



## SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING WITH COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hosted by the Operations Council  
First Unitarian Society in Newton

Date: November 12, 2011

### IN ATTENDANCE:

**Board Members:** Susan Bartlett (Ch), Bruce Henderson, Gordon Moriarty and Ann Woodbury

**Operations Council Members:** Pat Rohan (Ch), Laurel Farnsworth, Jeannie Chaisson, Anne Hess-Mahan, and Kim Shanks. *(Also: Bonnie McDonald, Assistant Clerk to the Ops Council.)*

**Staff/Minister:** Rev. Erin Splaine

**Committee Chairs and Members:** Karen Bottar, Jenny Duvall, Peter Farago, Barney Freiberg-Dale, Brian Gill, Brian Hicks, Jacqui James, Jud Leonard, Eric Olsen, Aurelie Goodwin, Nancy DuVergne Smith

Pat Rohan opened the first Committee Chairs meeting of the year, which is a forum for updating each other on recent and/or important initiatives.

### 1. SAFE CONGREGATION POLICY— UPDATE BY REV. ERIN SPLAINE

As is commonly done in other faith communities, a *Safe Congregation Policy* will be implemented at FUSN. In addition to taking steps to ensure FUSN is a safe place and prepared for emergencies, we will also discuss issues such as *who is responsible for the children in our playground area after services*, etc.

Erin mentioned that she expected the Safe Congregation Policy initiative to be a one to one-and-a-half year, wide-ranging conversation with the congregation. She currently has “*one and three-quarters*” people to lead it.

### 2. ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE— UPDATE BY BRUCE HENDERSON, CO-CHAIR OF ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE

Bruce Henderson and Josie Greene will be co-chairing this year’s Annual Budget Drive. The focus will be on community and building connections – by increasing opportunities for people to get together. We also want to make the donation commitment ‘ask’ easier/less painful. We will hopefully find out what members of the community value about FUSN, in addition to educating them about what FUSN needs to stay afloat and successful. New ideas and activities may include parties, and assigning Captains to people with whom they may already have some relationship or affiliation.

### 3. GOVERNANCE – UPDATE BY PAT ROHAN, CHAIR OF OPS COUNCIL

Pat mentioned this was the third year that the Operations (“Ops”) Council has been in place; and that they were hoping to change some bylaws to have it be a permanent fixture this year. However, due to the need to clarify some issues, they are not ready to go to the congregation yet. Pat figures we’re about a year behind making this change, but mentioned that things are going fairly well.

Susan Bartlett noted that there was agreement between the Board and Operations Council at the recent joint retreat that another year was needed.

There was a reminder that there will be a Finance Tutorial held for Board Members and Committee Chairs (and a few others) on November 20<sup>th</sup> in the Children’s Chapel.

Pat announced that the Services Auction committee has done some initial planning for the Services Auction, which will be held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The theme for this event will be “Pirates.” (Several people offered their best “*Aaargh*” impressions.)



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### 4. COMMUNICATIONS – *UPDATE BY NANCY DUVERGNE SMITH, CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE*

Nancy mentioned there would be a set of directions passed out at Coffee Hour following this Sunday's services, to let people know how to upload their photos to the Online Directory and edit their profiles. There will be a "Circle of Laptops" table in the Parish Hall at Coffee Hour.

Kevin Osborne has taken 108 portraits of people in the FUSN community. (Appreciation was expressed for all of Kevin's efforts in this project.) There were also photos taken at Ferry Beach.

### 5. DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS – *UPDATE BY ANNE HESS-MAHAN*

Anne mentioned that this committee needs a Chairperson.

### 6. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – *UPDATE BY REV. ERIN SPLAINE*

Erin mentioned that a couple of applications have come in for the Director of Lifetime Religious Education position. She noted she had several good conversations at the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Fall Conference in Portland, Oregon in October. Erin also hailed the slick postcard she and Barb Greve passed out at the event, saying it was the nicest looking one – and effective.

### 7. BUILDING AND GROUNDS – *UPDATE BY CHAIR LAUREL FARNSWORTH*

Laurel reported that we have had a rough year regarding the Building and Grounds budget. There were major, unexpected costs associated with air compressors, the chimes, emergency lights and wall leaks.

### 8. CHANCEL – *UPDATE BY AURELIE GOODWIN, CHAIR OF CHANCEL COMMITTEE*

Aurelie announced she is retiring from the Chancel Committee, but that Caroline Shoemaker and Betsy Leavitt were continuing on to keep the chancel decorated.

### 9. MUSIC – *UPDATE BY JENNY DUVALL, CHAIR OF MUSIC COMMITTEE*

The Music Committee has had a hard time meeting. They are still trying to formulate their roles, and support Anne Watson-Born. They're looking for non-committee members to help out in various ways, including getting some publicity for FUSN concerts. Jenny mentioned that there was desire to incorporate music into Family Fun Night and other events.

### 10. FINANCE – *UPDATE BY KAREN BOTTAR, CO-CHAIR OF FINANCE COMMITTEE*

The Finance Committee is now working on the five-year, long-range projections on FUSN's finances. They will also be asking Committees for their annual budget requests in February, 2012.

### 11. MEMBERSHIP – *UPDATE BY JACQUI JAMES, CO-CHAIR OF MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE AND CO-CHAIR OF ADULT RE*

There is now a message on the 'Intent to Join' card saying there is some expectation of financial support. Jacqui believes the 'New UU' courses now incorporate that message, as well.

Jacqui wanted to let people know about some of the recent good works with Kristin Cleveland's collaborative efforts, including the recent Halloween party and New Member potluck. Jacqui also reminded us that we will be welcoming six new members on Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be a New Member breakfast, along with a brief ceremony at the worship service. There was also some discussion about bringing back Dinners for Seven.



Date: November 12, 2011

Jacqui also mentioned that the Adult RE Catalog was out with a solid round of offerings, including some new ones. However, they had to cancel some events due to low registration. There may be a plan underway to survey the congregation about people's interests relating to Adult Religious Education.

Barney mentioned he felt that everyone should take it upon themselves to orient and greet newcomers. Laurel asked about the idea of signing up official greeters each week.

**12. BOARD OF INVESTMENTS – UPDATE BY BRIAN HICKS AND PETER FARAGO**

The past ten years has been a challenging environment for investments; no growth. The two areas the committee has been discussing are (1) Asset Allocation and (2) How much we should be taking annually from the Endowment Fund to supplement the Operating Budget.

It was asked what the Endowment fund should really be for, and if it should be invested more aggressively. This topic needs further discussion.

Peter Farago mentioned we have been effective with our current mix of allocations, which has kept our investments smooth. He also recommended that we make a cut to the 5% (taken from the Endowment Fund) that is allocated to the Operating Budget soon.

**13. LAY MINISTERS – UPDATE BY JUD LEONARD, FUSN LAY MINISTER**

Jud mentioned that the Lay Ministers have been discussing term limits. This topic brought up a number of questions, including the topic of who the right people are and what the right qualifications are for these important positions.

**14. MINISTRY – UPDATE BY BILL HORNE, MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Bill mentioned that the committee is coming along, and that they have met with Erin recently to discuss issues about the ministry. Although this committee does not evaluate the minister, per se, they do focus on her role and offer feedback.

**15. COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL ACTION – UPDATE BY BARNEY FREIBERG-DALE, CO-CHAIR OF CSA**

Barney reminded us that the Social Action Committee has been replaced by the Council for Social Action (CSA). Although this has been a transitional year, the CSA meetings have been widely attended. They are hoping to implement tools and processes to get the CSA organized—so they can encourage broader participation by the congregation and/or raise people's levels of involvement. We currently have between 20 and 30 programs which will be consolidated into five Task Forces including:

- International
- Hunger and Homelessness
- Urban/Suburban Issues
- Criminal Justice
- Advocacy

The CSA would like to improve the intergenerational component of its initiatives, so it can involve all ages.

**16. PLANNED GIVING – UPDATE BY PETER FARAGO, MEMBER OF PLANNED GIVING COMMITTEE**

This committee was established to promote people's willingness to include FUSN in their estate planning. Recent results uncovered 6-8 households that are planning to include FUSN in their estate



Date: November 12, 2011

plans. The next informational meeting to invite households to listen to the possibilities relating to FUSN and estate planning will be next Wednesday.

**17. BOARD OF TRUSTEES/OPS COUNCIL RETREAT – UPDATE BY GORDON MORIARTY, BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER**

Gordon mentioned a few topics from the recent Board/Ops Council retreat moderated by Doug Zelinski, including the discussion of how the Ops Council was to deal with the day-to-day issues, and the Board was to be like a ‘visioning Board.’ Two important questions mentioned at the retreat included:

- What is our brand?
- How do we ensure financial sustainability?

**18. SUPPLEMENTAL MARKETING SKILLS – OFFERED BY BONNIE McDONALD**

Bonnie mentioned she may be providing some marketing support to the Annual Budget Drive (if needed by the Co-Chairs), and that she was willing to provide occasional support for marketing related projects, including designing collateral, writing/editing, PR, etc.

**19. GREEN SANCTUARY – UPDATE BY ERIC OLSEN, MEMBER OF GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE**

Eric mentioned that a Green Sanctuary is a congregation recognized by the UUA, and that the program is modeled after the Welcoming Congregation Program—and that there is a roadmap to follow. Eric told of an organization out of Connecticut called “This Old House of Worship” that had an energy expert meet with local churches in the area, and said we were the front-runner in the area in terms of what we’ve already done. We already have opportunities for people to save money and energy; and Eric mentioned that we have new “Eco Teams” at FUSN, a subset of people who are giving other energy saving tips, and local walks that focus on appreciation for our conservation areas.

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**CONCLUSION:**

The subject of inviting the congregation to attend these semi-annual committee chair meetings came up. The idea was discussed, and may be considered for the next meeting.

Pat wrapped up the meeting saying he felt the meeting was very helpful and informative, and that we will look do have another one in February of 2012. He thanked everyone for being dedicated volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bonnie McDonald*  
*Assistant Clerk to the Ops Council*  
*December 11, 2011*