

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Bill Brown, Kay Fairwell, Randall Hudson, Beth Pollard, Cordell Sloan, Helen Tinsley-Jones

Absent: Pier Ho, David Rosales

Ex officio members: Rev. Marcus Liefert, Tess O’Riva (Executive Director), Selene Fabiano (Secretary), Carolyn James (Treasurer)

Visitors: Jean Gleason, Anne Greenwood, Lynn Hammond, Albert Kueffner, Anita Mermel, Bob Moore, Larry Nagel, Marta Tobey, Tom Tripp, Dave Wemmer

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Helen Tinsley-Jones, co-president, at 7:10_p.m. Carolyn did the chalice lighting and reading, Selene read the Board covenant, Kay read the land acknowledgement, and Beth read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M _Michael _/S__Kay) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve December 2023 Board Meeting minutes
- Approve February Congregational Meeting agenda
- Accept monthly Treasurer’s report
- Accept Executive Director’s report

MINISTER’S REPORT

The installation for Rev. Marcus will be on the afternoon of Sunday April 21st. Rev. Marcus described the installation as being “like a wedding” in that it’s a celebration of the union of minister and congregation, as well as an art installation to share and make visible our dreams and hopes for the future. He invited us to share our ideas on how the congregation can be included in the service.

Rev. Marcus reported that the 5PM Xmas service was extraordinarily well-attended and that he received feedback that it needs to be shorter. Staff performance evaluations are being done this month. Tess is working on the budgeting process and has begun sending out budget requests. Due to medical issues in her family, Tess will likely need to take some significant leave in the coming weeks or months, so there is a focus on how she can hand responsibilities off to other staff. Charis will share a new brochure for visitors that shows UUCB's offerings. Charis has flagged the need for consistent branding among church communications/brochures. Rebranding efforts will be considered in budgeting for FY24-25. Rev. Marcus hopes that that Ground and Horizon conversations on mission and vision will inform decisions about branding. He has asked the people who have raised the issue of changing the name of our congregation to include that idea in the larger conversation regarding UUCB's mission and vision.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

Board or Staff Announcements:

- Election process and timeline. Michael Armstrong reported that Candidates' Forum will take place on 1/28/24. The candidates have been given the four questions in advance. Candidate statements will be sent out shortly.
- Program Council leadership change. Jean Gleason will be stepping down as Chair of the Program Council and Marta Tobey will take on this role. Jean expressed her appreciation for being able to work with all of the program representatives. The purpose of the program council is to increase communication, coordinate, and provide cross-fertilization among the different church groups and programs. Big thanks to Jean for all her work.
- Worship Associates leadership change. Karen Elliott is stepping down as Lead WA and Don Klose is stepping into that role. Many thanks to both of them.
- MLK Jr. Parade and Rally, Jan 15, 2024 in El Cerrito. UUCB participants will join the parade from City Hall to EC High School
- Rev. Marcus' Service of Installation is scheduled for April 21, 2024 PM.

Report from Board listening presence:

Michael will take on the full role of online and in-person listening when Randall goes off the board.

Randall reported the following feedback:

One person felt the land acknowledgement statement seems performative and should be read occasionally rather than at every service. Randall informed this individual that UUCB gives money to the Shuumi land tax. Helen added: UUCB has an Honoring Indigenous People group (HIP) which has been partnering with some indigenous groups. All of HIP's many activities are included in the annual report.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:

Anne Greenwood: Reminded the board that the Zoom meeting between some UUCB BOT members and the board council of our partner church is scheduled for 1/20 at 10AM. Helen, Pier, Marcus will be participating and other board members are invited to join. Anne will send out an agenda. Selene will create the Zoom link and send it to Anne and the participating UUCB members. Anne will share the Zoom link with our partner church.

Al Kueffner: Al spoke about the indigenous tradition of meeting around a campfire and encouraged us to think about how UUCB might find ways to follow this tradition. Al also suggested that UUCB offer the Freestone land to indigenous people, perhaps for their youth vision quests. Helen suggested that these items be put on the agenda for the next HIP meeting.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC): Recommendation to list Lots 1 and 2 for sale

Larry Nagel shared that the Freestone Committee (FC) has requested to list Parcels 1 and 2 of the Freestone property with a Coldwell Banker in Sebastopol as part of their fundraising strategies. The FOC reviewed this request and is recommending that the Board approve a motion to list Parcels 1 and 2. If approved, the properties would appear on MLS in late January or early February 2024. Larry emphasized that the request is for listing not selling, and that the current intention is to see if sale of the lots could raise enough money to meet the 12/1/24 deadline of raising \$250,000 as laid out in the Freestone Resolution passed at the March 2023 Congregational Meeting.

Questions & Discussion

There was a question and concern about how to determine if the price offered for Lots 1 and 2 was reasonable, and if selling lots 1 and 2 was “ a favorable option for raising funds” per the March 2023 Resolution. A suggestion was made that it would be good to list both parcels 1 and 2, as well as listing all 3 parcels to better gauge the value of selling lots 1 and 2, separate from lot 4.

Responses to the above suggestion included: 1) The Freestone Committee is not considering selling lot 4 right now and the intention of the March 2023 Resolution was to try to maintain the Freestone dome for UUCB, if possible. 2) If the FC asked a realtor to list Lot 4 when there was no intention of selling it, we would be misleading the realtor and not acting in good faith. 3) The realtor with whom Dave Wemmer has been working is knowledgeable about properties in Sonoma County and has suggested that Parcels 1 and 2 be listed for \$300,000. This realtor also described the area where the Freestone lots are located as a “desirable destination market.” 4) The FC would be disinclined to recommend selling Parcels 1 and 2 if their sale won’t raise enough money to rehab Parcel 4 (lot on which the dome is located). 5) Another possible advantage of selling Parcels 1 and 2 is there would then be another owner to help with the work and expense of maintaining the road.

Some board members felt it was important to get the properties listed quickly since rural properties can sit on the market for a longtime, especially with the current high interest rates.

Some skepticism was expressed about the likelihood of a conservation easement being granted for the Freestone property.

Q: What are the fees for listing?

A: There is no fee for listing but we will be disclosing to the broker that we are also pursuing a conservation easement at the same time that we are listing the property. Because there are significant expenses for the realtor to list and show the property (estimate of \$3000-\$5000 in realtor costs for a 3 month listing) the realtor may not want to enter into an agreement with us unless we agree to reimburse them for expenses if we opt for a conservation easement instead of selling the lots. If Coldwell Banker decides not to work with us, the FC can contact Compass Realty in Sebastopol.

Motion. Bill made a motion to authorize the listing of Freestone Parcels 1 and 2 for sale, with any approval of a sale transaction to be made at a later date. Cordell seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.**

b. Building and Grounds – Tom Tripp

Brief report on the private sewer lateral project. Pressure test is required by EBMUD and must be completed by 2025. Because UUCB's sewers are all clay tile, they wouldn't pass a pressure test, so they need to be replaced.

Contractor was able to start work while the pre-school was on vacation and has worked quickly and intensively. The project required digging a pit at each of the 12 laterals and the 15 clean-outs. The excavation was more complex than the contractor expected due to other existing pipelines. The contractor has fenced and covered the pits so the school was able to open after its vacation and function normally. Communication between the contractor, UUCB, and the preschool has been ongoing. As of today (January 10th) all the sewers are done. Some holes have to be backfilled and a few sections need to be tested by EBMUD. It is expected that by January 12th, the contractor will backfill all pits. There was one change order request which the Buildings and Grounds Committee will probably approve.

c. Governance Manual Task Force updates – Kay Fairwell and Beth Pollard

Kay indicated that this agenda item was being brought forward tonight for initial discussion only, and that no action was required. At the February board meeting, she and Beth would like additional discussion of and possible adoption of the proposed changes. The Board Packet included a draft of the proposed revisions. Some of the main changes include a clarification of the purpose of Board executive sessions, expectations related to co-officers, clarification of some functions and policies, and a suggested expanded conflict of interest policy to include the finance and endowment committees.

Kay asked the board to let Beth and her know if there are any changes they want or anything that isn't clear. Beth reminded the board that the Governance Manual is a living document which is routinely updated.

Discussion: There were no comments or questions.

d. Beacon Article

Helen asked if there were any suggestions for the Board's article in the next Beacon. The following suggestions were made: Encourage the congregation to be welcoming to the many newcomers and encourage newcomers to participate in church programs and activities.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

Awards Committee – The following 4 Flaming Chalice awardees have been named and notified:
Ladie Malek, Anne Wardell, Don Klose, and Melissa Rosales.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Cordell: I have really enjoyed being on the group. We're in good shape as a board and congregation. I hope we as a church community can have a voice and be relevant, as we face many challenges beyond our walls in the coming year.

Kay: This is my 10th year serving on a UUCB board. This board is a really collegial, thoughtful, and engaged group.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:59PM

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

Next Board Meeting: February 7, 2024