

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Special Board Meeting to Discuss Offers for Vacant Freestone Lots
Wednesday March 13, 2024**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Michael DeWitt, Kay Fairwell, Beth Jerde, Beth Pollard, David Rosales, Pier Sun Ho, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Helen Toy,

Absent: None

Ex officio members: Rev. Marcus Liefert, Selene Fabiano (Secretary)

Visitors: Alan Davis, Sheldon Jones, Don Klose, Albert Kueffner, Larry Nagel, Laura Richards (Coldwell Banker realtor), Dick Sherman, Marta Tobey, Tom Tripp, David Wemmer

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Co-President Helen Tinsley-Jones at 6:16 p.m.

DISCUSSION:

Co-President Helen Tinsley-Jones explained the Board was holding this open board meeting to hear comments from church members regarding the possible sale of the two vacant Freestone lots. She indicated that the Board members would be discussing this in a subsequent executive session and that in this meeting the role of the Board members was to provide a listening presence. Helen stated that the terms of any purchase offers are confidential.

Comments and Questions from Congregants

Albert Kueffner: Al's written statement sent to the Board before this meeting, and summarized during this meeting, is included below:

The Board should not approve this sale to the developer because:

- 1. We have not yet offered it to indigenous tribes in the area as we state we would in our land acknowledgement and according to the 7th principle and we could do so until December 6. They would likely want it left undeveloped for the vision quests of their youth and their love of Mother Nature.*
- 2. Geno Mendoza, who led a personal theology discussion on sweat lodges saw and blessed the property many months ago and is enthused about its mutual use by the indigenous and UUCB spiritual communities. He has led many such uses over the past thirty years on his 360 acre in the wilderness north of Upper Lake.*

Said again yesterday he would be happy to propose indigenous ownership or use to tribal councils in the Bay Area, with whom he has a long standing relationship and his wife is secretary to the chief of the Upper Lake Pomo tribe as well.

3. Indigenous people are more likely to qualify for nature protection land easements, and therefore likely to offer more than our 300 K offering price.

4. Because of UUCB's dwindling interest and support for the property, without outside help and participation we will likely have to sell it eventually, and it would not have the same appeal to indigenous interests with new neighbors on developed property.

5. If we actually sell the property the same party who's made the current offer, they could forever brag about their commitment nature by waiting until it was offered to Bay Area Indigenous interests.

In addition to this written statement, Al made the following additional comments:

Geno Mendoza has a lot of experience working with other tribes and leading tracking and camping experiences. Offering the Freestone property to indigenous peoples would demonstrate UUCB's commitment to restoring their land to them.

Don Klose: UUCB is facing a December deadline to raise \$250,000. This firm deadline puts constraints on our ability to negotiate. If we decline the current offer, we don't know how long it will take to receive another offer.

Sheldon Jones: Two concerns about the sale: 1. Are either of the 2 parcels' boundaries associated with the encroachment and has that identified? (A "no" answer was given to this question.) 2. Wear and tear on the road if the buyer uses heavy equipment on the road.

Dick Sherman: Asked if the 2 parcels were being sold to the same individual. Due to the need to keep offer details confidential, the board was not able to answer this question.

Alan Davis: Thanked the Board for considering the offer for the lots.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Helen thanked congregants for making the time to come to this meeting and sharing their thoughts. She notes that the congregants' comments had been recorded and would be considered by the board when making its decision. She explained that the board would meet in executive session next and would send out an update.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:31PM

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary