

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY SPRING 2005 PARISH
MEETING MINUTES

April 10, 2005

Meeting called to order at 12:05 pm
45 Members present
Chalice was lit and Nobis Pacem sung.

MINUTES

Minutes of the Fall Parish Meeting of November 14, 2004 were approved (Mary Somers/
Phoenix Wardell)

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES REPORT

--The following slate for 2005-2006 Board of Directors was presented:

President:	Mike Briggs
Vice-President:	KK Anderson
Secretary:	Kim Truog
Treasurer:	Dirk Herr-Hoyman
Denominational Affairs:	Larry Nahlik
Finance:	Steve Vorass and Norma Briggs
Housing & Property:	Ron Hornbeck
Long Range Planning:	Ken Skog
Membership:	Rick Ruecking
Program:	Susan Herr-Hoyman and Mary Mullen
Religious Education:	Rachel Long and Paula Pachciarz Sarah
Social Action:	Lord and Corinne Hornbeck

Moved/seconded by Kathy Converse/Warren Hagstrom. Approved unanimously.

-- The 2005-2006 Committee on Committees was chosen:

Rick Ruecking (continuing), Barb Parks, Andy Somers and Linda Sheehy volunteered and were approved unanimously. (Aileen Nettleton, Dirk Herr-Hoyman). The 5th member will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Moved/seconded by Aileen Nettleton/Dirk Herr-Hoyman. Approved unanimously.

--General Assembly Delegates:

Patty Stockdale volunteered and was approved unanimously. (Aileen Nettleton, Anne Urbanski). The second position was held open and Board would review candidates.

TREASURER'S REPORT-Dirk Herr-Hoyman --

Two handouts were circulated:

- 1) Final 2004 Budget Report: Carryover = \$20, 878.68; building repairs pending.
- 2) April 2005 year-to-date: Undesignated Capital Reserves = approx. \$45,000; Mortgage balance = \$20,121.56.
- 3) Value of our current building = approx \$250K to \$400K. Insured for \$573,000.

Moved/seconded by Norma Briggs/Dan Proud. Report approved unanimously.

MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE-Aileen Nettleton

--A handout was circulated detailing the committee's work. A candidate will be identified in one week and then a service led by the candidate will be scheduled in May. After the service a vote will be taken. A $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the members at this service will be required to accept the candidate as Prairie's $\frac{1}{4}$ time consulting minister. The committee of Aileen, Ken Skog, Patty Stockdale, and Doleta Chapru were then thanked for their work.

LONG RANGE PLANNING-Ken Skog

The report of the LRP committee was circulated. This reviewed our prior votes to move to a larger building and to have LRP develop a draft agreement to purchase land from Fitchburg Center (FC). A resolution detailing this negotiated offer to purchase land next to Eagle School from FC is now presented to the congregation for their consideration and vote. Simple majority required.

Summary:

--A 1.65 Acre parcel is offered that would cost \$300,000 as of June 10, 2005, then \$2000 more for each month delay until reaching a maximum of \$320,000 as of April 2006 which is the deadline for the offer. Investors have pledged \$100,000 to date.

--If this offer is approved, Prairie members and friends would be asked to invest in this Prairie Land Investment Fund at 3% interest for the first 2 years, 5% compound interest thereafter, w/ 6 months notice for withdrawal.

--FC would require that construction of a new Meeting House begin within 2 years of accepting the offer. If this did not occur, FC would repurchase the land at the original price plus 3% pro-rated per year minus a \$2500 penalty.

Other information presented was the estimated cost of a new building of \$1,350,000-\$1,650,000 which would be reduced by the sale of our current building. Raising an expected \$250,000 as a down payment would also be required. It was noted that Prairie would need to grow to support this expansion.

There followed a long and lively discussion with many congregation members contributing. A summary of these comments follows:

Supportive:

- The offer has exceptionally favorable contingencies.
- UUA may assist with the mortgage of a new building.
- Land and a new building will permit us to realize the goal of growing Prairie and providing for a strong RE program as the congregation has supported.
- We can't grow at our current location and there is no parking here whereas we may be able to share parking w/ Eagle school at the proposed site.

Supportive comments, con't

- The vista to the north of this site includes public marsh land which will nourish us.
- Being on a bike path will give us exposure as well as facilitate bike-riding to church.
- Cost may seem high but Prairie is a giving group.
- Nothing cheap is suitable; if we don't act now, the cost will rise.
- We have invested much effort in growing in this locale and it hasn't worked; let's see if we can do better.
- This resolution is only to purchase land, without much to lose; it's worth the risk.
- This represents new Urbanism; will have bus lines and community will grow around us.
- Two year opportunity to get a bargain.
- We can insist on green construction.
- This gives us the opportunity to provide service in the future that we can't do here.
- We can find like-minded people from Fitchburg and FUS to join us.
- We once had 10 acres available for \$120,000; we put that off and inflation then put that possibility out of reach.
- We need to try; we won't grow if we say we can't.
- FC eager to have us succeed.

Concerns:

- Edifice approach is a concern; should have tried merger w/ James Reeb.
- Costs of new building will be too high for our congregation, requiring doubling of pledges.
- Not all of the costs entailed have been listed.
- Raising a million dollars and time to fund-raise will be daunting.
- Should have land investment partners all lined up first.
- Concern that FC might not live up to the bargain.
- Eagle School may not want us there.
- We can do more at our current location than we have tried to date.
- No bus lines there yet.
- Seek minister first, build program, then consider land and new building. Cart before horse.
- Need to be rational, not make a decision based on emotional appeal.

Moved/seconded by Ken Skog/Judy Skog to approve the land purchase from Fitchburg Center. By written ballot: 25 aye, 15 no, 4 abstentions, 1 illegible. The motion carried.

Reports of other officers and committees were to be submitted in written form and made available on file with these minutes.

Adjourned at 1:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted, KK Anderson