GPC Governing Board

Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2021

Via hybrid live & Zoom conference call: Rev. Dr. Douglas Cederberg, Dennis Christo, Kim Paré, David Raphael, Charles Whittall, Richard Grayson, Robert Converse

Guest: Nancy White (minutes taker until Kim arrived late)

This Zoom conference meeting commenced at 6:34 p.m.

Dick offered a prayer for God’s help and guidance, be kind to one another and look to Christ. Amen.

**VOTE**: The GB meeting minutes from 6/22/21 had been previously distributed and reviewed. Bob moved to accept the minutes as written. Charlie seconded. Unanimously approved. No opposition and no abstentions.

Financial status: Charlie Whittall said monthly statement was sent out. Doing okay but need same weekly contributions as this week just to make payroll. Charlie signed the Otis Elevator contract that will tie us to them for 5 years in exchange for 5% off the bill. Charlie reports that there is no one else in this area so we might as well take advantage of the 5% discount.

Bob asked if we had received the money from the YMCA yet. Charlie said no. Nancy said she had reached out to them once already but we’ll try again. Bob said it usually comes in around now.

We had good attendance from the first combined 9:30 service. There were a lot of early service congregants. We also had folks from the baptism. The family gave the church a debit card to pay for the baptism. Doug will buy a new air circulator. Doug said he would talk to families about getting to church on time or early not late as they usually do. The baptism family attended the coffee fellowship. Thank you to Rich and Ellen Green for providing coffee fellowship. We should continue to provide but we would need volunteers to do it. Put up a sign-up sheet. Charlie notified Shon that we will be needing to use the kitchen on Sunday mornings.

New business: Burncoat Neighborhood cook out – Dennis gave an overview of the request by the Greendale Neighborhood FaceBook Group to use GPC on Saturday, August 21, 2021, (11 a.m. – 5 p.m.).

Dave said that a few months ago the GB said we were not going to allow outside groups to use the facilities until the end of this calendar year. He’s not against the Greendale Neighborhood Group but of making an exception to the GB’s previous decision.

Dennis said the group only wants to use the green space on Fales Street and the bathrooms. He thinks its not an invasion nor contrary to the GB decision. Dave recommended they rent a couple port o’ potties.

Bob said there will need to be someone there in support of the facilities. Russ Vickstrom said he will attend. Russ said they were also planning on renting a dunk tank and have a lot of ideas. Russ said in lieu of money they can bring food for the Food Pantry or donate money to the FP. Charlie said there have been about 50-60 people excitedly responding to the post and one lady has already started a food drive.

Nancy said she thinks she and Ken would probably be attending. Ken grew up in that neighborhood and belongs to the Greendale Neighborhood Group.

Dave suggested changing our name to Greendale Community Center. Nancy said that was discussed long ago. Dennis added that we are a welcoming church, open to the community with services provided to the community but we are a church first. Charlie suggested setting up a table with volunteers to talk up GPC membership.

Dick asked about liability insurance. Dennis said he knows of groups taking out an insurance rider to fund Somebody from the church has to be responsible. We no longer have a custodian.

**VOTE:** Kim made a motion to allow the Greendale Neighborhood Group use the Fales Street green space and the Francis Street parking lot for a nonalcoholic event including the purchase of an insurance rider, their own port o’ potties, cleaning up after themselves, and respectfully adhering to noise limits in the GPC neighborhood. Dave seconded the motion. No further discussion. Unanimous approval. No opposition. No abstentions. Dennis will notify Russ Vickstrom and Charlie will inform Curtis that the GB chair will let Russ know and Russ will share the information of the vote.

Kim asked if there is any public notice regarding the shuttering of GPC to outside groups for the remainder of the calendar year. Dick said he replied to several people, 6 groups asking for building use and they accepted the limit. Remote/Zoom contact has actually worked better for them.

Dennis said he received a resignation email from the GB by Richard Greyson effective 7/15 due to personal and family commitments. Dennis thanked Dick for all he has done as a GB member and all of his activities in manning the Facilities Task Force, etc.

**VOTE:** Dave moved to accept Richard Greyson’s resignation with sorrow. Charlie seconded. Regretfully, unanimously accepted by all. No opposition. No abstentions.

There are two options to fill the vacancy, to hold a congregational vote or ask the incumbent from the most recent January election. Dave thinks we ought to have a congregational vote. There was a discussion about the term of service. Charlie said usually the person who fills a vacancy would complete the (two year) term. Dave suggested the term be until the next election/congregational vote in January 2022.

A future issue to discuss, before the next January congregational meeting, is bylaw clarification for vacancies.

**VOTE:** Charlie made a motion to elect Nancy White to fill in the unexpired term of the open vacancy. Bob seconded. Nancy was excused from the room for a vote. Dave suggested going into executive session for a vote. Nancy White has been voted to the GB for the remainder of the open term’s position. Nancy said she has been prayerfully praying about the request.

Dennis said he has two inquiries for the custodian position. One candidate was in the running for the last posting and the other person was put forward by Matt. There was a committee from the last hiring (Marion McLaren, Russ Vickstrom, Carlo Cimato, Michael Wilder). Dennis has not reached out to Carlo and Mike but Marion and Russ are aware of the vacancy and moving forward with a candidate. They had previously gone on Indeed to recruit. Dennis said the one person he has information on was referred as he has 10 years’ experience at the Antiquarian Society. He said the reason he stopped working was due to heart surgery. He’s looking for part-time/20 hours work.

Kim suggested interviewing the candidate of choice and only if the candidate doesn’t meet the criteria, then advertise. It’s an employee’s market and not many people are going to be looking for a $15/hour part-time position. Dennis said he’ll call Carlo and Mike to ask if they can join the revival of the former committee for an interview.

The Mission Implementation Team’s (MIT) paper had several pages of comments answering a dozen questions. The GB was asked to discern the top three-five bullets presented. Dennis said he would like the GB to look at each question they write one take-away. Dave said he went through all of the pages and found a statement from May 2020. He read the questions. They all talk about what we used to do and what we should be doing. The three questions should realistically answer the three big questions about our current situation. Dennis said the Search Committee used those three questions to formulate their process. The mission/values/vision was Team TLC’s body of work. From that came the MIT three big questions. Now is an opportunity to use the feedback from the MIT to get to the larger questions.

Doug said MIT was served eight questions and after much determination their biggest question for them was how to be a church if we’re closed to people who are not part of our church. The building being closed is a barrier to being a church. Dave said that after reading all of the responses, none of the options has grown membership. The problem has not been resolved by being open to the community. The community knows we’re there. It’s just not a time when people are running to church. We have to send this to the congregation and ask if they want to stay the way we’re going until we run out of money or merge with a church with similar problems to unite.

Doug said the MIT group asked how many times do we have to continue with this activity? Kim added that the church is not going to grow from simply opening the building. In her time, none of the groups (Scouts, etc.) were participating as GPC members. As Dave said, we need to decide if another church wants to join us, and, if not, when to close GPC or sell the building as another venue. Dennis said we are a church to learn about the bible, Christ, and church. Over the last 20 years, many people have come and gone but a dozen or so have stuck around. New members are not joining. You can’t keep doing the same, as we have been especially in the last few years, with dwindling resources and an aging congregation.

Dave asked about whether churches connect to advertise their resources in merging. Doug said he doesn’t see a lot of mergers happening since it’s usually just waiting for the inevitable, closure, to happen.

Dick exited the meeting.

Dennis said he tried to form the FUT and MIT to move their tasks forward. There were few volunteers. The members were solicited. Nancy said it’s always been that way. Volunteerism needs a push. She thinks the three questions are too nebulous. How do we get new members? We’re not going to answer this question. We can answer what to do with the property. We make plans that include a process. When we’re free of the property, we decide who we want to be as a church. Maybe whatever money is brought in rents a space. We’re supposed to be sharing the word, loving our neighbor, and all other Christian things. What is our legacy when we are free of the land purchased for GPC? We’ve got to work with the concrete spaces. We need to start the mourning process. What we were is not who we are anymore.

Doug said we need to pose questions to the congregation to answer about the property not the 40 years of recent wandering. People want to congregate together. Dennis said everything everyone said makes perfect sense. He’s trying to figure out how to get from the MIT synthesis of responses to formulate the key questions. **Here’s the challenge, what is the essence of it or questions raised from the MIT for the next GB meeting?**

Once the GB members share their questions, we will compile the information to then eventually present critical questions to the congregation. Doug said the MIT will take a hiatus until the GB completes this process.

Dennis said Carolina is not going to be the social media guru. There’s got to be volunteers for a social media team to make this happen. The MIT came up with a lot of suggestions, but there are no volunteers to man the teams. We’re not disputing their ideas. They need to be informed about a serious lack of resources.

FUT has 3 people on it; Bob Converse, Ken White, & Deb Richards. Dick is no longer able to do it. Nancy said she thought the GB decided not to open the building. Dennis said the decision could be revisited. Kim said GPC has a terminal illness and we need to embrace the grieving process and stop waxing nostalgic and reminiscing for who we used to be. We have some hard decisions to make about next steps. Nancy said people are seeing that since there’s no more COVID restrictions, they think that opening the building will promote better outcome.

Tori Jones would like to join the MIT.

Dave said he went to the florist and they signed for an outdoor key. On Saturdays they’ll put the flowers on the table inside the door.

Dave asked if Dennis sent a formal letter to Studio Worcester. Dave said he’ll reach out for them to return the key.

Charlie made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded. Unanimous agreement. The meeting ended at 8:44 p.m.

The next Governing Board is a regular GB Zoom meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Paré, Clerk