

Minutes of the Official Board of Sydenham Heritage United Church

Wednesday April 20, 2022

Present: Sharon Davidson, Maureen Gilmore, BJ Leighton, Lorne White, Yvonne Wright, Paul Shepherd, Ron Stinson, Verna Timpener, Terry Matheson

Absent Andrew Advincula

Sharon called the meeting to order.

Sharon expressed the gratitude and thanks to Darrell Picketts for his long service as co-chair of the Board. We are saddened to see him leave the Board but he deserves this well earned break from the tasks of the Board.

Maureen was welcomed as the new Co-Chair of the Board.

All the board members were welcomed back to this year of service.

Land Acknowledgement – offered by Yvonne

Devotion offered by Terry Matheson. A reading from the UCC Website authored by Sara Stratton titled 'Get Over It? Or Confront It?'

Sharing Circle

- **Sharon asked that we take some time to articulate our hopes and aspirations for the board over the next year. Each person is provide with three minutes**
- **The following is a consolidation of the hopes/aspirations shared by the Board Members present**
- Christian Governance – to demonstrate Christian leadership and beliefs, to not be so reactive
- Bring my Christian beliefs to all interaction
- Remind people that back room discussions are not helpful
- I love this church
- Take role of property seriously and the stewardship of this building
- Want to continue to have SHUC benefit from the Allan Cook Foundation
- I want us to gel well as a Board and look forward to connections with each other
- My skills are people , we need to put each other first
- We need to use our Holy Manners
- Explore relationships in the community particularly our fellow United Churches
- Want to see us share resources and program, and getting to know each other
- Manpower is a resource that is limited for us all, there is no need to reinvent the wheel
- We need to find ways to make this beautiful old expensive building pay for itself
- We need to rejuvenate worship to be a place of spiritual renewal
- Our outreach needs to be in partnership with other community programs /services
- A return to some normalcy of community care for each other
- Financial stability – want to watch our assets grow
- Find ways to rent the building out

- Find ways to have people make commitments to work of church- so much time is often required like SSC and other tasks are less time – making sandwiches; its hard now to find people to commit to the work
- Want to see people back in the pews
- Want to see Paul continue to be involved with the Community Groups in Brantford
- Hope for clarity of the Finance Lead role
- There is great potential in the proposed Home Care Hub renting space weekly
- Beyond the financial enhancements we may be able to be involved with the participants
- During Covid felt like I lost my motivation
- Would like to see the sanctuary full and feel the vibrancy that once was there
- Would like to see stabilize, incomes increase and expenses decrease
- We have a lovely building that we can utilize
- My hope is Resurrection as individuals and in how we connect to the Brantford community
- There is so much sniping in this congregation, we don't need to like each other but we need to love each other
- We need to redirect our energy to the community
- Find the intersection between our passions and the needs of Brantford
- Coming out of covid and still feel nervous coming to church and the activities
- Love keeping people connected , I love communication, snippets, newsletters, knitting and crocheting group
- Want to be connected to what ive been missing.
- Living outside the community my contribution will be different
- My roles at General Council and at the Region can be a link back to SHUC
- Hope that we can have people return to the pews on Sundays
- Our connections to the other United Churches should extend to Burford, St George as well as Brantford
- Wish that as an elected board we operate in an honest and open manner and be seen in a positive and strong light
- As a participant in planning in Brampton of United Property Resource Corporation , hope to be able to bring insight and experience back to SHUC to inform our planning
- Generate energy in our community of faith

Sharon thanked people for their contributions. She suggested that we consider a one day or half day retreat, that would permit time to connect socially as well as articulate goals for the next year. She asked that it be considered and will be placed on May agenda for decision making.

Congregational Health

1. Maureen inquired about how meetings are conducted – how is decision made for Board Meetings to be hybrid?
 - Sharon clarified that Board Meetings have transitioned to hybrid from solely Zoom over course of last two years

- For any meetings a zoom links should be available to ensure inclusivity until full in person meetings can safely resume for all
2. Larry raised issue of Masking. He stated that he is very disappointed in SHUC. He expressed we are being too cautious. Many surrounding churches have made masking optional. We did not ask the congregation their opinion about removing the mask mandate. He pointed out that while masks are worn in the sanctuary, they are removed during coffee hour after the service.

Discussion

Decision

1. The mask mandate will remain in place for another month given the increasing Covid numbers
2. It is a personal choice to go for coffee after worship where masks will be removed while drinking/eating.
3. We do need to dialogue with the congregation about this issue. A questionnaire will be developed for the congregation. One item will be the mask mandate. Other items will be what is keeping people from returning to church on Sundays? What would bring you back to the church? How do we enhance the worship experience? Questionnaire will be placed on website, in Snippetts, newsletter and spoken to during the service.
4. The responses will inform the decision making of the Board.

Motion to accept the agenda moved by Ron Stinson, seconded by Yvonne Wright, carried.

Motion to accept the minutes of March 9,2022 moved by Lorne White, seconded by Maureen Gilmore, carried.

Business Arising from the Minutes

1. **Summer planning** – will be spoken to in Worship Report

2. **Home Care Hub Rental**
 - Contract forwarded to the organization
 - Rental fee set at \$100.00/day
 - The organization did ask if there would be a reduction in rental if they utilized the building five days a week rather than three days a week
 - As this is not a charitable group, they are making a profit, the rental fee will remain \$100/day
 - Ron will follow up with the Home Care Hub to finalize the contract and to set a start date

3. **Chair Lift Training**
 - Training is needed to permit access to building for worship and committee meetings and community use
 - There was a list of those trained originally compiled by Larry Eddy- we need to obtain the list and have it held by Aileen in the office for future reference
 - Paul wants to be trained

- Will send out notice in Snippetts inviting people to declare interest in training
4. Electronic Sign – the city has provided approval for placement of sign
 5. United Property Resource Corporation – to be spoken to in Ministers report
 6. Deed/title change – trustees are awaiting input
 7. UCC Hub – has profile been uploaded ?
 - Administrative forms and financial information ready to be posted
 - Profile report was approved at AGM, initial endorsement by region has been received , ready to be uploaded

Ministers Report

- Conducted interesting funeral
- Belonging Brant – leading drum circle next month
- Shared summer worship potential with neighboring United Churches
- Vacation dates set
- Study dates set
- May 7 celebration of Life for Don Wood
- Grief Workshops this spring – in person and on line
- United Property Resource Corp – able to provide advice on how to use buildings – have initiated some telephone contact , hope to invite to a Board Meeting
- Podcast – 11 episodes, a sales pitch for the church
- Has yielded one couple approaching Paul to marry them in the fall in Keswick
- Idea – the church could make a great location for a Halloween Party
- Participated in a Future Church event – discussion with Cummer UC focussed on understanding how online worship is experienced by the ‘unchurched’

Committee Reports

Stewardship& Outreach

- Legacy Seminar Saturday April 23rd 10;30 to noon
- Low registration
- Sandwich prep for Roger Boyd ministry goig well
- Tia McGrath concert being planned for Fall 2022

Spiritual

Pastoral Care

- Continue to do what they do so well connecting with our congregant

Worship

- SHUC has been invited to provide summer worship along with three other churches
- The Worship committee supports this initiative provided there is clarity and agreement with respect to dates, lay leaders, music , and coverage of pastoral care
- Suggest that a committee from each worship committee meet to clarify the details
- **Motion from the Worship Committee that SHUC go ahead and work with the other United Churches to share summer services moved by Yvonne Wright, seconded by BJ Leighton, carried.**
- March 20th – service was not streamed nor was it recorded; raised need to have a plan when there is a glitch in future to communicate delay/ cancellation

Discussion

Decision

- The Tech team can message the communication team who will place message on social media
- Another resignation from committee, committee member has been asked to reconsider decision
- Membership recruitment and retention is an ongoing challenge on this committee

Youth Report

- No report

M& P

- Membership retention and recruitment an issue for this committee as well
- Committee has identified a potential conflict of interest
- Maureen has been member of committee , as new cochair of Board should she resign?
- Cosulted with Diane at the region office
- Maureen can either resign or step back from the committee to avoid the potential of conflict
- Maureen will step back from M& P during Co-Chair term

Communication

- Subscribers have dropped from 155 to 133
- There is an increase of activity within Snippets links
- Summer Newsletter being prepared

Trustees

- If additional money is needed for Operating Budget a motion is required
- **Motion that the board approve another \$20,000.00 be advanced to the Operating Budget as needed, moved by Norma Janzen, seconded by Ron Stinson, carried.**

Discussion

- Concern we are depleting our investments
- This concern was expressed at the AGM as well
- A fear that what happened at Heritage will happen here at SHUC
- Financial reports are not received until late in day of the Board meeting which does not permit time to review
- Repeated monthly motions to transfer money to operating budget is problematic
- Payroll each month is \$13,000.00 (\$39,000.00 Jan to March 2022) ; Jan to March 2022 income is \$29,992.00

Decisions

- Treasurer report will be submitted no later than 130 pm on day of Board Meetings
- Review of financial position will be monthly
- Fundraising beginning slowly , this will be monitored as well

Property

- Auction realized approximately \$1900.00 that will be directed to the operating budget
- Training for new electronic sign being planned, will include Aileen, Paul, Larry Pickard, Darrell Picketts, and Ron Stinson

Horseshoe Falls Region

- Yvonne sahed that there was an incident during a meeting regarding Palestine and Israel that was unnerving and ended with a call for prayer for wisdom in how to manage the situation
- May 26 & 27 AGM
- Jenny Stevens and Diane Blanchard are retiring this summer

Edge

- Curiosity Cohort is a five week workshop
- Reimagining what church can be
- Similar to questions we have been asking at SHUC
- If you are interested please advise Sharon
- Membership survey from the AGM yielded 7 responses
- Themes of that limited number were strikingly aligned – community dinners, united churches in the area food to the needy and mid week meditation

New Business

- Invitation to participate in UCC Mission and Development (formerly Erie Presbytery Council)
- 3 to 4 annual meetings
- Randy McKenzie is facilitating

Next Meeting

- May 11, 2022

- Devotion – Verna
- Paul closed meeting with prayer