

Social Justice Council Meeting

May 27, 2023

The Zoom-only meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM. Attending: Linda Stoller (chair), Carole Vaughn, Carol Hamilton, Rev. Amy Kindred, Eloise Hardman, Eliseo Santana, Trude Diamond, Barbara Foley, Davonne Irion, Patti Hanks, Ann Myers, Sue Hand and Anne Burnham (secretary).

Minutes (April 29th): Trudy made motion, Carol seconded, minutes accepted.

New and Continuing Issues

- 1) Policy/Procedure for Space with Nonprofits: Carol H. reported that the meeting with Rev. Amy, Anne Gilbert and Patti to review rental policy was productive. Anne G. has a total grasp of the many types of rentals and extensive procedures. Carol read the new wording (currently in draft form) for Category B – Voluntary Facilities Usage Fee (a.k.a. Love Offering):

“In the spirit of unity, UUC welcomes local social justice groups. For those seeking meeting space, provided no ancillary services are required (see “Fees” above), the UUC Administrator will request approval from the Social Justice Council Chair to process their meeting(s) as Category B. To expedite the request, the Social Justice Council Chair will take an email vote of the Council and, if passed, obtain a UUC Social Justice Representative for the applicant group. The Representative will be the UUC point person at their meeting(s) and is responsible for ensuring clean up is according to UUC requirements (details can be obtained from an experienced Representative or from the UUC Administrator). If unable to attend a future meeting(s), the Representative will find a substitute. Once approved and a Representative designated, the Social Justice Chair will inform the UUC Administrator who will process the application as Category B, inform the applicant that the rental fee will take the form of voluntary financial donations (as described above), and that a UUC Representative will be point person at their meetings. If not approved, the UUC Administrator will process the application according to the regular fee structure.”

Further discussion: Linda stated that we should encourage local nonprofit groups that are aligned with our purposes and priorities to rent space (no charge, love offering only) at UUC. This B Category applies to rentals for regular meetings, rather than events, which typically involve staff, catering, etc. Eloise clarified that the SJC representative doesn't need to actually be in the meeting room, just in the general vicinity while the meeting is ongoing (and not at the group's meetings off-campus). Eliseo pointed out the necessity of quick turnarounds in some cases; Linda is prepared to send emails to SJC members, asking for immediate reply if time is short. AA's regular meetings have been grandfathered in with a separate contract and they pay rent. Anne B. mentioned that having community events at UUC may have the added advantage of an extra 20% of funding from the Inflation Reduction Act for solar installation.

- 2) St. Pete Pride 2023: Linda reiterated that Lifelong Learning will have a table at the Family Day on June 10th, 10 AM-2 PM. On June 24th, the Pride Parade will start at 6 PM and go from Albert Whitted Airport to Vinoy Park (the reverse of last year). UU Tarpon Springs will be joining us, as well as UU St. Pete, which will be providing a car and flatbed trailer to decorate for the parade; there will be some seating on the flatbed. Parking is difficult; limited parking will be available at UU St. Pete. Sue stated the importance of having a big UUC presence.
Dunedin Pride Week: There will be a golf cart parade in Dunedin on June 23rd from 4-5 PM. Linda will ask in her SJ Report tomorrow if any member has (or knows of someone who has) a golf cart that UUC members could decorate and drive in the parade.
- 3) Juneteenth: Trude spoke about Race Amity Day at the Clearwater Bahai Center on June 11th from 1-4 PM. Eliseo mentioned that he will be speaking there about the local Hispanic community. Linda suggested the event might provide a good opportunity to have lunch after the church service, before going to the Bahai Center. Trude will post a notice about it in the e-Octagram. There will be many other events to celebrate Juneteenth throughout the Tampa Bay area.

- 4) Family Promise: Anne related that Denis Sousa, Executive Director of Family Promise, spoke at Open Issues recently. The agency, which serves unhoused families (no single individuals), is changing its program from a rotational model with different host congregations to a static location in Pinellas Park. That will enable it to serve up to 15 families at a time (vs. 4 presently) and provide more stability for the families. This plan will involve support congregations only and make it more possible for UUC to consider participating. Stay tuned as the plans progress.
- 5) WeCare Babysitting and more: Rev. Amy said that Rich Cann is the coordinator, Stephen Pierre is the point person. All Saturdays in June, July and August, from 10 AM-2 PM, are covered. Currently there are no signups, will see if there's a need for it. Discussion led to the possibility of inviting the foster families to some UUC community events, like Trunk or Treat for Halloween, which might also be a consideration for refugee families--or both groups of children might welcome donations of school supplies.
- 6) Abortion on the Ballot: UUC is a collection hub for abortion petitions and Sue Hand is the point person. Sue will be at UUC to receive signed petitions on Sundays (2-4 PM) and Wednesdays (4-6 PM). For security reasons, she feels there should be two people present at all times; she is looking for help with the Google link for developing a signup sheet. In the past two weeks she has collected 71 petitions (9 that the League of Women Voters dropped off) and handed out 100+. A few of us have taken the Floridians Protecting Freedom training on Zoom and Sue also has a handout that gives info for how to petition in public places. We need to spread the word about being a hub; Carole V. made an announcement at a recent North Democratic Club meeting and Carol H. offered to contact Christa, the NAACP Upper Pinellas secretary. Ann M. mentioned that anyone living in a residential facility can request that a registrar go there to register residents. Anne B. asked if we would be having a table at St. Pete Pride; Sue will check with Bill Norsworthy to see if Dems have plans and Megan may have petition signing at the Lifelong Learning table at Family Pride.

Treasurer's Report: In Marlene's absence, Linda reminded us that Marlene will be officially retired as treasurer of the SJC in a few days. She really had two jobs: #1) tracking income/expenses and coordinating with Joe Pace in order to prepare the monthly SJC reports, and #2) as Community Outreach coordinator (researching 501c3s, bringing info to SJC meetings for selection, notifying recipients that they've been selected, putting notices in the e-Octagram, and paying them). Trude verified that her husband, Bob Hedlund, has accepted the treasurer position (#1); Linda is still looking for someone to do Outreach (#2).

Outreach for June will be Equality Florida (voted on earlier). Linda recommended Clothes to Kids for July & August again this year; Eloise made motion, Trude seconded, passed. Patti mentioned that the RE kids will be decorating a collection box for kids' clothing to put in the lobby; there may also be a box to collect sock donations from congregational members (in planning stage).

Committee Reports

- 1) Racial Justice: Trude reported on May activities at UUC: Foundation 451's Banned/Challenged Books Donation and Arts Unite Us (14 volunteers, positive feedback, e.g., "learned a lot," "had fun," and "the value of interacting with the artists and audience"). See Juneteenth (above) re: Race Amity Day (intersectional with Racial Justice).
- 2) Refugee Task Force: Barb said that work will continue with the family from Sudan and there may be other Sudanese families coming; some financial support from the SJ Refugee Fund may be needed. She will be keeping in touch with the Afghan families, but they no longer need ESL training. Jewish Family Services is no longer matching churches with refugee families.
- 3) FAST: Linda reported on a wonderful press conference in front of City Hall recently re: the lack of affordable housing in St. Pete. The mayor and city council were asked to commit to 5,000 units by the end of Mayor Welch's 4 years (vs. present commitment for 3,200 units in the next 10 years). There will be an investment drive with corporate leaders to raise money. FAST will be taking a short rest during the summer.
- 4) Compassion & Choices: Anne reported that she met recently with the St. Pete Quaker discussion group (10 attendees in person and on Zoom). She is in the process of following up with additional info to email the group.

- 5) LULAC: Eliseo listed lots of important events that LULAC is involved with all around the Tampa Bay area. Recent events at UUC: Teachers Union "Work to Live" event and Hispanic Women's Coalition monthly meetings. Sheriff Gualtieri will be speaking on June 13th, which will provide an opportunity to do some education around immigration.
- 6) Environmental Justice: Eloise had to leave the meeting early, no report.
- 7) Additional agenda item: Rev. Amy mentioned that Margie met with Farm Fresh to finalize their contract renewal. Vanessa told Margie that she and husband John are seeking groups for their catering business that are in step with UUC values, that they want to be part of the "We" congregation. They consider UUC a hidden jewel in Pinellas County. Vanessa also quietly mentioned that they are doing a food bank for one hour on Saturdays for 50 families in need and that a second Spanish speaker would be helpful for that; Eliseo said he knows people who would be interested. Rev. Amy will ask Anne G. to connect Vanessa with Eliseo. Would they need more food (might be able to use contributions members leave in the lobby)? Sue wondered if there might be produce from the garden that could be shared also.

SJC Calendar: Carol H. said that 50+ members have subscribed to the new Social Justice Calendar of upcoming social justice events happening at UUC and beyond.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next Zoom-only meeting will be on Sat., June 17th at 9:30 AM (the third Sat. rather than the fourth, which is the Pride Parade).

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham