

Group 1 – Highlights

(Maryellen Doherty, Nancy Caswell, Anna Smith, Sondra Gold, John Burnham, Norm Moore)

- missing from current growth talk – growing/enhancing the community, strengthening the interconnectedness
 - o one of our greatest assets
 - o warm, growing, active, happily participating
- Canvass should be more than asking for \$ contributions; we need to ask for contributions of time and talent
- Related idea: Volunteer coordinator to help both the individual and the congregation, by tracking who's involved in what, asking what people would like to be involved with, matching needs and interests/availability; what would serve the individual as well as the church
- Vision is for us now to go beyond ourselves in our ministry to outside the congregation (inner focus to outer focus)
- Good things that are happening already – more musicians, SGM, improved fellowship process, more connectedness
- People's needs/desires/interests vary by where they are in their lives; it's a growth process
- *opportunities for connectedness
- We have to look like we have our act together, including space, to move toward a more outer focus, as well as to attract people into the congregation (and we don't now)
 - o Need to be welcoming in all ways, and representative of who we are (such as artwork via artist of the month displays)
- Fear of acting v. all the plans that have already been developed – stops even small changes
 - o Why are we stuck????
 - Process is too long, and tiresome, too unwieldy, too much debate
 - Fear of negative individual responses, reactions
 - ?How do other churches do it???
 - Insufficient energy
 - Micromanagement
 - Lack of action due to “major distraction of the year”, e.g., steeple, missing \$, etc.
 - o People almost didn't come today because of the lack of progress and action to previous plans

Specific Recommendations

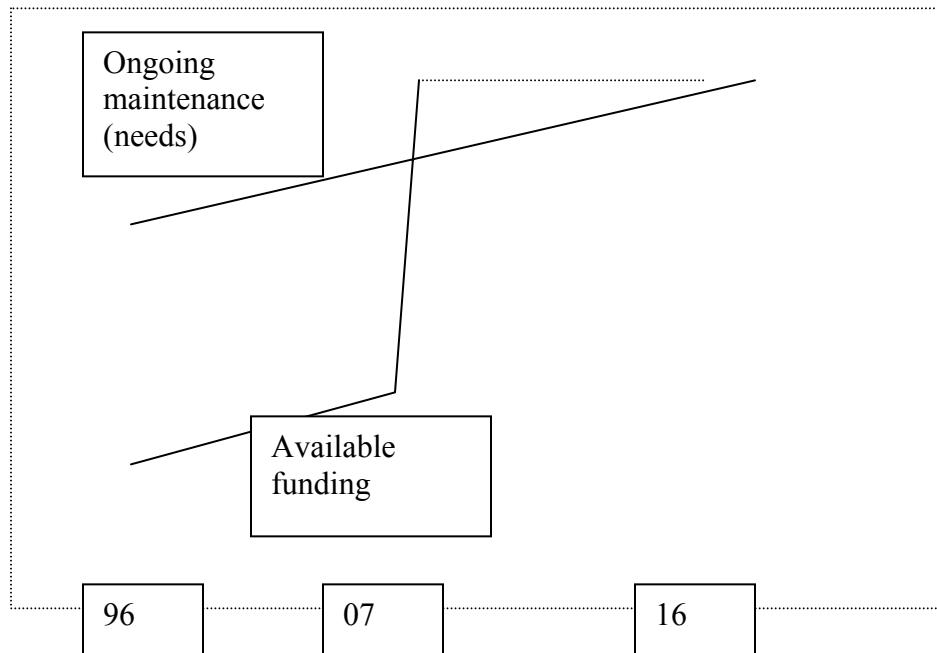
- Change bylaws so committee chairs are not part of the executive board, to allow executive board to focus on higher level, longer term issues
 - establish and regularly use a mechanism for establishing (empowered) temporary committee(s) so we delegate actions that need to take place or particular problem-solving, rather than defer or detract; could make this part of the annual retreat, to identify special committees needed for year (TT is an example of this)
 - fix the driveway now
 - eliminate the PH, develop the undercroft
 - sell property, prepare the undercroft and Sanctuary for all of our needs NOW
 - get out of the landlord business

- start NOW to make our spaces more welcoming and useful: fix driveway, remove some pews, clean up the PH, etc.
- condo-ize and buy one for our needs

Graph as shown not accurate. In 96, our maintenance needs and available funding were widely separate. We have a lot of catching up to do to get into a normal maintenance mode. (see graph)

Highlights as shared during lunch

- We have to get started – do something now! Projects to spruce up property that people can work on now (pews, driveway) (not a consensus about this as a good idea)
 - o Think creatively to get things done to meet our needs
- Growth aspects don't seem to capture strengthening the interconnectedness of our community
- Volunteer coordinator to identify resources/needs as well as serve individual needs
- Don't defer – delegate (temp board committees, institutionalized, involving “different” folks than those already serving in some position)
- Have to prove to ourselves it's okay to act – too many ideas/plans have gathered dust (why will this be different?)



Group 2

Return to A Decade Ago

- ✓ No Amy or minister of her quality C
- All lay led services P & C
- Feeling of unsustainability C
- As a church congregation really need a minister C
- Uneven quality of services C
- Lack of paid RE director C
- Keeping property together with bandaids – limited resources C
- With a small group have limited resources
- Most of energy went to RE and not to other programs C
- Everything that was good is still here P

Stay the Same

- Won't be able to retain or attract talented minister because currently requiring her to do office work.
- We can't stay the same
- Concern of burnout of committee members
- No one being trained for future comm. chair
- Don't want to lose active leaders due to burnout

What We Vision as Needs for the Future (Desires)

- Full time office manager/secretary
- Want to keep – small group ministry & other programs to encourage ministry and intimacy
- Full-time RE
- Ministerial intern
- Professional musicians sometimes during services
- Commitment for volunteer time for RE & programs expected
- Train someone to take over each committee in the future – Co-Chair
- Take greater advantage of UU Ballou Channing training resources
- Our buildings get repaired
- What kinds of training & programs would be required to grow
- How would we keep energy members now have about current programs while expanding
- Need full-time sexton
- Do we want to keep tenants
- Replace rental income
- Sell Channing House to Church Community Housing
- Apply for grants for our programs
- Educate members & friends about expected contribution of money and/or volunteer time
- Current leadership needs to ask for what they need
- A more diverse congregation in as many dimensions you can imagine

Group 3

Return to: No plan? No goals?

50 members or so
No long-term funding
No income established to sustain properties

- No plan – imbalance will continue
- We changed minister and were lay-lead for more than a year – then 2 interim ministers
- Slow implosion was result. Schism?
- Lost anything by growing? RE was close knit. Core active members.
 - Beautiful now w/ more input
 - Exciting & fresh input & ideas
 - But more work & committee members are overworked
- How did we get here?
 - Goals more existential
 - Celebration of individuals
 - Differences celebrated
 - Foster spiritual growth
 - Be responsible citizens
 - Concentrated on being citizens

Now

- 180 members/110 pledges
- Less kids in RE “Engine of Growth” / RE Committee overworked / Not enough time for planning ahead & building a good program Youth Group, esp., shrunk
- Insufficient funds for steeple repair
- What’s driving us now to grow = steep & church upkeep
- What’s our demographic? More older, retired people?
- Need more leaders in RE
- Average annual gift less. Why?
- People will up contribution if can see results!

Future[How do we generate energy needed – we had it as small group – why not as large group?]

- 300+ members – 300K in pledges – steeple could be repaired
- Would need more space in P.H.
- 2 services on Sunday & one on Saturday
- If twice as many members, would we split in 2
- Remove steeple?
- Part of the community, so we are seen as essential to Newport tourism
- Weddings
- Renovate / Update Sanctuary / Auction off pews – Julia Ward Howe pew?
- Sanctuary a burden or opportunity?
- Unitarians not that numerous
- Outreach? Unrealistic – 200 slow growth may be better.

Group 4 [refused to consider returning to 10 years ago scenario]

No change in size scenario

- Assistant professional temporary ministry (students?) provides services our minister to draw on
- *** Increased endowment for physical plant & capital improvements (Endowment Program)
- Needs will be changing
- More paid employees
- Buildings will be in top shape
- *** Structural civil engineering report done & paid for all physical plants/ complete reports
- Sell Channing House and use money to fix church & Parish Hall
- Have a capital campaign to fix what we have & provide the resources
- *** Targeted fund raising incrementally (for specific portions of the property)
- *** Capital campaigns
- *** Borrowing from banks
- *** Foundation grants for windows
- *** Re-think how we use the physical plant
 - Environmental issue leads repairs to the sanctuary
 - Comfort & upgrade sanctuary space – add sunlight – Let's take out the pews
- Parking will continue to be an issue / carpooling for the environment will be our commitment
- *** Greater partnership with the UUA
- *** Improve partnerships with the Elks and all neighbors
- People would get burned out and we commit to only a few programs every year
- *** Restructure governance model

Big Change Scenario

- Absolutely restructure governance model (Program Council & Committee Council)
- ROAD SHOW – planned marketing
 - Plays on cable TV
 - Soulful sundown – shared with other places, cable
 - Shared ministry – publish
 - Photos to newspapers (free marketing)
- MONEY – for membership growth
 - RE ads in August
- We will need space – buy land – expand
- Let go of CH & PH – build a huge structure that meets all our need
- The more we grow, the more we have to keep up with [more good, more chaos, more problems]
- Steeple & foundation need to be solid
- Plan growth - phases

Group 5

“In-Site” Paper

- 4.5 – 5 million over 20 yrs = \$250,000/yr.
- Funding for church repair
 - Possible and probable
 - Capital campaign would be necessary
- Can we as a group support financially
 - A capital campaign?
 - Should we cut and run?

Practical Problems

- 100 attend a 300 person church
- Bad parking?
- The other facilities are presently ill suited to the church
- Spaces are too specialized
 - This church demands only sanctuary use
- Cong. Church went to Middletown
 - Built meeting spaces – highly successful
 - The church left behind
- We need better meeting spaces
 - Either develop the undercroft
 - Or raising money thru congregational expansion
 - Or is another church possible to be our home?

Summary

Past Scenario

- Not many people with small children are represented here today (Saturday is difficult for people with kids.)
- No resources of any kind would be sustainable
- No Amy or minister of her quality
- No wealth of programming

Present Scenario *** Burn Out ***

- Diversity of programs that appeal to a wide range of people – How do we sustain this?
- We can't stay the same

Future Scenario

- Diversity in congregation and programming
- Increased staffing
- Continue to encourage small group feeling
- Commitment for volunteer time & pledging for members & friends is expected
- Broader and more diverse pool of engaged members
- Stewardship of historic properties
- Apply for grants
- Leadership needs to ask for what they need
- Bigger outreach & visibility in community