

Recorded Minutes for the Governing Board Retreat Parish Hall, Channing Memorial Church Saturday, September 15th, 2007

Attendance:

Facilitator
Strategic Planning
Property Committee (to include master planning)
Governance Review
Shared Ministry
Religious Education
Membership
Social Justice
Fundraising
Finance

Recorder

Tom Beall
Maryellen Doherty
Chris Laudon
Bill Peresta
Rev. Amy Freedman
Kelly Bailey
Marsha Francis
Bill Peresta
Chris Yalanis
Richard Webb

Barb Nowicki

The meeting began at 8:30 am with Chalice lighting, Check-In and Welcome.

Tom Beall established the goals for the retreat and gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the history and background for where we are now. Tom reviewed the Channing vision statement developed during last year's "Year of Decision" and approved by the congregation in May 2007. The objective of this board retreat is to explore ways in which we can put our new vision into action by setting goals for this Church year.

In the following facilitated discussion, committee chairs and team leaders stated their group's individual objectives in the near term – this year and for the next few years. These were recorded to set the stage for a discussion on our priorities and how we as a group can assist each other in accomplishing our objectives.

Presentations and Facilitated Discussion:

1. Maryellen Doherty – Strategic Planning Committee

The strategic planning committee members include Maryellen Doherty (chair), Linda Beall, Don Malinson, Norm Moore, Dave Pedrick (alternate, Chris Laudon). The goal of the committee is to provide a "road map" to our vision by articulating "How do we get there?" and "What are the steps?" They will create a 10-year strategic plan. They plan to rely on our vision statement as a basis, and will then consult with other specific groups in church to be sure they are on track. Their goal is to have something put together before the canvass that might be useful input for the canvass.

Challenges and concerns include:

- The strategic plan must include clear objectives and clear steps along the way.
- The objectives must be specific enough that we know when we have accomplished them.
- There are a number of parallel efforts going on (Master Plan, Governance Review, Capital Campaign) and we need coordination and communication between them.
- A good model for communicating with the board and the congregation is needed.

Discussion:

There is some redundancy with the Property Committee. The Property Committee's Master planning effort is a subset of strategic planning.

The strategic planning group has a very important role as facilitator to be sure that information is shared between all of the parallel groups. The strategic planning group needs representatives from all key committees and constituencies in the church to participate in the process. Our committees are involved in day to day operations. Strategic planning is involved in creating the roadmap. There must be a linkage. Strategic planning must be informed about what the committees are doing. After the Strategic Plan is in place, the committees will operate within the boundaries of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan should be a living document. The process of strategic planning is important, it helps us live day today more productively with what our future vision is.

2. Chris Laudon – Property Committee

Currently the Property Committee is involved in 3 main categories of work:

1. Ongoing administration of buildings, rental issues, repair and restoration
2. Administration of grants for restoration of buildings
3. Development of a Master Plan

Today's discussion will focus on the development of a Master Plan.

The goal of the Master Plan (MP) is to create a document, based on a consensus, that will take the issue of property out of the realm of "problem" and into a step by step plan.

Chris outlined the following steps to be taken to create the Master Plan:

1. Through October - Data gathering. Gather together all existing data through the history of the church, including oral histories from people involved in property over time. Survey all committees for specific space/property needs and repair issues and wants.
2. November - Provide a set of solutions for the congregation to view. Communicate with the congregation, through a series of meetings, so that by the annual meeting we have a 10-20 year plan for the congregation to vote on. This will include a core

- direction and a set of steps to follow that include the needs of the congregation, as well as restoration issues. Architectural and property people will be included in stages and representatives from the finance committee will help to determine that the plan is financially feasible.
3. February – review plan with congregation
 4. Create a final plan for a congregational vote in May.

Discussion:

Both Tom Beall and Richard Webb pointed out that no congregational vote should be required to move forward with a Master Plan. The Property Committee was given a mandate from the congregation to fix our buildings as part of the “Year of Decision” process and vote.

This plan must be flexible to provide for unanticipated changes in the future. Chris Yalanis reminded us not to lose sight of the incredible value of some of our property (eg. stained glass). We need to use our buildings’ credentials as historical buildings, historical standing/status and leverage this financially in grant-writing and capital campaigns. Our sales pitch to granting agencies should include a 10-year vision.

Chris Laudon would like to get all of our past historical information and property information, and what is required for restoration, into a viable architectural and engineering document.

Tom Beall pointed out that this actually includes 2 steps:
What do we need to keep it from falling down?
What do we need to restore it to its original condition?

It’s pretty easy to know what is needed to keep it from falling down. But the steps needed to keep it from falling down impact the process of restoration to original condition.

Richard Webb suggested that the property committee will need to prioritize so that they can tell the finance people how much each step will cost. Right now property has more money than they have contractors to spend it on. He feels that we don’t want to lose the momentum and need to move forward.

Tom Beall suggests that a master plan is important in order to move forward – a tool which professionals can use to move us forward. The empowerment is there to move us forward. While we do need to solicit other’s opinions in the process, a congregational vote is not necessary. We got the vote last year at the annual meeting. The issue of priorities is very important. We do need to move forward as we continue this planning process.

Tom suggested that we:

1. develop the tool (Master plan) to move forward
2. offer the opportunity for others in the congregation to become engaged
3. look at priorities for what we need to move us forward as we continue to plan
4. remember that none of these plans are carved in stone and will change in the future.

Richard suggested that we need to keep our focus and not get distracted by issues like the undercroft development question – we need to keep focused on doing the steeple.

Amy Freedman added that she was surprised to hear that there was any uncertainty about fixing the steeple. Now that we know that we are not going to leave, we have to fix the steeple. It is too expensive to take it down. We are part of a historical neighborhood. We must fix the steeple. We have the space we need right now to meet the needs of RE . We need to attend to repairing the drainage problems and our antiquated structures. Amy doesn't see that it is necessary to go back and re-visit our wants and needs, which were covered adequately during the Year of Decision process.

Chris Laudon responded that the Property Committee is looking for very specific information to figure out architecturally what to do with the space, to avoid going off in the wrong direction.

Tom Beall suggested that the Property Committee help other committees articulate needs that are useful for developing the MP, then also move ahead on critical needs for infrastructure. He feels we will need better coordination between our master planning, fund raising, and grant writing people. The process of seeking to understand space needs and articulate them in a way that is useful for the property committee is tied in to what Maryellen is doing with the Strategic Plan.

The Property Committee should define immediate needs – steeple, emergencies (using the ON-site IN-site report) and then integrate the growth of the congregation issues into this.

There was concern that the Property Committee may not have the time and resources to do a large Master Plan this year in addition to attending to planning for immediate steeple and emergency issues. Some felt that the Property Committee can't do all they have to do and also have time to do grant writing, however R.Webb pointed out that they do have the knowledge and expertise needed to do grants.

A few people expressed the opinion that the Property Committee should be defining the task for which someone else writes the grants. They need to do the gathering of technical information to write the specs for contractors so that they can give us a bid on a price so that we can apply for grants. Do we want to take the grant-writing piece and weave it into a larger fund-raising committee mission?

We are in a historic neighborhood but we are not on the list of National Historic Places. We could get this designation. Todd Thomas and Holly Governor would have the expertise to pursue historical designations. We have asked the Property Committee to let us know what is needed to pursue this.

3. Bill Peresta – Governance Review

Bill's plan is to take a look at how we do our governance and how we can do it better, targeting opportunities for improvement. The questions he will address include:

How do we make decisions and what are our processes?
What kinds of decisions do we make regularly?
What very important one-time decisions do we make and how?
How do we anticipate making future decisions?
How will moving from a Pastoral size to a Program size church impact our decision making?
Who makes the decisions at Channing? What kinds of decisions do they make? How do they make them? Do they need improvement?
How are our decisions documented and communicated? How well do we do that?

Bill plans to use a bottom-up approach, interviewing individuals and committees as we did during Year of Decision. He will identify and interview decision makers, and examine what's been their experience in making important decisions.

After Bill has documented all interviews he plans to form a governance review team to analyze the results. He plans to do this via email rather than through regular meetings. By spring of 2008, Bill plans to have analyzed all input, formulated a report, and integrated the results with the strategic planning group.

Bill has in mind 2 important goals:

1. **empowerment** so that those who need to make decisions can do so effectively.
2. **communication** so that everyone knows what those decisions are.

Discussion:

It requires a vote of the congregation to change our by-laws (change in governance). So we would need a vote at the annual meeting for next year's board to be able to work under new rules. If there needs to be a change in board structure, it needs to be done before nominations for the board in the spring. Changing the board is only one of several options. A huge change in board structure will take time to implement. If we do this it would be nice to have a timetable so that we could vote on it at the annual meeting and be ready to implement it next year.

We are dealing with a change in the size of the congregation and we need to enhance this process. We should see this not as a problem but as a transition. With growth there will be issues. We are going through a period of stretching to make things work for a larger group of people. Managers cope with complexity. Leaders cope with change. Governance is an issue that has been brought up repeatedly but keeps getting tabled. It needs to be addressed as we grow.

4. Rev. Amy Freedman – Shared Ministry

Shared ministry includes:

- Finding people
- Keeping people
- Celebrating with people and making them feel valued
- Educating people

Overseeing people
Caring for people – pastoral and wider community

With a congregation this size it's hard to have a sustained effort in all of these categories and a single minister tends to have most effort focused at one end or the other of this list. It's hard for a minister with over 150 people in the congregation to focus enough effort in all of these areas.

We are lucky at Channing to have really good care-giving. This is our strength.

Given these components of shared ministry, Amy has the following:

Shared Ministry Goals

Finding People * Keeping People * Celebrating with People * Educating People * Overseeing People * Caring for People

Near-term Goals for this Year

- Committee on Ministry review shared ministry in a systematic way
- Reinstate Worship Committee
- Develop Adult Enrichment Program
- Work closely with Halcyon Westall to expand Family Ministry
- Work closely with RE Committee to expand Youth Ministry
- Develop Policies and Procedures
- Establish Personnel Review
- Develop a Book Team for the UU Bookstore and Church Library
- Strategic Plan~ “Staffing for Growth”

Goals for Next Church Year

1. Significantly expand Director of Religious Education position
2. Pay Fair Share to the Ballou Channing District and UUA
3. Better Signage for all buildings
4. Shared Ministry brochure
5. Budget for Lay Leadership Development
6. Create a fund to help pay for delegates to attend General Assembly
7. Hold our own workshops and retreats related to shared ministry

Goals for the Next Few Years

1. Gift-based shared ministry
2. Lay Leaders constantly replacing themselves, “sharing the ministry”
3. Purchase a projector and screen for worship and education
4. Hold and publicize Tours of Sanctuary
5. Get on Tourist Map
6. Church Archives preserved and shared electronically
7. Hire a Wedding Coordinator to publicize and organize marriage ceremonies

8. Expand Sexton position to clean facilities, grounds, open/close and set-up for meetings
9. Larger percentage of budget spent on music (8-10%)
10. Permanent choir section
11. Full-time Director of Music
12. Full-time Administrator

Amy sees a need to develop policies and procedures to help cope with our larger size. In our strategic plan we need to include staffing for growth. Every group at Channing wishes they had more people (staff) working with them. All of our staffing could be expanded but the most immediate need is to expand the Director of RE position. We need an expanded RE director position for our size RE program. Amy would like to see the DRE position move towards full-time and would rather see money go to an expanded DRE than to an intern minister or associate minister.

Amy envisions a “gift-based shared ministry” – where everyone comes to share their best selves and talents. We need a “culture shift” in that church leaders should be constantly developing someone to replace them. Each leader, board member and committee chair should be constantly nurturing someone behind them to take over their job when they leave. In our current practice, the nominating committee may replace committee chairs with folks who may never have even served on the committee, rather than “bringing leaders up through the ranks”. This tends to fragment our leadership efforts and does not encourage continuity in the work of the committees.

One of our challenges is volunteer resources. How do we get people to volunteer and not burn out our “regulars”. Do we need a volunteer coordinator? It’s a real underpinning of our strategic plan. How do we do leadership development so that we find our replacements? The chair of committees should not be placed at the top by the nominating committee each year, they should be brought up through the ranks from within the committee. Leaders must take responsibility to grow their replacement, not leave it to the nominating committee and Amy. This is a shift from a pastoral model to a program model.

Chris Yalanis suggests we use local Universities to provide students for college internships for credits. But we have to be careful because these students have to be adequately supervised. What tasks do we have in our group that could be done by a student? They need oversight.

Other future goals include a permanent physical choir section with microphones in the sanctuary, and paying our fair share to the UUA. The UUA is in trouble as an organization and we should support them more. We don’t pay our fair share to the organization even though a lot of our curriculum for RE comes from the UUA, and our district administrators have provided support for us in the past.

Tom suggests that for issues like these we need to do a better job with budgeting. Each individual area needs to be articulated accurately in our budget. We need to include these things in our budget rather than depending on special collections.

5. Kelly Bailey – Religious Education

Short-term Goals – some have been met or are in the process of being met:

1. take back RE space (done) – it's fantastic to have a classroom for each class, each class to have their own space. This helps children feel that this is their place.
2. cleaning and organizing and getting RE space painted and fixed up. Youth room and office in basement. They are working room by room though out the year.
3. programming: they are using the "Pillars curriculum". For 1/3 of the year all classes are learning the same thing so that siblings can share what they have learned and parents can know what's going on. All feel part of cohesive a group.
For junior youth group: 1 week discussion, 1 week fun, 1 week go to worship, 1 week social action.
4. Search for new senior youth group advisor.
5. Increase the (paid) DRE hours.

Long-term Goals

1. Increase RE enrollment and attendance
2. Involve more parents in RE teaching – especially encourage male participation (currently no male RE teachers). More church-wide participation in RE (currently 6 of 7 RE committee members teach).
3. Enhance teacher training and provide more support for teachers.
4. Expand OWL from 7th & 8th grade to other age groups.
5. Develop children's worship program, including music in children's worship
6. Review by parents and children about how RE is doing at fulfilling needs
7. Restructure RE spaces as needed with growth

In particular RE is focusing on trying to retain kids older than 4-6th grade in the program because it's already difficult to retain the older children and we lose kids without adequate youth programming.

Discussion:

The question was raised, "If we choose to market RE as a means to bring new people into the church do we have the resources to do it?"

What would we need to budget for a full-time DRE?

Answer: We currently budget 15 hours per week but she normally puts in 25 hours or more per week without allowing for any growth in the congregation.

6. Marsha Francis – Membership

Membership is the key to the growth and livelihood of the church and requires a concerted effort. However, few new members have been recruited to the Membership Committee. Their goal this year is to encourage new folks to join the Membership Committee.

In the past, the Membership Committee has done mostly clerical work (ordering brochures, maintaining database). However, now that the database has been given to our administrator (Karen) the committee can turn its attention to recruitment and restructuring procedures.

Goals for the Future:

- Recruit new members, and encourage more diversity on the Membership Committee
- Restructure the procedures for membership aligned with Amy's goals
- Keep the strategic planning groups and Canvass Committee up-to-date on the best ways to encourage new membership.
- Fully utilize the Catalyst and Website for recruitment
- Do a better job of welcoming new people

Discussion:

Chris Yalanis suggested that the database include information about which committees members have served on in past years so as to give us a better idea of people's skills and our available human resources.

7. Bill Peresta - Social Justice

The focus topic for Channing Social Justice Committee this year will be a continuation of the Green Sanctuary theme, encouraging us to take action both individually and as a church. Hot topics nights will continue once per month – the first one is “Immigration” in October. They will also host 3 or 4 movie nights.

The Social Justice committee feels that it lacks the budget for the number of guest speakers they would like to host, but there are UU grants for increasing social justice programs in the local community and they may apply for one of these.

One issue that they are confronting is the role of the Channing Soup Kitchen. In the past the Soup Kitchen has involved a small group of people that has not successfully integrated new people. Soup Kitchen might have the potential to do more if they brought in new people.

Tom suggested that the Social Justice Committee needs to provide the Board with an accurate budget so they can use that money effectively to expand their ministry. It might be wise to identify all potential needs of the community and then examine how we might fill those voids with events or publications. How do we take the lead in the community?

8. Chris Yalanis – Fundraising, Canvass, Capital Campaign

Chris views fundraising as a timeline that includes understanding both our short and long-term needs. In the short term – what are our immediate needs for our budget? Chris will need this information from everyone immediately. He plans to implement a strategy to help the congregation meet this year's commitments and then begin to deal with the future. He would like to change our perspective and to change the nature of our fundraising. He feels that we shouldn't view fundraising as discrete events like canvass or a capital campaign.

Other points requiring consideration:

Our fiscal year doesn't line up with the tax-year or with the estate planning process.

Staying in this location requires a huge financial commitment. How do we motivate our congregation to get excited rather than paralyzed by the level of commitment needed?

We need to examine what are our assets and what are they worth? What are our options? What are our buildings worth and how can we leverage this?

Chris is planning to do a presentation this year about tax issues. This is a necessary foundation for a capital campaign launch. We also need to know more about further opportunities for grant writing. We need a coherent long-term fund-raising plan, and we need to communicate our overarching needs to the congregation.

Tom Beall has asked for more clarity on what Chris needs from us. We have some sense of urgency for things deferred for years. We need a framework in time for coming to a decision. Whatever we decide to do with capital fund-raising we will also need to do internal fund-raising since this builds ownership.

9. Richard Webb – Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has been restructured to incorporate all of the financial structures of the church. The finance committee provides oversight. They review all financial statements every month. They work with the Property Committee, with the canvass chair and serve on the canvass committee, they prepare the budget, undertake special projects like tax credits. They are looking for new younger members to join committee.

Finance Committee Goals:

- Continue to support all fundraising activity.
- Make sure that planning is realistic.
- Decide how to raise the money to repair the steeple
- Put a process in place to handle un-paid pledges
- Make succession plans to replace members who leave the committee

Discussion:

Who is currently responsible for generating new income streams (weddings, concert series, rents) for the church? In the past it has been the board who has dealt with those issues. It was suggested that we need to put in place a process for generating new sources of revenue. We have traditionally relied on the canvass but haven't looked at other things thoroughly.

10. Tom Beall – Wrap-Up : Articulate Leadership Goals

Top things we want to get done this year as a board:

1. Address problem of steeple
 - a. What grants are available that we can potentially apply to? What designations do we need as a church to be able to apply for them?
 - b. Create a committee who will do this research and write the grants.
2. Create an overarching plan for leadership development and succession.
Identify all of the membership, what roles they've had, what talents they have and how we could develop leadership.
3. Community involvement – take a leadership role with regards to social justice in the community. Empower and support social justice. Social justice committee will give us a plan (and budget) for how they will take a leadership role in the community
4. Marketing group – how else can Channing become a bigger part of the community – Develop and implement specific actions to heighten awareness of Channing's physical presence in the community.
5. Review other churches' budgets and financial documents and leverage our connection with other UU churches for financial issues and problems
6. Estate planning and tax planning strategies as presentations.
7. Pay BCD and UUA fair share.
8. Do signage for property.
9. Support for church programs and specifically the Committee on Ministry objectives – Put in place a workable worship committee. Increasing programming in life-long learning.
10. Support full-time RE director
11. Communicate the vision, keep the momentum going, embrace and communicate the vision, make this our mission, incorporate it into all we do.
12. Find ways to increase volunteerism and teachers in the RE program (this is part of finding ways to share the ministry).

These goals can be distilled down into these areas:

Strategic planning

Governance review

Fundraising

Shared ministry development

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.