

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN NEWTON
JOINT OPERATIONS COUNCIL-COMMITTEE CHAIRS MEETING
Children's Chapel
Saturday, November 19, 2016

Present: Susan Bartlett, Karen Bottar, Judy Curby, Karen Edwards, Laurel Farnsworth, Josie Green, Lynn Holbein, Meg Holland, Andrea Kelley, Chris Krebs, Saul Lookner, Kate Mason, Ellen Metzger, Eric Olson, Pat Rohan, Gayle Smalley, Leslie Sneddon, Gordon Moriarty, Kim Shanks.

Attendees went around the circle and introduced themselves by name and role.

Susan distributed two helpful evaluation tools, used at the Evaluating Our Being and Our Doing workshop, to help FUSN consider its work. One sheet showed a way to determine how a project relates to FUSN's core issues (valuable but needs work; valuable, but not every year; valuable but needs new partners; no longer serves). Another document is a tool for deciding how to choose from among competing ideas: Is it within FUSN's mission? FUSN's capacity? The capacity of the individual doers? Will it have impact? Is there a will to accomplish it (motivation/desire)?

Kim Shanks shared an example: a RE long-term activity had been the Healthy Baby-Healthy Child holiday gift giving project. The RE Council determined that the project needed new partners, was less central to the mission, and there was a reduced will to work on it. In 2015, Susan Bartlett and Wendy Atamian took it on, providing new partners. Another example was the Halloween Party, which Perry Montrose spearheaded under RE but now is under Membership.

Developing Leadership Team:

Kate Mason presented a large poster (+/- 3' x 4'), "FUSN, The Big Picture," which could be displayed at various places and times, including coffee hour. This is an initiative of last year's Developing Leadership Team, including Karen Edwards, Kate Mason and Josie Greene who are following through to address some issues raised last year. Karen spoke about the rationale behind the large interactive board: To provide a graphic that improves visibility about what FUSN is, what we do and how we find out about any aspect of FUSN. The goal is to be transparent and to encourage opportunities to connect. The poster is organized by Ops Council categories: Education; Worship/Music; Social Action; Outreach; Communications (which has no current chair); Fellowship; Stewardship; Learning; Fundamentals; and Administration. It also lists which Operations Council member is the liaison to each category. This project is a "work in progress" and Kate requested that after the meeting and going forward, the committee chairs review the details on the board and add or correct information as needed. She pointed out that it

is a living representation and should reflect changes as they occur. She also proposed that down the road we add photos of people named on the board.

Saul said the poster was fantastic and also suggested it be digitized. Kate pointed out that not everyone digs deep on the website to find information, and this is a good visual overview “on paper”. It was also pointed out that younger folks spend more time on the Internet.

More information about the content: Some committees are elected, some are appointed, and some consist of volunteers. For example, Lay Ministers are appointed.

A suggestion was to identify where slots are open or opportunities exist, either in a separate section or by, for example, putting stars on committees that need help. Color coding could provide even more information, like indicating a leadership role in red; participation in blue. Karen said she will ask the beadle to bring it into the Parish Hall and put it by the piano after services.

The group applauded for both the idea and the presentation.

Buildings & Grounds - Laurel

Ramp construction is going slowly. She hopes it will be done by the Holiday Fair. The handrail on the steps will still need to be added, as well as landscaping.

Laurel also reported on **Holiday Fair** planning, splitting it into 2 days. Toys and treasures liked having more space, but we need to do more publicity about the new structure to increase attendance. The split relieves volunteers from doing too much on one day and will make the December Fair easier. We won't have to bring down tables from upstairs and won't use the upstairs space. After the 11/27 service, people can begin to bring in items for the fair and put them in the area behind the stage.

The committee still needs volunteers for set up on Friday, Dec. 2 and clean-up on Dec. 3. Laurel said she put a link on the website. It can be printed and posted, as well as shared on social media. She will also send the link out to the FUSN business list and an invite to contribute items.

FUSN and Second Church both will have their holiday fairs on December 3. Both are also part of the Newton Cultural Alliance, partnering with Newton merchants on Dec. 3. to promote local shopping. “The Stroll,” as the project is called, will include carollers. It will be publicized in a big banner ad in the TAB. This kind of publicity can be afforded through such collaboration.

Preservation Committee: Gayle

This committee is mainly responsible for the FUSN archive. One project includes trying to finish up books of information about the stained glass windows.

Finance: Judy, treasurer

Judy said FUSN is solvent, and there is nothing out of ordinary business to report. She mentioned she had written a column about the treasurer role and finance in the FUSN newsletter.

Budget/finance: Karen Bottar

In her role, Karen keeps track of expenditures relative to the budget. She affirmed that FUSN is solvent. The committee of seven people is interested in adding new members.

Member Services: Pat

The Halloween party was a big success, with about 70 people participating. The committee has proposed a New Year's Eve party and is waiting for feedback from the congregation. Last year's was a lot of work, with limited attendance at the adult party. The committee recently had a newcomer potluck at Rachel Viscomi's house. Two people came who saw it listed on the website, although they had never been to FUSN.

At the December 11 service, new members will be officially welcomed. There are around 7 new members to date.

Search committee for new Member Services Coordinator: Pat

A serious candidate has been identified. Compensation issues are currently being discussed. The Board of Trustees will address the issues at its next meeting.

Services Auction: Pat

It will be Saturday night, January 28. They plan to pitch it as a fun FUSN event, rather than as a fundraiser.

Nominating Committee: Josie Greene

Dwight Golann has begun to identify members of this year's nominating committee. He, (FUSN's Moderator) has to date, identified 3-5 members. This year, the process will include, keeping track of and contacting everyone who either self-nominates or is nominated by another person, job descriptions of elected leadership positions, and an organizational chart to help those nominated for positions (and the rest of us) understand better what the responsibilities are of our elected leaders and their role in the governance of FUSN.

Green Sanctuary: Eric

Carrie Van der Laan is leading the group. FUSN won UUA recognition/certification as a Green Sanctuary, however, FUSN needs to continue its work to continue to be certified. Recently the committee has offered walks, films, talks, etc. He has been asked to be "Adventurer in Residence" for the third grade RE class. He's also taken FUSN people to a small town in Nicaragua, where he volunteers, working on conservation and sustainability. The committee will also think about environmental justice locally and internationally. He recently went on a "toxic tour" in the City of Boston, which calls attention to the issues.

Religious Education: Kim

RE at FUSN is diverse and has multiple facets. Kim said that a great deal of energy has been spent getting young families involved. She also reported that the RE Council needs younger members. Recruiting teachers continues to be a big focus. She pointed out how challenging it is to teach: in some classes, kids have a lot of energy, some have individual special needs. Lynn said the schedule involves teaching every other week for the full year, which she enjoys more than every week for a semester.

Coming Of Age: Kim

She said it is running well. They continue making tweaks, to be less demanding on the students' and volunteers' time.

Youth Ministry: Kim

Dani is taking a broader perspective, looking at all the youth programming at FUSN, rather than just the youth group -- such as youth teachers, the coffeehouse, babysitters. She has been trying to get the youth advisors to play a stronger role in running the youth group. Kim pointed out that the Youth Coordinator is usually only at FUSN for a year or two, making continuity difficult. Gayle asked if youth activities could be more involved with music at FUSN. Ann Watson Born has been doing this on her own.

Adult RE: Kim

Jacqui James is overseeing the schedule.

The Developing Faith task force is looking at the big picture and hopes to have a plan by March. Kim also pointed out that Rowan is stretched, because of the lack of a member coordinator.

Multi Cultural Ministry: Meg, co chair along with Jacqui James

Meg reported that there has been good participation in Waking Up White and other groups. Overall, 122 people have participated in 1 or more events in recent years. She attended Navigating Whiteness, UUA regional program. One question put forth to the group asked how to address racism among people who are not actively racist. She said they will also initiate a group aimed particularly at men.

Leadership Development Team: Karen

She says there will be an opening next year for other people who are interested in developing leadership.

ByLaws: Gordon

Gordon said he is ready to assist the Board in interpreting and/or amending the ByLaws. In addition to information concerning the ByLaws, he also wants to share more about FUSN's policies. He finds the text dense. Pat said that they're too complicated and that we don't follow the policies strictly. Some policies are being followed, such as fundraising activities, but the governance section is rather dense.

Andrea suggested that if we had more people and time, we could have a committee to evaluate and revise the policies. Gordon said they should be simplified. Judy said they aren't written to be exciting reading, but that they include institutional knowledge and are comprehensive. Josie suggested also updating job descriptions.

Welcoming Congregation: Chris

Chris reported that Eric Haas recently wrote an article for the FUSN newsletter, reporting on the committee's activities and responsibilities. Being a Welcoming Congregation, like Green Sanctuary, is a UUA designation that must be maintained.

Annual Budget Drive: Ellen and Saul (provided by email)

The ABD is gearing up for the season. They need a few people to help with the ABD effort, as this year they have Tom Bean only in a limited advisory role -- most of the work will have to be done by Ellen, Saul, and one or two as yet unidentified people. They will be needing people also to give testimonials, host parties, and help steward. They ask that, as leaders of the congregation, the Joint Ops Council-Committee Chairs, along with the board, pledge early. They will know after meeting with the board what the monetary goal is. The kick off for the drive will be Erin's sermon on March 5. Pledge parties will happen between March 4 and April 9. (Several meeting participants volunteered to host parties this year.)

Social Action: Lynn (provided by email)

Immigration: There is a lot of post-election anxiety among immigrant communities. The Safety Pin Project -- people wear a safety pin to show they are an ally if someone experiences discrimination; safety pins will be available at the Social Action table. Dick Bail is leading a project to reach out to our Muslim neighbors in hope of creating a project in which we could work together. Does anyone know of immigration lawyers whose contact info. we could have in case it's needed?

Task Forces are each chairing one of the Social Action monthly lunch meetings, with a guest speaker. Economic and Racial Justice last week hosted Rev. Mary Margaret Earle of the UU Urban Ministry, and 35 people attended. Our task forces are theme based and contain about 30 projects. The task forces are: Hunger & Homelessness, Criminal Justice, Advocacy, Economic and Racial Justice, and International.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Schwartz
Assistant Clerk