

Minutes: Congregational Meeting of March 24, 2019

The East Shore Board of Trustees convened a special congregational meeting on March 24, 2019, to decide the disposition of the Holly House property. The Power Point presentation is available upon request.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Invitation from Right Relations – Please refer to the PPT presentation.
- President’s Opening Words,
Parliamentarians, Establish Quorum
- Board Motion #1
- Discussion, Vote for 1 of 4 options
- <If no majority> Board Motion #2 – to remove option with least votes.
2nd Round Ballot - vote for 4 options
- <If no majority> 3rd Round Ballot, 3 options
- <If no majority> 4th Round Ballot, 2 options
- Adjourn
- Listening Circles in the North Room

After opening remarks by our minister, Rev. Stephen Furrer, and Board President, Tom Doe, the meeting convened under Robert’s Rules of Order as specified in our bylaws. Mike Radow and Ann Fletcher were appointed as out parliamentarians. Tom Doe, President, read the following two statements to the congregation:

- The board will support the decision of the congregation and work to assure regardless of the outcome that we continue to serve our social justice mission and manage our resources for the sustainability of our church
- The choice of Holly House option does not make or break or the church financially. All options provide money to pay off our mortgage. Our sustainability depends on membership growth and the continued financial stewardship of our members.

It was announced by the ushers that a 25 % quorum was present. A total of 206 votes were cast on the first ballot.

Board Motion #1

- It has been moved and seconded by the Board that congregation members vote for one of the four ballot options for the sale of Holly House property to achieve a simple majority for one option.
- Discussion for 30 minutes, one minute each person, please...
...timekeeper is Paul Buehrens
- Please: Consider not repeating comments that have already been made to allow more voices to be heard.

An initial point of order raised the question of discussion time, which Robert’s rules allows each participant in the meeting two 10-minute discussion slots. Due to the size of the meeting, time limitations on our use of the sanctuary, and the need for multiple votes, a motion to adopt special rules limiting the discussion to 30 minutes and one-minute statements was proposed and adopted. The subsequent discussion provided an opportunity to all who indicated their desire to speak by coming to one of two stationary microphones or requesting a roving microphone.

A total of 30 members of the congregation made statements, during the discussion period.

Original Ballot - The vote asked members to choose between four options:

1. Attain Housing bid of \$1.2m to construct 12 affordable housing units targeting homeless families with children and 13 market rate rental units
2. LifeWlre bid of \$1.05M to construct 25 affordable housing units targeting homeless women and their families with separate domestic abuse
3. Woodbridge NW bid of \$4M to construct 19 to 21 mid-range market rate priced condos establishing a designated fund for earth and social justice of approximately \$933,000
4. Woodbridge NW bid of \$4M to construct 19 to 21 mid-range market rate priced condos with no restrictions on the church’s use of the proceeds

Other than establishing the designated fund of option three, the management of the fund and the use of the remainder of the proceeds will be determined after the sale by the board and the congregation.

As required under our bylaws and Robert’s rules of order, the voting process specified repeated votes until a simple majority (>50%) for one option could be achieved. All 3 rounds of voting are indicated below in Table #1.

After the first round of voting on all four options failed to achieve a simple majority, a motion from the floor was adopted by unanimous consent to amend the rules as follows:

Board Motion #2

- The Board has moved and seconded to suspend the Rules of Order, Voting, and use a voting method that eliminates the option with the least votes at each round until a simple majority for one option is achieved.
- If the Rules are Suspended, the 2nd Round would use the Initial Ballot. Each subsequent round would have a ballot with the remaining options, once the option with the least votes is removed.

This motion was amended to remove the choice of Attain Housing after the first round, from further consideration, since this option only received 5 votes on the initial ballot.

The subsequent voting went the full three rounds with the following vote total and percentage results (>50% required for adoption):

Table #1 – Results of Voting (3 Rounds)

Ballot Choices		First Round		Second Round	Third Round
Affordable	Attain	5	2.4%	<i>Eliminated</i>	<i>Eliminated</i>

	LifeWire	81	39.3%	81	38.8%	90	43.5%
Market Rate	Woodbridge with earth and social justice designated fund	65	31.6%	82	39.2%	117	56.5%
	Woodbridge with no restrictions on proceeds use	55	26.7%	46	22.0%	<i>Eliminated</i>	
Number of Votes Cast		206		209		207	

[It is noted that following each round of voting, the results were projected for the congregation to see, on the large screen. Each round was also verbally announced by our President, Tom Doe. It is also noted that the votes were tabulated by a team of 4 members of the congregation led by Jennifer Sumner. All results were double checks.]

Third Choice – Receives Majority

Following the third round, it was announced that the third choice on the original ballot (see Original Ballot above) received a majority of 117 votes out of a total of 207 votes cast. The 3rd choice was:

- Woodbridge NW bid of \$4M to construct 19 to 21 mid-range market rate priced condos establishing a designated fund for earth and social justice of approximately \$933,000

Listening Circles

Following the vote our restorative justice consultant, Pam Orbach, convened a well-attended talking circle in the North Room.

The board of trustees extends sincere gratitude to all who attended this congregational meeting. The attendance greatly exceeded the quorum requirements, providing a strong indication of our member’s commitment to be involved in our community. Except for convening a task force to complete the negotiations and sale of the property, the board has made no further decisions about the establishment of the earth and social justice designated fund for the disposition of other sale proceeds.

The board will be providing opportunities for open discussion and welcomes any suggestions that will ensure all voices are heard as we take our next steps forward.

The board recognizes the disappointment of those who voted for affordable housing options and their concerns that the church is not fulfilling its core principles for social action. Adding the votes of the first three options shows that approximately ¾ of the membership favors a commitment to using our financial resources for social justice. Furthermore, the amounts designated in the decided option are minimum amounts and can be increased by vote of the membership in future congregational meetings. The board also has set as a goal of preparing a long-term campus plan, which has been put on hold until after this vote. Our executive director, Jason Puracal, has already presented concepts to the board for developing our lower parking lot area and these will be considered by a soon-to-be-convened campus plan working group and members.

The board gives its **special thanks to the Holly House Task Force** -- Linda Freeburg, Laurie Adams, Trevor Hall, Jim Shuman, Carrie Bowman, Roger Greene, Sue Yates, Dave Baumgart (board liaison), Rev. Stephen Furrer (SLT liaison), and Mark Norelius (Right Relations Liaison) as well as to members of previous task forces that have worked so hard to bring this process to fruition.

Sincere thanks are due to Ann Fletcher (Policy and Governance) for her work on assuring our voting processes conformed to Robert's rules and our bylaws. Also thanks to Mike Radow for serving as parliamentarian with Ann Fletcher, Paul Buehrens as timer, Ralph Lutz and Lee Dorigan for providing AV help, and to board members Sara Brannman, Jerry Bushnell, Lee Dorigan, Evelyn Smith, and Marcy Langrock for assisting with running the meeting.

Closing Words, Adjourn

Jack thanked the current board, the lay leaders, the staff, and the entire membership for their active support of the ministry of East Shore Unitarian Church. Closing words were offered by Reverend Steven Furrer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

These draft minutes were compiled and submitted by David Baumgart, Board Secretary.

Thanks Dave

P.S. Please contact David for any additions or corrections to these minutes. David's email is david_baumgart@hotmail.com