

**FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF OTTAWA  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – JUNE 06, 2021 - MINUTES**

**Call to Order at 10:30am by Lisa Sharp**

**1. Open reading and chalice lighting** Rev. Pat Haresch

**2. President's Remarks**

Lisa Sharp called the meeting to order and made a land acknowledgement. She then gave an overview of the important activities the congregation had done during the past six months including getting an Intern minister, choosing a new settled minister, hosting several town halls, and having several FirstU attend the UU United Nations Intergenerational Spring Seminar in April. She thanks the Caring Committee for their continued Wellness checks, Deirdre Kellerman for postponing her departure as Music Director, the Search Committee for finding the new settled minister and the Environmental Awareness Group for leading the way in local and national actions. Her closing statement was one of hope that with continued access to Covid 19 vaccines the church may be able to open its doors to offline Sunday services in September.

**3. Minister's Remarks**

Rev. Pat Haresch had several acknowledgements to make: Guy Belleperche for his wisdom and knowledge when it came to board resolutions, policies and governance; the internship committee for their assistance in finding E.N. Hill, our intern minister; the music director search committee for their assistance in finding a new music director; FirstU's staff that went above and beyond during Covid 19, every person involved in a Caring network, committee, or team for keeping us all connected. Pat affirmed that the pandemic did not stop us from being a congregation, that we are more than just a building. In closing Pat also believes congregants will be able to attend Sunday services in September, albeit in a modified fashion and of course, in accordance to public health guidelines.

**4. Report of Scrutineer**

The head scrutineer, Maury Prevost, confirmed that quorum requirements (41) had been met with 110 eligible members attending either in person or by proxy.

**5. Process Observer voting explanations**

Guy Belleperche explained the voting process for all in attendance.

**6. Notice of Amendment and approval of Agenda**

A notice of amendment to agenda was given to all present as the meeting was conducted virtually and could not be done in person. Mainly, it was for surprise presentations after the break (See paragraphs 11 and 18).

**Motion: "Move that the agenda be approved, as amended."** Moved by Andrew Drake, seconded by Irvin Waller. Passed.

**7. Approval of 2020 FCM Minutes**

**Motion: " Move that the minutes of the 2020 Fall Congregational Meeting be approved as presented."** Moved by Caycee Price, seconded by Carl Sonnen. Brought to the congregation's attention was an error in paragraph 8 - to be corrected by Caycee Price, secretary. Motion passed.

## **8. Intern Minister's Remarks**

E.N.Hill expressed thanks to those who helped them during their stay. He received much support and feedback for which he was extremely grateful. His thanks included (but were not limited to): FirstU staff, the Board, the internship committee, those who took his workshop, Rev. Pat Haresch, and Joan Auden for her generous hospitality. Despite the pandemic they felt extremely fortunate to have had such a rich learning experience. They've already begun the next steps in their journey of religious leadership and dream goal to become a military chaplain. Guy Belleperche also thanked E.N. on behalf of the congregation for their passionate presence.

## **9. Ratification of Acts of the Board**

**Motion: "Move that the acts of the Board from November 01, 2020 to May 12, 2021 be ratified."** Moved by Brent Nicolle, seconded by Andrew Drake. Passed.

## **10. Campus Development Committee (CPC)**

Terry Kimmel presented two motions on behalf of the CPC.

### **10.1 - Motion to develop an integrated plan for the improvement and development of the FirstU Campus. Whereas:**

- **FirstU groups and individuals have proposed improvement and development initiatives for the FirstU Campus, including a proposal for Indigenous gardening and regenerative agriculture, proposals for improvements to our building, our existing gardens, and our playground area, and other suggestions for ways to enhance community and spiritual experiences on the Campus and to make it a welcoming space;**
- **FirstU groups and individuals have identified issues and opportunities to consider in future improvement and development initiatives, including the recommendations from the Ecological Assessment of Assets, the incorporation of Indigenous reconciliation into Congregational activities, the continuing climate crisis and our commitment to the Green Sanctuary initiative, and the examples of innovative land use from other congregations; and**
- **The creation of a new integrated plan for the overall improvement and development of the FirstU Campus is a necessary step in developing/ refining our site plan and in translating words and commitments to action.**

### **The Congregation:**

**Directs the Board of Directors and its Campus Planning Committee, working with the Operations Manager and the Property Team where appropriate, with input from our Campus Partners, Unitarian House, River Parkway Children's Centre and Or Haneshamah, to explore the feasibility of a variety of development and improvement projects on the campus, including, but not limited to:**

- **making improvements to the existing church building to better serve future Congregational and program needs, and to mitigate impacts of climate change;**
- **improving our existing playground area, and/or creating new play areas if not already being included in the planning of mixed-income housing;**
- **enhancing and highlighting our green spaces and the natural environment of the Campus;**
- **making our site more resilient to climate change, such as removing pavement where possible and including sponge gardens to reduce flooding;**

- creating community food gardens; and
- creating a welcoming outdoor space (“town square”) which can be used for outdoor meetings, services and events.

The integrated plan would incorporate the results of the various feasibility studies, and would be brought back to the Congregation for consideration and further direction in the future.

Moved by Terry Kimmel, seconded by Caycee Price. Passed.

**10.2 - Motion for approval of a feasibility study for a new building on our campus to provide mixed income housing. Whereas the Congregation wants to:**

- create a residential community which is a leading example of mixed income housing, including significant numbers of apartments which are rented at much-below-market rents, at modestly- below-market rents, and at market rents;
- implement developments in a manner that is intended to be free of direct fossil fuel use (natural gas/propane/oil) in normal operations (heating, hot water, cooking, etc) and uses high standards of construction from an environmental point of view;
- ensure that green space continues to be an important element of the campus, including areas that promote a respect for nature such as gardens, playgrounds, outdoor meeting space and trees;
- identify community partners that could include local Indigenous organizations; and
- generate revenue that will help to advance the Congregation’s initiatives in support of its mission and to support the operations of the Congregation.

**THE CONGREGATION:**

- Gives its approval in principle for the construction of one new building on the campus, for the primary purpose of providing affordable housing;
- Authorizes the Board, with the assistance of the Campus Planning Committee (CPC), to proceed with a feasibility study including the identification of potential partners for the initiative and development of the business case for the project;
- Recognizes and accepts that the Statement of Intent (see Appendix A) is a starting point for the feasibility study; and
- Calls on the Board to return to the Congregation with the recommendations from the feasibility study and to seek further approvals for proceeding to the next stage of this project providing the results of the feasibility study are consistent with our goals and principles.

Moved by Terry Kimmel, seconded by David Chernushenko. Passed.

Questions/ concerns raised:

1. “Do we have any idea of how much the study will cost?” **Answer:** Yes, approximately \$20,000 for 4.5 months work.
2. Concern about the use of the word “gas” in the Guiding Principles (Appendix A). **Answer:** The motion supersedes the verbiage used in the guiding principles which is dated from 2018 and will be updated after the feasibility study.
3. “Where does location fit into all of this?” **Answer:** Site C is being proposed.

4. "What about a suggestion made at a previous meeting to have a fundraiser to hire a professional designer/ architect/ landscaper who would oversee from an objective point of view all the elements of the various communities." **Answer:** It was approved in the first motion.
5. "When will we know the details of what's planned for Christie's property and the dentist property?" **Answer:** Christie's new building has already been determined and approved but construction date is unknown. It may be as high as 24 stories. Rennie's no known building plans and is willing to work with FirstU. Dental office: as far as we know has plans to build a medical centre that may be 4-6 stories high.
6. Concerns about getting rid of the pavement for people with walkers. **Answer:** A parking survey will be done in the future.
7. "Has Unitarian House abandoned plans to move elsewhere?" **Answer:** They no longer intend to move and they have not asked for more space on FirstU property (although the option to negotiate will remain open).
8. "Who will the new building apartments be rented to?" **Answer:** Apartment rentals will be open to anyone (not just FirstU members).
9. "If one third of the apartments will not have a rent reduction, is the building going to contain amenities such as a swimming pool for the tenants?" **Answer:** It is far too early to make decisions about amenities.
10. "Has a decision been made about a possible second entrance to the property? **Answer:** The City of Ottawa has not yet given us any approvals to create a second entrance. Only current recourse is to make arrangements with our neighbours on Richmond Rd.
11. "With respect to a second entrance, would we need to purchase more land or would the city of Ottawa expropriate land?, if necessary." **Answer:** The City of Ottawa will not expropriate land as they do not believe we need a second entrance. We would have to negotiate with our neighbours.

## **11. Farewell to Deirdre Kellerman**

Donna Bowen-Miller thanked Deirdre, on behalf of the FirstU choirs, for all her hard work during the past six years as music director. Jane Lindsay also thanked her, on behalf of non-choir congregants.

## **12. Treasurer's Report**

### **12.1 - 2020 Audited Financial Statements**

Justine De Jaegher, Treasurer, first thanked Michelle Jackson for her hard work in coordinating the audit during the pandemic since no auditors were able to be on site. She then went on to mention highlights of this year's audit report. Unique to 2020 is the long-term debt figure which is a \$40,000 loan received from the Government of Canada (Canada Emergency Business Account - CEBA loan) of which \$10,000 is forgivable as long as we meet the repayment deadline. There is a small year-end surplus which is fantastic given the substantial revenue loss due to Covid-19 (primarily from loss of in-person fundraisers and rental revenue). The Government's Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program allowed us to maintain this surplus. Note 6 of the report explains the re-balancing of the Legacy fund, between the Legacy Endowment and Legacy Unrestricted funds to be in accordance with the 2012 Legacy policy. If people want more information about the help we received from the Government of Canada during the pandemic, please read note 13.

**Motion: Move that the audited financial statements for 2020 report be accepted by the congregation.**  
Moved by Justine De Jaegher, seconded by Brent Nicolle. Passed.

Questions raised:

1. “Do we still have investments in fossil fuels?” **Answer:** Yes, and no. We are divested in a Primary sense, however we are not divested in a secondary sense.
2. “What surplus amount are we talking about?” **Answer:** With the CEWS it is around \$18,000.
3. “In Note 5, where does the figure of \$422,086 for the FirstU land come from?” **Answer:** Margaret explains that the auditor uses the original purchase price of the land (in this case from approximately 50 years, and it is not depreciated). For a current value of the we would need to hire an estimator. A request was made to have this note added to the report.

### **12.2 - 2021 Budget Update**

Justine De Jaegher explained that although there is no formal resolution to be made, she wanted to give an update given this extraordinary continuation of the Covid year, to give a sense of our finances. The biggest news is that our pledges continue to come in and we find ourselves in a fairly positive financial situation as of April 30th (only a \$20,000 deficit which we anticipate will be offset moving forward by additional pledges and continued re-eligibility for the CEWS program). We received an incredibly generous bequest of \$450,000 from the estate of Ann Denis which expands our Legacy Fund Endowment for which Justine would like to send a huge thank you. In closing, Justine announced that she has resigned from the position of Treasurer due to work commitments.

### **12.3 - Re-Appointment of Auditor for 2021/ 2022**

Although the Finance committee feels the congregation is due for a tender process, they do not recommend we proceed with one during the pandemic. It would be more prudent to continue with the current auditors until next year.

**Motion: Move that the congregation re-appoint Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) as Auditor for 2021/2022.** Moved by Justine De Jaegher, seconded by Andrew Drake. Passed.

## **13. Report of the Nominating Committee**

### **13.1 Nomination to elect Directors to the Board**

**Motion: Whereas, as Andrew Drake was elected at the 2020 Fall Congregational Meeting, as shown in the minutes of that meeting but was not confirmed at the Annual General Meeting, AND that Brent Nicolle has completed year 3 of his first 3-year term, be it resolved that the nominating Committee nominates the following candidates for the Board of Directors:**

- Brent Nicolle for the 1st year of a second 3-year term, and
- Andrew Drake to the 2nd year of the first 3-year term,

**the Nominating Committee so moves.** Moved by Joe Connor, seconded by Carl Sonnen. Passed.

### **13.2 Nomination of Officers to the Congregation**

**Motion: The Nominating Committee moves that President Lisa Sharp be nominated for her 2nd 1-year term, that Vice-President Brent Nicolle be nominated for his 2nd 1-year term, and that Secretary Caycee Price be nominated for her 2nd 1-year term. The Nominating Committee so moves.** Moved by Joe Connor, seconded by Carl Sonnen. Passed.

#### **14. Report on Green Sanctuary Program**

Mike Fletcher gave a brief update on the work being done by the Environmental Action Group (EAG) which began in 2019. The Opportunity assessment is now complete and they continue to examine what future actions they take as they move towards being fully accredited as a green Sanctuary. Mike thanked Eva Berringer for all her hard work. Lisa Sharp also thanked Sharon Bowen for her hard work in getting the Ajashki project off the ground. Margaret Linton gave a brief explanation of the motion proposed by EAG related to Green investments that FirstU has.

**Motion: It is hereby moved: That the Congregation's Investment Policy Statement within the Investment Policy**

- 1. Require a 15% minimum of the Congregational investment Portfolio to be invested in companies directly related to reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions – thus protecting the health of the future generations by reducing climate change. These investments would include all sectors described at [www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org). This percentage is to be reached within a year of the motion being passed.**
- 2. Use an ESG (Environment Societal and Governance) Rating to exclude investments that have low ratings.**

Moved by Margaret Linton, seconded by David Chernushenko. Passed.

#### Questions raised

1. "Does our Environmental portfolio also include a divestment from arms production?"  
**Answer:** Yes. We also have a social responsibility in investments which excludes many things like arms, prison farms etc.

#### **15. Lay Chaplaincy Report**

Bob Armstrong presented the motion as follows:

**Motion: Whereas lay chaplains are appointed by the congregation ut we have to confirm those appointments annually and because the national lay chaplaincy committee at the CUC has already approved Lisa Boulay's application for lay chaplaincy (and indeed she has received her license from the province of Ontario), AND they have also approved the one year extension for Alex Campbell as a lay chaplain, I move, to be seconded Carol Card, that Alex Campbell and Lisa Boulay be confirmed as lay chaplains of the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa. Passed.**

#### **16. Acceptance of Annual Report**

Brent Nicolle gave an overview of the report titled "The Church has Left the Building". He described how we missed many things yet persevered, and how despite it all we stayed connected and social responsibility did not stop. We also had significant staffing changes too, including the announcement of the departure of Rev. Pat. It was a pandemic year but it was a busy year.

**Motion: Move that the 2020 Annual report be accepted by the congregation.** Moved by Brent Nicolle, seconded by Carl Sonnen. Passed.

## **17. Acceptance of the Strategic Plan**

Although a full strategic plan is not yet available, Justine De Jaegher presented the 5 key goals which the Board has already affirmed along with a draft of the possible format for the plan. Over the summer and fall there will be further consultations with action groups, team, committees and Rev. Eric Meter. The 5 key goals are:

- An energized Spirituality
- A renewed, growing, diverse congregation
- A firm commitment to social and climate justice
- A responsible, mission-oriented campus development
- And, reliable structures and resources to support congregational priorities & growth

### Questions/ concerns raised:

1. One request was to amend the document's first page to refer to 7 principles and not 8.

**Motion: Move that the Strategic Plan be accepted, as amended, by the congregation.** Moved by Justine De Jaegher, seconded by Irvin Waller. Passed.

## **18. Board recognition of Guy Belleperche**

Irvin Waller took a few moments to thank Guy Belleperche for all his hard work and devotion to the Board as Guy is finishing up his year as Past President. A joyous round of applause was given in his name.

## **19. Recognition of Life Events**

Presented by Rev. Ellen Bell. In memoriam: William Devine, Doris Smith, Phyllis Grigg, Auralie (Lee) Fraser, Madeleine "Maddie" Soroczan-Wright, and Marguerite (Marge) Larson.

## **20. Farewell tribute to Rev. Pat Haresch**

Several people gave an emotional talk thanking Rev. Pat Haresch for the work and devotion she gave to our congregation during her time here. These "thank yous" were often specific and personal, recounting memories of support received, wisdom shared, and compassion given. With a few teary eyes, people expressed their thanks and gratitude, assuring her she would not soon be forgotten. Rev. Pat in turn gave a few words of thanks and appreciation of her own.

## **21. Announcement of Next Congregational Meeting: November 21, 2021**

## **22. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:36pm.

**Prepared by:** Caycee Price, Secretary

**Approved by Congregation:**