

October 16, 2019

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
SHINING WATERS REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Communities of Faith Commission
Wednesday, October 16, 2019**

The Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council met on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 by video conference. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Members Present

Christine Smaller (Chairperson), Carolyn Harding, Calin Lau, Ross Leckie, Kevin Logie, Sandra Nottegar, Gloria Tozek,

Jody Maltby (Staff Lead), Karen Hilfman Millson (staff), Susie Henderson (staff)

Regrets: Amy Lee, Harry Ramsaran, Cindy Randall

Absent: Emma Pipes

Welcome, check in and prayer

The chairperson welcomed everyone, opened with prayer, gave an acknowledgement of the land, and acknowledged our commitment to being a safe place for all people to gather and participate in our Region. Members checked in. Amy Lee joined the meeting briefly to offer her regrets and to update the commission that a proposal has gone to the regional executive for an Intercultural Diversity Commission.

The chairperson constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ.

Agenda

Two items were added to the agenda: a draft policy for collaboration agreements between communities of faith, and a lease agreement from Royal York Road United Church, Toronto.

MOTION by Calin Lau/Sandra Nottegar that the agenda, be approved as amended.

MOTION

CARRIED

Minutes

MOTION by Kevin Logie/Ross Leckie that the minutes of the meeting of the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council dated September 18, 2019 be approved as circulated.

MOTION

CARRIED

Omnibus Motion

MOTION by Ross Leckie/Carolyn Harding that the Communities of Faith Commission of Shining Waters Regional Council take the following actions:

a) Madill United Church, Huntsville, Ontario

... Approves the request of the former Trustees of the former Madill United Church regarding funds remaining in the bank account:

- \$4,000 to be given to Trinity United Church, Huntsville in recognition of payment of insurance on the former Madill United Church building for approximately 25 years; and
- The remainder (approximately \$16,000) to be transferred to Shining Waters Regional Council.

Madill United Church closed approximately 25 years ago. The building was held by the congregational Trustees until 2017 when it was transferred to Toronto Conference. In February 2018 the building was transferred to the Madill Church Preservation Society along with \$10,000.

b) Forest Hill United Church, Toronto, Ontario

... Approves the application of Forest Hill United Church for a capital loan in the amount of \$23,000 from the capital assistance program of The United Church of Canada.

Funds will be used for the replacement of the roof.

c) West Hill United Church, Toronto, Ontario

... Approves the request of West Hill United Church for the use of restricted funds in the amount of \$27,000 to cover the monthly short fall in expenses while the congregation and the commission explore options for an ongoing viable ministry in this location.

The restricted funds are part of a PTCC grant approved by the former Toronto Southeast Presbytery for comprehensive community engagement and market research to understand best practices in Community Hub development, strategic vision and comprehensive understanding of the needs of the community. Toronto Southeast Presbytery used five mission priorities to evaluate grant applications:

- a) Equipping new forms of leadership*
- b) Assisting congregations and communities of faith to take steps to transform their mission and ministry*
- c) Fostering collaboration between congregations/mission units, their surrounding neighbourhoods, and other faith communities to develop new community partnership*
- d) Creating new forms of urban ministry*
- e) Providing support for collaborative work between/among congregations for shared ministry.*

Allowing the congregation to use the funds in the short-term is assisting them to take steps to transform their mission and ministry.

MOTION

CARRIED

October 16, 2019

Strategic Report from TUCC

Toronto United Church Council has had two requests to share the Strategic Sites Report. One is an author who works in the Flourishing Congregations Institute in Calgary and the other was from another region wrestling with the same issue. We will ask TUCC to remove identifying information about the congregations and advise that the report – or any portion of it – may not be reproduced without permission.

Update on Liaisons

Jody Maltby reported that she hopes to make recruitment and training a priority by early November.

Policy Update: Collaboration Agreements between Communities of Faith Sharing Staff

Karen Hilfman Millson shared a draft policy for collaboration agreements between communities of faith sharing staff. Experience has shown that it is important that communities have entered this process and have clear understanding of relationship before calling staff.

There was discussion about what would qualify as significant changes. The wording was changed to substantive changes (changes of relationship) to reflect the language of remits. The policy needs to be broad and provide a framework without being too prescriptive. Liaisons need to be trained and equipped to help communities of faith to have the conversation around time management and flexibility within the position description. This can be fleshed out in the handbook with templates for time tracking and other tools.

Islay Scott is working as a liaison with a group of communities that are using this process. Islay will help to evaluate the process and develop a handbook for doing this work.

Karen is going to train some of our current Pastoral Relations Liaisons to do this work and then they will be able to continue to work with the communities as they call staff to help them interpret and honour the agreement.

The review of the collaboration agreement will be included as part of the congregational self-assessment process.

MOTION by Gloria Tozek/Carolyn Harding that the policy for collaboration agreements between communities of faith sharing staff be approved.

MOTION

CARRIED

Mapping

Susie Henderson joined the meeting.

Christine Smaller reminded the commission that we have been working on a vision for the future of the region; looking at how we can be strategic and proactive in helping the region have a healthy network of thriving congregations. One of the tasks in that is mapping our communities of faith and their surrounding areas.

Susie shared a document outlining a plan for mapping communities of faith. She noted the many ways communities could be identified, including Affirming congregations, community ministries, camps, accessibility and availability of public transit, traditional territories, watersheds and information Edge has already gathered or can access through Environics, the United Church year books and Church Hub. There would be two levels of the process. The first would be an annotated map that would be available to congregations. The second would be a more detailed report that would inform the work of the commission.

The next step is to ask Edge for a quote for the work and a process to engage the data that the commission could use at a later meeting. Is this the time for this work and if so, is this the information we need to help us develop our vision? Do we have the energy for this work?

Another option would be to send a survey to local communities of faith. The Social and Ecological Justice Commission is doing something similar to assess justice priorities. It will be important not to overwhelm communities with requests, so we would want to partner if possible.

The commission agreed to ask for a quote for the work and then decide how to proceed.

Policy Update: Sale of Property by an Existing Community of Faith

Jody Maltby and Gloria Tozek presented the draft policy for sale of property by an existing community of faith. The commission was comfortable with the direction of the policy and the financial thresholds provided.

It is an important piece of our reconciliation work to share a percentage of all property sales with Indigenous Peoples. This could mean a percentage to the national Indigenous Circle, a proposal from the congregation as to how the money might be used locally, or another option. Further consultation with Indigenous Communities is needed to do this appropriately. This consultation could include – but is not limited to – the Living Into Right Relations Circle of the region, the National Indigenous Circle and local Indigenous communities in our region. We also need to review our Manse Fund Policy to ensure that this is consistent when a manse is sold.

October 16, 2019

Regarding markers for vitality, it may be helpful to focus on guidance rather than direction. Vitality may look different in different places.

If the commission wants to be able to access the funds given to the region from these sales we need to have a conversation with the Executive to ensure we can do this. Before doing so, we need to have a clear proposal about how the funds will be used to support communities of faith.

Jody, Gloria and Ross Leckie will do some more work on the issues identified above.

Funding Workshop – Edge

Gloria Tozek and Jody Maltby participated in a conversation with Carla Leon and Chris Rotolo of Edge and with John Suk, chair of the regional Grants Review Committee. Edge offers an online workshop for all Embracing the Spirit grant recipients using a Theory of Change approach. People have a chance to have conversation on-line with people in other communities of faith who are also trying to do something new. The workshop provides a framework and sounding board for them to talk about their ideas.

This may be a useful tool as we support communities seeking to remain or become viable.

Community Ministries Event

Karen Hilfman Millson reported that there will be a gathering on November 16th at King City United Church focused on community ministry. A direct invitation has been issued to Community Ministries as well as Communities of Faith who are engaged in community ministry. An open invitation has also been sent to all communities of faith.

Property Redevelopment Gathering

Jody Maltby reported that there will be a gathering on November 23rd at Fairlawn Avenue United Church to discuss issues, questions and concerns related to property redevelopment in Toronto. Commission members are welcome to attend.

Christine Smaller encouraged us to pay attention to possible people who might be liaisons.

Trustees Workshop

Jody Maltby reported that she is offering two workshops on Trustees – one in person at Thornhill United Church on October 19th and one via videoconference on November 6th. Registration has been good for both.

Lease Agreement

We received a lease agreement from Royal York Road United Church, Toronto last night. Due to its complexity, it was not circulated for this meeting. Jody Maltby reported that the congregation has worked with both a lawyer and a real estate agent in developing the lease.

Jody will circulate the lease via email and we will use the email process for approval unless anyone has concerns, in which case we will meet via video conference.

It was recommended that we develop a more streamlined process for responding to time sensitive requests such as leases, loans and property sales. This could include empowering a sub-group of the commission to review the documents. We could also require a letter, on letterhead, from the communities' lawyer confirming that they have reviewed the documents.

Retreat planning

Staff will send a reminder to complete the doodle poll.

Closing

Christine Smaller offered gratitude for the members of the commission and a blessing. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm