

FirstU Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 – ZOOM – 7:30 p.m.

Our mission is to “Kindle the light within and inspire courage to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world.

In attendance (10): Lisa Sharp (President), Guy Belleperche (Past President), Brent Nicolle (Vice-President), Caycee Price (Secretary), Justine De Jaegher (Treasurer); Andrew Drake, Carl Sonnen, David Chernushenko, and Irvin Waller (Members at Large), Rev. Pat Haresch

Guests:

Chuck Shields, Terry Kimmel, E.N.Hill

References:

Agenda

Appendix 1: Minutes of Board Meeting from March 17, 2021

Appendix 2: Membership bio for Carmen Contreras

Appendix 3: Motion to Correct Legacy Fund Balances

Appendix 4: Proposed Motions on Campus Development

Appendix 5: Minister’s Report

Call to order 7:30pm

1. Welcome and call to order

- a. Opening Reading/ Song – Carl/ Irvin
- b. Selection of Time Keeper/ Process Monitor – Carl/ Brent
- c. Brief check-in was done in a meeting with BOD members just prior to this one and thus skipped

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of agenda
- b. Approval of Minutes from March 17, 2021 meeting
- c. Motion to accept new member Carmen Contreras
- d. Motion to appoint Mary Ella Keblusek to the Finance Committee
- e. Guy’s motion skipping of proxy in favour of advance email voting for voting on the minister on May 2nd.

Motion to move Consent agenda. Moved by Guy, seconded by Justine, motion carries.

3. Committee Reports

- a. Personnel Committee - Chuck Shields. Chuck gave a brief review on recent past and current Personnel Committee projects:

- i. Compensation study, which includes updating job descriptions, will eventually result in recommendations to the board. Current focus: Music Director.
- ii. They are also reviewing performance review forms and processes.
- iii. Reviewing the Staff/ Human Resources handbook. Rev. Pat reminded us that post-Covid, the Board will need to reconsider how often we want staff on-site in the office.
- b. Finance Committee – Justine. Justine presented a motion to correct the motion brought forth in November 2020 to correct the Legacy Fund Balances such that they are in accordance with the 2012 Legacy Fund Policy changes. Mainly a wording change, see Appendix 3.

Motion that the board approve the amended wording to correct the Legacy Fund Balances. Moved by Justine, seconded by Andrew, motion carries.

- c. Campus Planning – Terry Kimmel – Terry and Lisa answered questions from the Board that were presented to them. Lisa explained that an informational meeting was had with MultiFaith housing on Monday April 19 where discussions about how affordable housing works (in short, it depends on what the Community organization is permitted to do). It was decided by all to NOT include any site plans with the motion. Three motions will be presented at the AGM “
 - i. Developing an integrated plan for the improvement and development of the FirstU Campus
 - ii. Participating in a feasibility study for a new building on our campus to provide mixed income house.
 - iii. Approval to submit the long term site plan to the City of Ottawa

Motion that the board approve the three motions, as amended (and added below), presented by the Campus Planning Committee. Moved by Irvin, seconded by Guy, motion carries.

- d. Indigenous Reconciliation Discussion – No motions will be presented at the AGM. Guy pointed out that that the Board must be mindful of any proposals that involve giving away tangible assets as it may jeopardize us financially and our charitable purpose as a church. We must be clear at the outset what our limitations around reconciliation mean. Pat said that no proposals have been presented as the group has not yet met. A meeting will happen in May with interested parties to **begin** the conversation. Any proposals will go through the normal working group procedures.

4. Staff Reports

- a. Minister’s Report
 - i. Developmental Ministry Accomplishments - Rev. Pat thinks it would be a good idea to include this document in the Strategic Plan as well as part of the Annual Report as part of the AGM package.
Action item: Caycee to ensure this document is part of the AGM package.
 - ii. Raw Data, Sunday Service Data (before-after COVID) - Report attached as part of the Minister’s Report See Appendix 5.

- iii. Communications Coordinator - Allison Armstrong started this month as Communications Coordinator. If the board has requests about specific social media reports we are to pass them on to Jen Brennan.
- iv. Status of 2020 Staff Performance Assessments – Most are complete.
- v. HR Spending in Congregations – HR spending in general is going up as we ask more from staff and the number of volunteers goes down.
- vi. Misc. Finance Notes: A new bequest of \$20K will be coming in and the govt. Is extending the emergency wage subsidy program for which may qualify later on in the year.
- vii. Keeping an Eye on COVID-19 “Brake” – Current restrictions remain in place until May 5th, 2021.

5. **New Business** - None was presented.

6. **Information Items**

- a. AGM Update – Lisa made a request for assistance in different roles such as Zoom host and vote counting. Mary Ella Keblusek has offered to be the head scrutineer.

Action item: Lisa will make a list of roles needing to be filled and send out to the board.

7. **Other Business**

- a. Board “Thankyous” - Search Committee.
- b. Board Announcements - Recording: Lisa/ Hospitality hour: Guy
- c. Next Meetings:
 - i. Board Meeting: May 12th, 2021 (Wednesday) 7pm – **a week EARLY**
 - 1. Opening Reading: Andrew
 - 2. Opening Song: Justine
 - 3. Closing Reading: Brent

8. **Adjournment** - Closing Reading - Guy

Meeting adjourned at 9:50pm. Submitted by Caycee Price on May 3, 2021.

APPENDIX 4 - CAMPUS PLANNING – MOTIONS FOR THE AGM ON JUNE 6, 2021

The Board and the Campus Planning Committee propose three motions:

- 1. **Developing an integrated plan for the improvement and development of the FIRSTU Campus**

2. **Participating in a feasibility study for a new building on our campus to provide mixed income housing** (see also “*Appendix 1 - Statement of Intent on the Feasibility Study for the New Building on Our Campus to provide mixed income housing*”)
3. **Approval to submit the long term site plan to the City of Ottawa** (required to proceed with future development, and to maintain flexibility for future land use)

Requirements for Motions

Actions on these motions will be guided by the following:

- The motion addressing a proposed affordable housing development project and related issues which was approved by the Congregation in October of 2018;

Moved by Werner Daechsel, seconded by Kathy Yach that:

The Board of the Congregation confirm by resolution that future development on the First Unitarian campus will include a reasonable amount of less-than-market housing and that it or the Campus Planning Committee encourage the same on properties in the vicinity of the campus;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Campus Planning Committee and Board of the Congregation organize a congregational Town Hall followed within 6 months of the Fall Congregational Meeting by a charette to consider and discuss the multiple campus development options that might suit the FirstU Ottawa Congregation.

- GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITARIAN CAMPUS, approved by the Congregation in April of 2019 (attached as a separate document);
- The need to consider developments adjacent to the campus, including the opening of the LRT station, intensification, and other land use;
- Commitment to advance FirstU’s mission, UU principles and Key Objectives for the Strategic Plan 2021-2026; and
- The urgency to address climate change, including decisions taken by the Board and the Congregation, such as the commitment to the goals of Green Sanctuary; and
- The importance of Indigenous Reconciliation.

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;

- FirstU groups and individuals have identified issues to consider in future improvement and development initiatives, including the recommendation 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 refining our long term 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, 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.

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 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.

3. MOTION FOR PRESENTATION OF LONG TERM SITE PLAN TO THE CITY OF OTTAWA

The Congregation affirms its agreement with the Board starting discussions with the City of Ottawa about a Site Plan to guide development on the entire campus over the long term. Before the proposed housing development project can proceed, the City will need to approve such a Site Plan. The main elements, meaning the green space areas and major buildings, in the Site Plan which is to be presented to the City are to be substantially as shown on the attached draft plan accompanying this motion. If the final Site Plan to be approved by the City differs substantially from the attached draft plan, it is to be brought to the Congregation for approval. If it does not differ substantially, the final Site Plan may be approved by the Board.

Such a Site Plan in no way binds FirstU or any future Board to construct any buildings, or to follow the site plan in the future. Those decisions are left to the congregation of the day.

Appendix A - Statement of Intent on the Feasibility Study for the New Building on Our Campus to provide mixed income housing.

The following statement of intent guides this motion:

- The new building will be located on and partly to the north of the so-called CPR strip of land, east of River Parkway Children's Centre and north of Rennie's Autocare. The specific location is to be determined, subject to approval, during the feasibility study.
- The building will be about 16 storeys tall, with each floor being about 750 sq.m. (8000 sq.ft.) in area, with the actual size of the building (including footprint) being determined during the feasibility study.

- The building is estimated to have between 120 and 150 residential units in the building.
- the building be constructed in accordance with high standards of energy efficiency. The feasibility study is to seriously consider the possibility of meeting or coming close to “passive house standards” or possibly “net zero” energy consumption standards.
- Consideration is to be given to choosing building materials which produce a lower carbon footprint.
- the new building will be operated and managed by an existing or new, not-for-profit organization, hereafter referred to as the “Housing Enterprise”.
- The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa will be the land owner and lessor; it is intended that the land be leased to the Housing Enterprise and not sold.
- The length of the lease is expected to be for at least 50 years.
- It is anticipated that one or more community partner organizations may participate in the operation of the Housing Enterprise. All such partner organizations will have expertise and experience in housing ventures, and some (or all) will be charitable organizations. Examples of organizations which are contemplated as possible participants are Multifaith Housing Initiative, Ottawa Salus, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corp. (CCOC), and an Indigenous housing corporation or other Ottawa area Indigenous community partner.
- The Housing Enterprise will be responsible for management and operation of the building, including all of its general upkeep, utilities, repairs and maintenance. It will also be responsible for managing the use of the building, including all landlord / tenant management, use of community space within the building, as well as the use of agreed upon outdoor or other areas near the building, which may include parking, gardens and/or a playground.
- The First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa intends to hire CAHDCO, a non-profit local developer and consulting firm with experience and expertise in the field of affordable housing, to advise the Congregation on this initiative and to conduct the feasibility study.
- The space in the building is to be primarily for residential use. Some space might be designated for community programs, support services for the residents of the building, a community enterprise (such as a café); or other services which serve people living or working on or near the campus.
- The feasibility study will consider whether underground parking for the building might offer parking to other campus partners including First U
- All the units in the building are to be rental units, meaning that they are to be rented to, and not owned by, the residents.
- The development is to be designed to encourage residents in the new building to become a community of people of varied incomes, cultures and backgrounds who will socially interact with each other.

- Arrangements are to be made for a playground for use by families living in the building which may be located close to the building or somewhere on the campus.
- It is envisioned that the resident population will consist, in broad terms, of mixed income, with corresponding rents as follows:
 - About 1/3 of residents would rent units at rates approximately equal to “market rent”.
 - About 1/3 of the residents would rent units at approximately “market rent less 20%”
 - About 1/3 of the residents would rent units at significantly below market rent.
- The Housing Enterprise would pay rent to the Congregation for the use of the land on which the building is located. The amount of rent payable for the land is to be determined in accordance with the general concept that:
 - For the “market rent” apartments, a full share of land rent, based on the share of the value of the land which is attributable to these units,
 - For the mid-range, “market rent less 20%” apartments, a reduced land rent would be paid,
 - For the lowest rent apartments, no rent for the land would be payable.
- The specific arrangements for payment of rent to the Congregation, including both the amounts and the administrative arrangements, are to be worked out as part of the feasibility study.
- The land lease arrangement is to include provisions for adjusting the rent payable to the Congregation over time.
- Efforts are to be made to arrange for a second vehicle access into the campus, at a location east of RPCC.