



BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

June 29, 2020

Board Members Present (by zoom): Moderator Rev. Dwayne Johnson, Jim Garner, Johanna Hardy, Linda Hornsby, Terri Neal, and Knut Panknin. Lilah Blackstone was unable to attend. **Guests:** Rev. Cathy Alexander, Rev. Elder McCray, Dr. Carla Sherrell and Rev. Emma Chattin.

Rev. Dwayne Johnson started the meeting at 6:05 and offered an opening prayer.

Rev. Dwayne noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss planning for future reopening of the church and what benchmarks do we need to see, what values will continue to guide us in considering options for future reopening. He shared that church staff continue to participate in meetings with, and listen to, city officials are saying to faith communities on this topic.

The group engaged in a thoughtful discussion considering the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

- The group discussed the question of where are we at this moment?
 - Although the City has moved to phase 2, which allows limited in-person church services, the decisions to move to this posture appears to be more related to political realities and constitution, than optimum protective operations.
 - There was consensus among the group that now is not the time to return to in-person services. It was noted that high numbers of new cases continue in our area; reopening in other parts of the country are seeing increases in cases; we have many congregants with compromised health conditions; and although we could conduct deep cleaning between services and create some method of contact tracing, we do not have capacity to enforce practices (such as how to handle the extra person showing up after capacity is hit; how to enforce social distancing; and enforcing mask wearing).
 - We do not want to be in a position of determining first and second tier of congregants or is telling someone they should not be here because of their health condition, etc.
 - The group also discussed tenant organization that also use the church facilities – we need to determine if the building is closed for all purposes or whether we have different standards for smaller groups, such as NA, could begin using with restrictions. Again, the issue is ensuring enforcement of safety protocols and need for deep cleanings. It may be premature to consider.
 - The group noted that it is important to answer questions from congregants and keep open communications.
- The next conversation focused on: What do we need to see happen? What are the benchmarks to guide reopening? How will our values guide us? Key comments from the conversation include:
 - Feel safest when we have a vaccine – safest benchmark
 - Unitarians recommend not opening until May 2021
 - Some thought it is was too early to discuss benchmarks
 - Other groups: all of it goes back if we were to open building for anyone, we need to have protocols in place (is the space cleaned before and after?)
 - We need to research risk management and liability issues

- We need be cognizant of what it would mean to reopen and then have to close again – could create lots of confusion
 - This might be one of many waves/viruses
 - It was suggested that we also write down and ask questions; we can do research and check out resources; there might be questions we never even asked ourselves
 - A number of churches are meeting and are not practicing social distancing
 - We need to keep focused on who is this decision for and who are we trying to keep safe?
 - Safety, health, and love for fellow congregants must be a guiding value.
 - It was suggested that we gather information and research things we can start doing now in preparation – there are CDC guidelines for cleaning and ventilation; deep cleaning before and after; different AC systems? Keep ample supply of disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizers, and masks
- The group then discussed next steps
 - Rev. Dwayne recommended that we create document for gathering questions (google doc); build a list and organize our questions by topics to research and address
 - There is general agreement on pursuing with this approach.
 - Also, there is general agreement on not reinstating in-person services or reopening the building at this point
 - And, there is general agreement that we are not clear on benchmarks, but gathering questions and research will likely help us on that front.
 - Johanna agreed to start creating a compilation of questions document. See asked that the group send questions to her at brassrat93@gmail.com; and to send them by this weekend/early next week.
 - It was also noted that we need to think about how we can be supportive of each other and other congregations, including MCC NoVA and UFCDC. Virtual church network? Share info and best practices? There was interest in developing a marketing video with caring for people's health and safety and invitation to join our services

Linda Hornsby offered a closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.