

Council of Guiding Elders – Minutes January 17th, 2024
Edith Rankin Memorial United Church

In Attendance: Bill Spencer, Margaret Merkley, Andrew Robb, Ruth Pettis, Ken Williams, Rev. Michelle Down

Regrets: Gordon Sinclair, Peter Merkley

Guests:

1. **Call to order:** Bill called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Mission Statement: We seek to be a welcoming community, anchored in God’s love, challenged to sail on the winds of the spirit, sharing the Good News of Christ with each other and the world.

Devotional: As we flick the calendar to a new year, we come face to face with the fact that our days on earth are numbered. As the psalmist wrote, “Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” No thoughtful person can approach New Year’s Day without some introspection. We are reminded of the brevity of time. We also look back over our failures, mistakes, and missed opportunities, and vow that we will make better use of our time during the coming year. We should take time to be pleasant, to smile, to extend the small courtesies we often omit – to show love to our family. Psychiatrists tell us that most people are starved for love. Take time for the goodbye kiss; we shall go to work with a sweeter spirit. Let us take time to get acquainted with our families. We are not machines. We are not robots. The secret of a happy home is that members of the family learn to give and receive love. Let us take time to express our love in a thousand ways.

Commendations, Regrets, Prayer Concerns: A number of member’s names were offered up in prayer.

Correspondence:

EDRMUC has received correspondence from Sydenham Street United Church (SSUC) to collaborate on a joint Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper initiative in support of the Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group (JTRAG) and all Our Relations Land Trust, hoping to engage Edith Rankin Memorial U.C. Michelle noted that at the last collaboration group meeting it was decided that we would support a collaboration Pancake Supper, hosted at SSUC on Tuesday Feb 13 and that proceeds of this supper would go to JTRAG. Also, there will be announcements on Sunday and a note will be included in our weekly Tidings. However, ERMUC will not be hosting a Pancake Supper this year, but will make sure that our members know that they are invited to SSUC Shrove Tuesday dinner.

2. **Business Arising from Dec 20th Minutes:**

Ruth Pettis had suggested the idea of creating an oral history comprised of personal stories/perspectives of Edith Rankin's history from Collins Bay U.C. to current day Edith Rankin Memorial U.C. Council discussed some ideas regarding the interview format and who might make good interviewers. A task force would be charged with developing these details. Ruth will continue to oversee this initiative.

Minutes of the Previous Meetings:

Council Reviewed the draft minutes of Dec 20th, 2023. No specific other issues of concern were raised although it was noted several items will have follow-up discussion on today's agenda.

Motion:

Moved by Ken Williams, seconded by Andrew Robb to accept the minutes of the council meeting of Dec 20th, 2023.

3. **New Business:**

1. **Vision for next 5 Years:**

Bill felt it would be important to give some thought to where we are going as a church over the next 5 years. A workshop, similar to that run by the Affirming Team would be a good mechanism. Such a workshop would include representatives of other teams (e.g. Discernment Team; Affirming Team; Kitchen Renovation Team etc.). Council agreed and Bill will consider how best to proceed with a possible summary in the Annual Report.

2. Motion to Move In-Camera:

Motion:

Moved by Andrew Robb, seconded by Ruth Pettis to move “in-camera” to consider a number of staffing issues.

CARRIED

Motion:

Moved by Andrew Robb, seconded by Marg Merkley to move out of “in-camera”.

CARRIED

3. Report of the Rental Coordinator:

Motion:

Moved by Bill Spencer, seconded by Ruth Pettis to move “in-camera” to consider the Rental Coordinator’s Report.

CARRIED

Motion:

Moved by Bill Spencer, seconded by Ruth Pettis to move out of “in-camera”.

CARRIED

Peter Merkley had prepared a draft report for consideration. Following the in-camera discussion the following motion was put forward:

Motion:

- o Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Margaret Merkley, that Council establish the role of Rental Coordinator with the Mandate as outlined in the Rental Coordinator Report

CARRIED

4. Affirming Committee Progress:

Council wants to maintain steady progress of this committee. Michelle noted that the goal to submit the final documents has slipped (This includes the Mission Statement and Plan of Action) but this shouldn’t greatly affect the longer-term objective to submit to the UCC for their review and approval.

5. Update on New Sign/Media Team Response:

The sign development team had passed several ideas back and forth with the Media and Communications Team over the holidays and settled on the following as shown in attachment. The supplier was notified in late Jan 2024 and it is expected that installation can proceed in February. It was noted the team is still short some on the

needed costs and that an announcement should be made to the congregation focused on raising the final amount.

In addition, the Media Team noted the need to develop Policy and Procedure guidelines which Media and Communications would oversee. Stephanie Van Der Pryt would be trained to act as a backup operator if needed. Messaging for the first few months will need to focus only on ERMUC issues until better familiarity is developed with the policy and procedures.

6. Photo Album & Website:

As noted in the Dec 20th Council Minutes, Paul VanNest has offered options to better inform the congregation regarding the progress of the proposed new photo album. Council felt the most effective option would be to have a series of short presentations before service on Sundays complimented by a full-length webinar/seminar which could then also be posted to the website. This information should also be included in the January Tidings. As it stands the schedule would be approximately:

- January - Tidings/announcements
- February/March – individuals book on-line
- Aprils – Photo sessions
- May and/or September – Album made available

7. ERMUC Staff Vacancy and Needs Process:

Pastoral Care Report: Mandate of this Committee:

- Council established this Ad Hoc Committee when Elizabeth Amirault resigned. The Mandate of the Committee is to consider various options and to bring recommendations to Council
- the members of the Committee are: Gordon Sinclair, Marcus Robertson, Peter Merkley and Michelle Down.

Update:

- the Ad Hoc Committee met on January 16, 2024
- The Committee decided on a two-step approach:
 - The first step would be a short term, immediate solution. This would be to enter into a 6-8 month contract with an appropriate person to be responsible for pastoral care on the same basis as Elizabeth (10 hours per week). The contract will be to June 30 or to August 30, depending on the arrangements negotiated with the candidate.
 - this will provide timely support to Michelle
 - The budget for this contract is already in place - from a financial point of view, the salary for Elizabeth will just be paid to someone else.
 - ideally the new person will be able to start soon and be able to quickly become active in the role
 - at this point, we do not have a candidate identified
 - The second step will be a longer term solution and the Ad Hoc Committee will bring recommendations to Council by June 30 2024.

Recommendation:

- the Ad Hoc Committee recommends the following Motion:

Motion:

Moved by Gordon Sinclair and seconded by Peter Merkley that Council authorize the Minister to enter into 6-8 month contract for 10 hours per week with an appropriate person.

CARRIED

Follow Up:

As noted in the Recommendation above, Rev. Down was given the authority to enter into a 6-8 month contract with an appropriate person. She has since done just that and with the endorsement of council by electronic review, the following motion was put forward:

Motion:

Moved by Gordon Sinclair and seconded by Peter Merkley that Council authorize the Minister (in consultation with the Ad Hoc Committee) to enter into a 6 month contract for 10 hours per week with Alma Barney to provide Lay Pastoral Care.

8.ERMUC Website Use.

Council agreed it would be helpful if Paul Van Nest could give us a session on the website's operation and opportunities. Bill will speak to Paul about this for the next council meeting in February.

9.New Board Committee Members Needed – how to streamline:

Bill suggested one option to streamline filling positions on the various committees would be to merge some committees. Say reduce the number from 6 to 4. Bill will offer some suggestions to council in February.

10. Other Items:

Statutory Holidays for Staff in 2024:

An email from Rev. Michelle approving 12 statutory holidays for staff in 2024 was discussed. Council felt that decisions of this sort need to be made by Council. A motion was not made as Rev. Michell had left the meeting at this time.

Reports:

1. Treasurers Report:

Peter had circulated an overview report prior to the meeting. Council briefly reviewed these documents but again, given Peter could not be with us today, further

discussion will be left to the February meeting or optionally, if members have questions to consult with Peter on line.

2. Minister's Reports:

Michelle reported on ongoing conversations she has had with Sydenham Street, Faith United and Chalmers United Churches. As noted under Correspondence we will be embarking on a collaborative initiative with the other United Churches in Kingson over the next months to share ministers to better understand where we are. Rev. Catherine Elsdon from SSUC will be at ERMUC Sunday January 21st. The Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group (JTRAG), an initiative of Sydenham Street, Faith and Chalmers United churches is hoping to engage our associated congregations in a shared Shrove Tuesday initiative in support of All Our Relations Land Trust. We would support a collaboration Pancake Supper, hosted at SSUC on Tuesday Feb 13 and that proceeds of this supper would go to JTRAG. Also, there will be announcements on Sunday and a note will be included in our weekly Tidings. However, ERMUC will not be hosting a Pancake Supper this year, but will make sure that our members know that they are invited to SSUC Shrove Tuesday dinner.

The Fellowship breakfast will be one of a two-part presentation on powers of attorney, wills and estate planning by our own Alexandra Manthorpe. She is a Wills & Estates lawyer with Cunningham Swan. At a later date, the church is planning a workshop on the topic with Alexandra along with a financial planner.

Announcements: none

Closing Prayer: Michelle closed with a prayer.

Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of council will be – Wednesday February 21st. Again, the meeting will be held in person at the church beginning at 9:00am.

Bill Spencer, Chair

Ken Williams, Secretary