

UUC Social Justice Council Minutes

March 23, 2024

Present: Linda Stoller (chair), Carol Hamilton, Marlene Calderone, Bob Hedlund (treasurer), Trude Diamond, Eliseo Santana, Maryann Hamilton, Christina Bellamy, Carole Vaughn and Anne Burnham.

Minutes were mailed shortly before the meeting, so not everyone had a chance to read them. Accepted but any subsequent changes can be emailed to Linda (lstol10403@aol.com).

Committee Reports

Racial Justice (Trude): There were 50 attendees at the recent Arts Unite Us with significant cash contributions received. Danny White (Florida Equal Justice Initiative) asked Trude about placing one of the organization's lynch memorial markers on the UUC campus, facing Nursery Road, to mark a lynching that had occurred mid-county. Discussion: with the little library and banners already in that area and with increased traffic with the future widening of Nursery Road, the marker would be readily visible to passersby, it could actually become a little pocket park; seen as a relationship builder, important for the white community to be accountable. Unanimous vote. Trude and Linda will be gathering info from the Sarasota UUs about their experience with installing and maintaining the marker on their campus before presenting the proposal to the board.

Environmental Justice (Linda & Anne, in Eloise's absence):

April 14: Rev. Amy will frame her message around Earth Day and "Food, Faith & Climate" postcards from Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) will be passed out before/after the service.

Rev. Amy may also give a blessing to the new raised garden bed that Cibby, who is now in charge of the Food Forest, has built, along with a demonstration there. SJC voted to give \$79 to the EJC for 1/3 of the cost of the new raised bed.

April 21: The IPL film "Common Ground" will be shown after the service in Surti Hall.

April 28: EJ will have discussion about the film at Open Issues, along with other Earth Day topics.

FAST (Linda): Fantastic turnout at recent network mtg at UUC to organize for Nehemiah Action, which will be on Tuesday, April 30, at 7 PM (First Baptist Church, St. Pete) and this year there will be a bus going from UUC.

NAMI (Christina): The class is halfway through, 6 attending from UUC, with the rest from the outside community, going extremely well with a lot of extraordinary new material. The support group is also going well and NAMI is grateful to UUC for hosting both groups.

LULAC (Eliseo): 1) Eliseo will be delivering the message at tomorrow's service; 2) Next Sat., 10-noon, there will be a New Words Reading Program for Hispanic children pre-K through 5th grade, as well as parents who are learning to read English, more info on UUC Immediate Response facebook page; 3) July 5 the Gulf Coast Alianza, which Eliseo heads, will have a festival at UUC (music and lectures in the Octagon, with additional entertainment in the Social Hall afterwards, expecting about 200 people); 4) \$250 for the 2 security cameras installed by the banners will be paid for by Community Outreach funds remaining at end of fiscal year, Eliseo to submit request for payment to Bob; no vandalism to the banner since then and Black visitors have been seen taking selfies in front of them; 5) Judges Forum at UUC 30 days before August elections will be organized by LULAC, along with other local Hispanic groups.

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Maryann): Prayer in the Park, 1-5 PM on April 7, Straub Park, St. Pete. Maryann wondered if SJC would like to have a table with peace postcards for kids to draw and send to legislators. Probably too late for this year, but Linda suggested she contact Lori in RE so she can advertise the event to families who might be interested in going and also put a notice in the *Octagram*. SJC voted to pay \$50 to join TBIB; Bob will send the group a check.

Treasurer's Report (Bob):

\$473.28 to Florida Indigenous Alliance
\$900 for bed (Refugee Committee request)
\$90 Community Outreach (Susan's cleanup)
\$460.45 Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
Feb. not final yet, March not closed

Community Outreach (Trude): tentative

April: We Care Family Connections
May: Pinellas Habitat for Humanity (Faith Drive, 100% match in May)
June: Community Tampa Bay
July: Clothes to Kids
Aug: Recovery Epicenter Fdtn.
Sept: Poynter
Oct: Pinellas Meals on Wheels
Nov: Guest at Your Table (UUSC)
Dec: Community Health Centers of Pinellas (Evara)

New and Continuing Programs

Homeless Empowerment Program (HEP) (Anne): Linda, Rev. Amy and Anne met with Edie Minton, Volunteer Specialist, about how UUC might be of service to HEP and Edie reviewed a wide array of possibilities. The 3 of us felt that a couple of events might be most manageable for the congregation: 1) backpacks (for Back to School Bash) and 2) Adopt-a-Family at Christmas (need to sign up early, very popular). Opposition to suggestion that RE kids could be part of the backpack selection process was expressed, for cultural reasons. Anne will check with Edie to learn how other groups handle backpack donations. A second tour of the HEP campus will be on March 28 at 3 PM (see *Octagram* to sign up).

Voter Project (Linda): "Tu voto, tu voz" postcards are in stock for our members to write to Eliseo's list of 3,000 voters in the local Hispanic community. Eliseo offered to print the back side on his commercial printer so that QR code could also be included. There will be a postcard writing party in early April and then members will be on their own to finish them.

Movie Night (Linda): Linda asked if there would be interest in having social justice films during the summer, positive response received, need list of low-cost possibilities.

Abortion Kickoff (Linda): Floridians Protecting Freedom is organizing a rally in Orlando on April 13; SEIU buses will be available free of charge. Word came from Rev. Amy that Bread & Roses is in need of more escorts.

Let Carol H. know if you have any additions for the **SJC Calendar**. The next mtg will be on April 27th at 9:30 on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham