that are experiencing homelessness, more than 70,000 Fairfax County residents have a disability. Data shows that individuals with disabilities are much more likely to have extremely low-incomes and often face a compounded problem - finding housing that is price-appropriate AND has the accessibility features they need to live comfortably in their homes. Similarly, our elderly neighbors, many of whom have worked in Fairfax County throughout their careers and have contributed to their communities and the local economy, are having difficulty affording their homes on fixed incomes.

What happens when working families earning low wages cannot find housing they can afford? In many cases, they live in overcrowded housing or commute to Fairfax County from other jurisdictions. Overcrowded housing continues to be a critical challenge in Fairfax County. The majority of overcrowded households include at least one child and have incomes below 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).

Many workers, including Millennials and young families, find they are not able to afford to buy a home in our community. The ability of young households to purchase a home in Fairfax County has dropped precipitously over a ten-year period.

Our community already faces a deficit of more than 31,000 rental homes affordable to low-income individuals and families. Over time, the gap between the need and the supply will grow considerably without new approaches for expanded housing availability and affordability

The private market meets the demand for housing for higher-income households; however, housing for low-income households is difficult and expensive to provide. In order to develop new housing—or often to preserve existing housing—at rents or prices that are affordable to our community’s low- and moderate-income residents and workers, it is necessary for there to be some type of subsidy, either a financial subsidy provided in the form of a low-interest loan, grant or tax credit, a subsidy in the form of reduced land costs, an incentive in the form of an increase in the allowable density, a reduction in development approval requirements—or all of the above.