

Minutes for the Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday 8th December 2009
7:30 pm in the Morning Room (Hollin Hall)

“Pending Approval at the next Board of Trustees Meeting.”

Members Present: Reid Adler (Chair), Joan Darrah (Vice Chair), Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Ian Anderson (Youth Representative), Tamara de la Camp (Program Council Convener), Birgit Robbert, Kate Walker (Minister and Ex officio Board Member)

Members Absent: Dan Cohen (Secretary), Jamie Barnett, Lisa Gillispie and Mike Walker

Others Present: Branka Bijelovich (Administrator), Al Erickson (Treasurer), Karen Tyson (Chair, Mission/Vision Task Force), Members of the Worship Committee (i.e., Peg Bartel, Alan Bunner, Jim Wamsley, Betsy Yarrison), Vince Patton (Program Coordinator for Worship) and Keith Krogh.

Reid Adler convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m., and noted the presence of a quorum.

Rev. Kate Walker made opening remarks.

Karen Tyson gave an update on Mission/Visioning sessions in January (weekend of January 29/30 plus some other dates). Karen is the point of contact if anyone is interested in helping out. See attachment (Theme: Envisioning our Hill of Dreams). This is a major event and all MVUC leadership is encouraged to participate. The goal is a new mission statement and vision (or ends) goals to be approved by the congregation at either a special or annual meeting. Karen requests \$1,000 to proceed with the contemplated events, including a dinner on Friday night January 29. Motion was approved unanimously.

Karen asked for BOT volunteers to help her and Joan Darrah with Friday night dinner. Tamara de la Camp, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson and Reid volunteered. Ian Anderson was asked to rally the youth to get them involved.

The BOT had invited Worship Committee members for a joint meeting with the BOT to discuss our mutual activities and support for the BOT goal of improving the worship experience. Peg Bartel, Jim Wamsley, Betsy Yarrison and Alan Bunner graciously attended as well as Vince Patton.

Peg commented on feedback heard by the Committee that summer services were not always up to par. She mentioned that MVUC has traditionally been a 9-month church versus 12-month church from the perspective of minister led services. And that she has taken to heart Larry Wheeler's comments at the September 26 workshop at MVUC

about the capital campaign process. He had observed that summer is a major church "shopping time" for potential new members.

Peg also noted that it is important to continue to support our music program throughout the year, paying particular attention to the summer months." She has met with Rev. Kate and Mark Zimmerman (as well as Vince and Alan) to discuss options. Mark believes having a summer piano accompanist would help. Also, the Worship Committee is committed to planning summer services earlier in the year and including better music planning in the process. On that note, Mark put together a proposed budget of \$2,500 to cover pianist accompaniment during the summer. Bill A-J asked about success rate for 12-month minister-led program versus 9-month churches, but there was not a clear answer. Shifting to a 12-month minister-led church year could raise challenges for the Program Council and its committees and councils because other areas might be affected by a 12-month schedule, in particular RE and childcare. However, even with year-round minister-led services, RE would not necessarily need to provide 12 months of classes. Betsy Yarrison expressed mixed feelings about a 12-month schedule because some of us enjoy the down time and lay-led services. Peg pointed out that not everyone would be happy with every service regardless. Everyone agreed, however, that diversity in our Sunday services is good.

There was also a discussion of potential advantages of consolidating worship, music, and coffee hour planning to present a more cohesive worship experience.

After a break, the Board turned to Old Business. Keith Krogh joined the meeting at this point.

Reid thanked Joan for her diligent and gracious leadership of the Cell Phone Task Force, and for organizing the informational meeting for the congregation on October 18 and the special congregational meeting on December 6. Reid observed that the cell tower has been a sensitive and controversial topic spanning several areas of concern: health, spirituality, revenue, community, aesthetics, relationship with our neighbors, and more. He noted that the BOT had been duly authorized to start negotiations with AT&T, and suggested that the Board discuss the process leading up to the December 6 meeting as well as the substance of the meeting itself to consider whether there were any reasons for the BOT to defer those negotiations. For example, some people felt that there was not adequate notice before the meeting and that the decision had been rushed, some felt that the church should have considered in more depth the spiritual aspect and propriety of this kind of relationship with a corporate entity (*i.e.*, AT&T), and others were concerned about permitting voting before the meeting started. And a 75% majority means that 25% of our church family is opposed.

Discussion ensued about the process used to solicit a congregational vote and next steps in the cell tower process. Joan explained that AT&T would come out (visit scheduled for 12/9) to survey the grounds and talk about these details. We won't sign a contract until all issues of concern to MVUC have been satisfactorily defined and resolved.

Keith Krogh expressed his concern about lack of ability to make a motion to table the vote and felt that someone should have informed him if it were possible. Reid and Birgit stated that they had both conducted a count at that time and that a quorum was no longer present in the meeting hall although a quorum had been present in the chapel at the start of the meeting and for most of the discussion. Reid explained that he consulted with the parliamentarian and decided that accepting a motion at that point would have been improper. Keith also stated that consequences for community were his biggest concern. The Board discussed some ways that the process could have been different, for example, by scheduling an additional information meeting, sending additional mailings to the congregation, or not permitting voting until after the meeting.

Rev. Kate mentioned that there were five significant areas of questioning that have arisen: health, aesthetics, spiritual/religious, community/neighborhood relations, and legal/financial. She thinks we should address each of these in a web posting that she will spearhead. Reid asked whether or not we need to do something specific about our community in terms of our Congregants and how do we handle this kind of divisive issue with our neighbors. Joan and Tamara pointed out that some of these issues we'll never get to resolution on: it is unlikely neighbors will embrace the idea of tower no matter how long we discuss it. However, Joan intends to keep our neighbors informed about the process. It was also suggested that we consider asking the neighbors for suggestions for the contract. Keith offered to be involved in contract review and negotiations, and suggested putting up a model or stakes in the meadow so that people can see exactly what the size and shape of structure will be.

Reid asked the Board to vote on whether they agreed that the Board should proceed with contract negotiations as approved by the Congregation. The six members present voted in favor of moving forward, two had voted yes by email, one member voted no by email and one member had not voted.

The BOT thanked Keith for his interest and his thoughtful comments and invited him to be a part of any future discussions, particularly concerning the AT&T contract, as that is his professional area of expertise.

Other topics discussed:

- November Board minutes were approved unanimously.
- Charter for the Governance Enhancement Project Task Force was approved unanimously.
- Appointment for Lauck Walton to serve on the Endowment Committee as a replacement for Steve Murphy was approved unanimously. Lauck's initial term would be from now through April 2011.
- A motion to approve a consulting contract with Larry Wheeler for up to 3 days @\$1,300/day as requested by the Finance Committee was approved unanimously.
- Safety concerns. One of the arguments in favor of a cell tower is better safety through improved communications on the hill. Since even if a tower is built we won't

see results for several years, there was unanimous consent to set up a task force to look at near term improvement for safety.

Ian Anderson presented an update on our youth group and youth programs. A lock in to plan an upcoming youth service will take place, and the youth service will coming up soon.

Rev. Kate explained that MVUC received a stipend grant for an intern minister in the amount of \$6,500. The Church would be responsible for additional funds of approximately \$7,600 and that the Board previously approved this for inclusion in next year's budget. Kate has identified a ministerial intern: Kären Rasmussen will start end of August. Three things need to happen: the Newsletter will be used to remind the congregation that we're a teaching congregation (Kate); we need to establish an Intern Committee (Kate will consider the charter); and we need to draw up a letter of agreement for Karen (Kate and Branka).

Reid offered brief closing words. He noted that the Congregation's decision to move forward with the cell tower is a very significant event in the life of our Church. He was also very thankful for the many voices within MVUC that spoke out to be heard either in favor of or opposed to the tower. While this is a controversial issue, as stewards of MVUC, he feels that the Board is following the right course of action.

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