

Unitarian Society of Ridgewood  
Board of Trustees Meeting: 10/3/16

Convened at 7  
PM

---

ATTENDEES: Willis, Johnson, Duran, Nadler, McMurray, Krag, Nolan, Josefsberg

AGENDA: Previous BOT meeting minutes were approved. Discussion only on other items.

1. Rev. Tony Reading: David Eaton's "Common Destiny"
2. Unanimous Approval of 9/12/16 Minutes as submitted
3. Interim Minister's Report
  - a. Written report is attached.
  - b. Rev. Tony referenced the 9/17 memorial service for Bill Cobb and noted the recent losses of Mary Boutin, Peter Levy, and Deedee Sprecher. Memorial services for Mary and Peter to be held on 10/9 and 10/15, respectively. He spoke with Paul Sprecher and reported that Deedee's memorial service also will be held on 10/15 in Hingham, MA.
  - c. The BOT will send condolences to all families.
4. Interim Ministry Evaluation

The number of high level pastoral demands explains the slight delay in finalizing the report. To be addressed by Rob in October.

## 5. Governance Structure

Rob shared his recent discussion with Rev. Tony about how best to address the current governance structure which is widely viewed as “cumbersome” and/or “broken for a long time.” Rev. Tony noted the recent history of corrective efforts that have yet to bear fruit. Still, much good work continues to be done. In this context, Rob and Rev. Tony advised ongoing discussions with the various Council Chairpersons to consider current effectiveness and next steps.

Members agreed about core issues regarding “flow of information,” “confusing nomenclature,” and ambiguous task/function responsibilities.” Members agreed to a mission-driven principle for moving forward which, as Rev. Tony recommended, requires a “long and thoughtful process that will engage as much of the congregation as is possible.”

## 6. Treasurer’s Report

- a. Written report is attached
- b. Peter noted that the fiscal year is young and that report numbers can be misleading. He described our circumstances as “steady.”
- c. The preliminary Fiber Festival net is between \$6,000 and \$7,000. Last year’s net was \$7,200. This year’s target was \$8,000.

*The BOT went into Executive Session at 7:40 PM to discuss a letter received from the Village of Ridgewood. The BOT exited Executive Session at 7:45 PM. No action was taken.*

## 7. RE Director’s Report

Written report is attached.

In follow-up discussion, the BOT praised Johanna for her initiative in planning/implementing the recent Re Open House.

#### 8. Open Positions

BOT members discussed ongoing concerns about the status of volunteerism within the Society.

#### 9. Door Locks

Rob reported that the lock on the Fellowship Room door will be replaced and that a new lock will be installed on the west side door that allows for a bypass of Anderson into the Fellowship Room.

#### 10. Actions Associated with Goals

Proceeding sequentially through the previously approved goal set, the BOT discussed required action steps. Members considered the BOT's authority to define such steps in relation to the responsibilities delegated to other Council Committees. All agreed that action to attain all goals must be collaborative in nature.

As a result, the three objectives associated with **"Fostering Increased Engagement of Friends and Members of our Congregation"** requires BOT partnership with the Membership Council to determine an "ongoing welcoming protocol for our congregational guests that fosters a path to membership. " Current approaches were deemed too haphazard.

The three objectives under **"Improve Communication"** were discussed at length. Peter suggested several ways to leverage technology to improve "inward" communication including digital dial-in access (e.g., Google Hangout, Zoom, and Skype) to town hall meetings and digital

daisy-chains via Facebook. We have yet to fully utilize the functions of our ACS database. Doing so would better support communication within our organizational structure.

Available technology would expedite the updating of a congregational Photo Directory. With respect to “raising our profile within the larger community,” members agreed on the wisdom of working with the Membership Council to use local media to promote awareness of Society events. One approach would be to create a task force that would align existing outreach efforts within the scope of a broader Community Outreach Strategy.

Our third goal’s focus on **“Key Issues of Institutional Stewardship”** included self-explanatory steps to improve our facilities and technology infrastructure. A BOT liaison to the RE Committee will be named to seek recommendations about how best to support RE and grow its programming. For the purpose of “reviewing and evaluating how we raise and spend money,” the BOT will move up the budget planning process as well as promote active budget management across our congregational committees. It was felt that our prior discussion subsumed the important objective of “maintaining/increasing membership” and that “supporting the ministerial search and interim ministry process” is a self-evident BOT responsibility.

Our fourth goal – **“Planning for the Future”** – prompted Rev. Tony’s provocative question of “What kind of growth do we want to have?” Discussion ensued about whether a capital plan should be developed in 2017-18 or 2018-19. No decision was reached. Ready agreement was had that reading it was a logical first step in “reviewing and assessing our long term strategic plan.”

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM

Submitted by Bernie Josefsberg