

BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Date: 8/9/2020

Submitted by: Sanjay Cherian

In Attendance (via Zoom videoconference):

Name	Role	Voting?
Catherine Merrill	Minister	N
Ann Desrochers	Moderator	Y
Carol Cherian	Deacons/Fundraising	Y
Sanjay Cherian	Clerk	Y
Susan Haight	Trustees	Y
Amy Razzaboni	Outreach	Y
Bill Dunbar	Finance	Y
Rena Duncklee	Treasurer	Y
Candy Tiner	Publicity	Y
Megan King	Outreach/Fundraising	N

The meeting started at 8:01 am with a prayer from Rev Cath. We had a voting quorum.

Calendar Review

- Cath: wondering if we should do in-person worship 8/16. Consensus was yes, weather permitting. If the weather is poor, we'll revert to zoom rather than try to go indoors.

Review of Prior minutes

- Susan moved to accept the July meeting minutes, Rena seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Google class-action suit

- After a brief discussion, we decided not to participate in it. The expected payout is low, and the effort doesn't justify it. [Update from a week and a half later: Sanjay researched the suit and found we are not eligible for compensation.]

Hillsborough association annual meeting changes

- Ann: explained the change to authorize electronic voting and reduce the notice period for constitutional amendments from one year to 8 weeks. This is informational to our Cabinet unless anyone objects. Given the lack of objection, we will agree when it comes up for vote at that meeting.

Stewardship

- A link for stewardship guidance was provided in the meeting agenda to see if anyone wants to look at it before next month.

Finance & Treasurer's Report

BCC YTD Financial Summary	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs Expenses + / -
July	\$42,784	\$48,975	(\$6,191)

- Finances are \$3,672 ahead in July without the TD Bank Affinity money we were expecting.
- Looking at our electric bill, Bill analyzed the past year and saw that for the parking lot light and the light shining on the front of the church, we're paying about \$800-900/year. The parking lot light is a metal-halide light that loses efficiency after the first 2-3 months. It is very dim already. We can turn it off, put up an LED light at the side entrance, which will get it on the church's electric bill and save us money. For the front light that illuminates the church, we have options. We can run an underground wire We can install a new LED spotlight. We can install a new solar-powered light over the door or just along the sidewalk. Bill's estimated savings are \$337 first year. With solar, it will be even more.
 - Susan: this involves the Trustees so she will need time for them to discuss it.
 - Megan: it gets dark here in the winter. Will this be enough light for winter, particularly in the parking lot? Bill: the current parking lot light has weakened so much that while a church-side light won't illuminate the whole parking, it will be better than it is now.
 - Ann: we have some late services once in a while so we need to make sure the church front is well-lit. Megan: there are also groups that meet here to be considered.
 - Amy: is there any reason we can't change our lighting approach, e.g. town considerations? Bill: no reason.
 - Cath: considering our neighbors, having our parking lot lit dusk from dawn, particularly if it will be brighter than presently, can be a nuisance. We should think about things like timers or other ways of being a good neighbor.
 - Carol: anything that adds lighting to the front sign is a plus.

Thoughts on Reopening the Church / Guidelines

- Megan: Are we going to start having a regular schedule for outdoors compared to the one-at-a-time approach we're taking now? Also, are we going to start supporting AA?
 - Cath: will be happy to work with the Deacons to figure out a more predictable schedule. We are currently focused on outdoors worship. The tipping point will be in September when the outdoors will be too cool. She's not sure when it will be but will work with the Deacons. We are working on making sure we can worship indoors and are waiting for some safety equipment. We haven't gotten there yet because we're at the training wheels stage - learning through outdoor services. We're not yet ready for indoor worship. She will defer to others about building use.
 - Ann: the conference stand is that at this point, even if we let staff or internal people in building, we should not be letting outside groups come in until the end of the year. The rationale is that we will need some sort of tracing because if someone gets sick, how do we find out and let everybody that might have been exposed know? This is an issue particularly for a group where we wouldn't know who the members are.
 - Amy: is okay with restricting the Scouts but is having a hard time restricting AA because of the importance of their ability to meet. We can tell them not to use the kitchen and to have their own chairs. Is there a way to let them meet? Sue: before we tell AA anything, we need to have some firm guidelines and processes. They need their own systems worked out because the last time she spoke to someone, they were still considering if it was best for them to stay on Zoom or meet in person.

- Amy: when will the sanitizing machine get here? Bill: It is here. When he went to start it up, he found that a part was broken and contacted the seller in China. It took 2 months to get the machine so is expecting 2 months for the replacement part. A timer switch was broken in shipping so he couldn't even turn it on to test.
- Megan: we're getting more information about surface survivability. If AA met after the virus surface lifetime relative to last building use and we're not meeting every Sunday, can this work?
 - Amy: is there a sense they're asking to come back or needing to come back? Susan: in the most recent discussion she had last week, AA is still working on their end because they've lost some people due to no face-to-face meetings but have picked up others due to Zoom.
 - Cath: her impression is that they're struggling the same way we are, balancing between safety and effectiveness. There's no clear answer to Megan's question but it's a good point that we can use time separation and the degradation of the virus on surfaces to do creative things like staggering services.
- Cath: our prior thoughts on reopening were conditional on having a functional sanitizing machine. Bill: if we only do activities upstairs and use only the front door and keep the downstairs and side door reserved only for AA, i.e. spatial separation of building users, this could work. For the bathrooms, Lysol spray is approved by CDC as a disinfectant so that will suffice. We should keep the kitchen out of bounds for everything and everyone except the Take Home Meals crew.
- Carol: what about taking everything out of Fellowship Hall (extra chairs and tables) to minimize the number of exposed surfaces. Cath: we should also consider removing them in case we learn something new that necessitates cleaning.
- Susan: outside groups are also subject to headcount restrictions. Amy: the in-building users may be only the people who can't use Zoom for some reason.
- Ann: will get the group who worked up the in-person worship guidelines to consider this discussion. Cath: is it okay to use existing guidelines for next outdoor service? Ann: yes.
- Ann: went to remove the chair placement marking tape from the lawn to avoid clogging the mower and saw the lawn had already been mowed but the tape is still there. Susan: Clyde is doing it – we don't know what he's doing with the tape. Ann will contact Clyde.

Being the Church During Pandemic

- Cath: thinks we need to continue online worship no matter what we do in-person. She has seen that we've gotten creative with how we stay connected with the outside community, e.g. Outreach, THM, etc. Ideas are coming from within the body of the church. What she hasn't seen is people saying "let's get together and do a hymn sing" on the lawn. Do we want to look at something else?
 - Amy: Outreach will be looking at a way to do senior luncheon in some form. They don't do well with being idle and it's been a long time. They understand there can be no traditional senior luncheon for now.
 - Susan: wondering if there's a way we can have a lawn concert. Are there musicians in town dying to perform? Ann: instrumental music is okay but vocals and instruments require 23 feet of spacing.
- Susan: is there a way we can communicate about an event to the community. Cath: how big a community? Sue: just the church membership for now. She's thinking of a coffee house or a chance to talk and catch-up.
 - Amy: seeing each other in person and catching up would help people.
 - Carol: music is nice but everyone is longing for time together. It would be nice to have a church-sanctioned event as she thinks we're just socializing behind the scenes and keeping quiet.
 - Sanjay: can set up recorded music outside for a patio-type social event.
 - Carol: the Deacons are talking about doing things like a Zoom book group, etc.

- Cath: in her heart is struggling with news reports about how small family birthday parties and funerals are what's spreading COVID-19. She is comfortable with small groups gathering independently. Do we just let that happen and let more people have access to our "all" mailing list to notify people about small social events? Megan: wedding and funeral viral propagation is happening because of an assumption that the other participants are "safe" so people aren't maintaining standard precautions and there is a more mixed crowd.
- Cath: if we wanted to try worship on August 30th with a foodless coffee hour and some form of post-worship socialization, she's game though she may personally opt out.
 - Susan: this may be a good message to people driving by that the church is trying to "come back." The Trustees can help by making the outside of the church, starting with the sign, look like we're not ignoring the building.
 - Amy: everybody is meeting in small groups. Outreach is staying extremely close through this but she'd like to interact with people outside Outreach.
 - Carol: there are people who haven't been able to come to church because of family situations. It would be great if we could find a way to include them, like a book group or some other communal action. Ann: in person or Zoom? Carol: either, though Zoom may be more doable given that we're approaching Fall and Winter. If we say we're doing something to help keep the church together, people may be able to join in.
- Ann: torn because she's hearing mixed messages. She's trying to understand what community existed before. Is it that Zoom is not filling the need?
 - Bill: for some people, in-person fellowship is the key. Rob & Erin don't do Zoom or online stuff. They want to be with people.
 - Amy: we should be proud that as a church we all want to be together. There are churches where people just go their own way. We seem to want to be together more from what she's hearing.
 - Bill: the Aitkens would love to be around us but can't keep kids from running around to say hi.
- Cath: we can do book discussion online. What's the Brookline school decision?
 - Megan: starting on September 9th, students can choose remote or in-person education. Milford will be totally remote and will check again October 19th.
 - Ann: are there protocols for in-person education? Megan: they took a poll in June. 70% said they are interested in having children at school in-person. A lot of protocols have been established.
 - Ann: cases near her daughter are very low but teachers are wondering how all will deal with the protocols for in-person attendance. Megan: yes, it is masks for all in Brookline. A lot of teachers are taking a leave of absence.
 - Ann: it would be helpful for us to see the school's guidelines, particularly if we have kids involved in our plans.

Trustees Report

- Susan: scraped down the church sign. A part is rotted and she and Russell will be looking at what to do. It will be repainted, hopefully next week, but the sign is out of order for now.
- Lights in kitchen are fixed thanks to Bill.
- Bill: Lights in the function hall have changed to LED. Thanks to Megan and the THM group because their revenue is really helping out the bottom line.

Minister's Report:

August 2020 (through 8/2)

Since this goes in the church's record, the Covid-19 global pandemic led the church to stop in person meetings and services on March 13, 2020.

- Averaging 25.51 hours/week, which puts me between 92 hours under and 33 hours over since Sept. 15. This time last year, I was 9 to 117 hours over.
- Pastoral counseling over the phone.
- Virtual coffee hours on 7/19, 7/26, 8/2.
- Online Prayer Group: 7/8, 7/15, 7/23/ 7/30.
- Gathering Joys & Concerns ahead of the service.
- Finalizing & publishing plan for September to November worship services.
- As I contact church members, confirming and updating the Clerk's membership spreadsheet.
- Learning new video processing software to do everything I was doing already plus normalizing the audio, so the level it is recorded at is consistent across the worship service.
- Beginning worship plan for Advent – Transfiguration.
- Communicating the death and memorial service plans for Rev. Dr. Tom Atherton.
- Granite District clergy & lay leadership meetings for the UMC on 7/14

Services:

- 7/12: [In person worship as well as on-line] We need both body and spirit to anchor our faith life in this world.
- 7/19: Growing into the larger reality of the coming of the kingdom where we are not the ones who will pass judgment.
- 7/26: We take a lot to follow Jesus; but we let go of a lot too.
- 8/2: [In person worship as well as on-line] When we have something to offer that might bring forth the Kingdom of God, it's not nothing and we should offer it.

Regular Meetings:

- Cabinet, Deacons, Moderator/Minister

The meeting was closed in prayer at 8:57 am by Rev. Cath.