

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING
January 13, 2014**

Parish Committee Members Present: Steve Davis, Ann Gilmore, Stacey Raczek, Ryan Kim, Ann Dinsmoor, Ann Congleton, Anya Thomas, Greg Buckland and Jake Walters

Others Present: Rev. James Sherblom, Sean Neil-Barron, Karen Kepler, Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson and Alice Mark.

Minutes: The December, 2013 minutes were reviewed and approved.

Minister's report: Rev. Jim noted that we are half way through the fiscal 2014 and detailed our progress to date. Beloved Community - Rev. Jim stated that the Pastoral Care Associates have reached out to nearly 50 congregants some of whom were very thankful for the contact. The pastoral care program is being revamped to help the associates focus on offering a caring community around Sunday worship and hospitality. The neighborhood potlucks, classes and spirituality groups and working well with a new round of classes, workshops and gatherings planned for this month. The welcoming team is in the process of rethinking how we might best welcome newcomers to First Parish. High School Youth – We need to broaden and deepen our youth programming but how that is going to unfold is unclear given current budget constraints. Children and Youth – The religious exploration committee is working hard to resolve issues of how we best move forward with our Sunday learning, worship, faith formation and social action opportunities. Cultural Competence - Rev. Jim stated that Maria Christina has had an enormous impact in helping our congregation better understand issues around cultural competence and changing the dominant cultures. There will be a guest minister (Mykal Slack) preaching this month and leading a workshop to help us become even more of a welcoming congregation. First Parish will be a trial site for a new UU curriculum on dealing with issues of class. Our Diversity Caucus continues to develop new language to address some of our growing racial and cultural issues and is sponsoring workshops and films to deepen our understanding. Social Action – Immigration work and mission trips continue to engage our social activists. The Social Action Committee is engaged in programs with the UU Urban Ministry, UU Mass Action and UUSC. A new initiative called *Jobs not Jails*, is emerging among UU and other churches and it appears a large portion of our social action community is embracing this new initiative. Staff turnover – Maria Christina, Sarah, Shane and Sean will all be leaving in June. The core staff personnel, Keith, Rebecca, Sonya and Rev. Jim will remain. Fiscal 2015 will see the addition of a second minister, membership coordinator and possibly a ministerial intern.

Report on By-Laws. Sean Neil Barron opened the By-Laws discussion by mentioning that members of the congregation have mentioned the importance of having policies, such as clearly articulated fees for events at First Parish, and added that the more inclusive we can be in formulating policies the better. Sean also suggested that we hold a special meeting to discuss and draft proposed changes to our By-Laws. He also thought we could set forth drafts of the various policies First Parish might want to adopt by mid-February and perhaps review some at our next meeting and the remainder at the March P.C. meeting. The suggestion was made that

we post drafts of proposed changes in By-Laws as well as policies in order to solicit input from the congregation. It was agreed that after our March 3rd meeting if satisfied with the proposed changes and or new policies that they be published by 3/9 with a request for comments.

Religious Exploration: Bijan Etemad-Gilbertson, Alice Mark and Karen Kepler of the Religious Exploration Committee addressed the Parish Committee. They were following up on a written proposal to bring a paid staff person to build the youth program. The Committee members stated that they are the remainder of the RE Committee were over extended with many commitments and felt a professional would better follow up on the Committee's ideas and bring his or her own ideas and activities to fruition. It was expressed to the Parish Committee that we need to plan for when the 120 or so RE participants grow up, they will need programs in place to keep them engaged. A better transition from OWL to Youth Group is vital, in the eyes of the Religious Exploration Committee. Interest among the youth exists, but currently there is not enough happening to keep them involved at First Parish. There are adults willing to assist, but we need continuity of leadership, perhaps a professional who can tap into existing UUA programs and ideas. In the past the Ministerial Intern filled the role of working with our youth.

Other business: Although authorized to sell the silver by Annual Meeting, no action to that end has been taken. One option would be to engage an auction house. Steve Davis offered to contact the MFA for advice on selling the silver. Sally Moore has donated a portrait of Rev. Martha she painted, Rev. Jim is looking for find the appropriate Sunday to have a ceremony to hang the portrait and offer Sally our thanks.

There being no other business it was unanimously voted to Adjourn.

Respectfully submitted

Jake Walters, Clerk